

A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
JOHN

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Letter from Senior Pastor

The beginning of a new year is a great time to begin new things. Many people set resolutions or goals. Our church is setting a goal of having everyone read the Gospel of John together. I hope that you will join us in making this possible. The reading plan will be one chapter per week until Lent and then we will read two chapters per week. That schedule allows for three things: 1. Ample time to fully reflect on the text and consider how it applies to our lives. 2. Increased devotional time during the season of Lent. Lent is the season where we prepare our hearts and lives for the meaning of Easter and so increasing our study during that time will follow ancient traditional practices. 3. Reading the scripture about the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the week before Easter.

The Gospel of John is a great book of the Bible for us to read. The language is simple and is easy for people to understand even if they aren't well-versed in scripture. But behind the initial simplicity is a profound theology that even the most scholarly can learn from time and again. Wherever you are in your faith journey, reading the Bible will bless your life. Please join me and your family of faith as we commit time together to read the Gospel of John.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert T. Long". The signature is written in a cursive style.

WEEK 1: JOHN 1

Prayer before Reading

God,

Open my heart and mind to your presence. Speak to me and let me have ears to hear. Give me the eyes to see how I can make a difference through what I learn. Let this time be fruitful in helping me to become the person I was created to be.

John 1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God; **3** all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light but came to bear witness to the light. **9** The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. **11** He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. **12** But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. **15** (John bore witness to him, and cried, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.’”) **16** And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. **19** And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” **20** He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” **21** And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” And he answered, “No.” **22** They said to him then, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” **23** He said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” **24** Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. **25** They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” **26** John answered them, “I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, **27** even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” **28** This took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. **29** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.’ **31** I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” **32** And John bore witness, “I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. **33** I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ **34** And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” **35** The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; **36** and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” **37** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. **38** Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” **39** He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. **40** One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. **41** He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). **42** He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, “So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter). **43** The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” **44** Now Philip was from Beth-sa’ida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip found Nathan’a-el, and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” **46** Nathan’a-el said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” **47** Jesus saw Nathan’a-el coming to him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” **48** Nathan’a-

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WEEK 1: JOHN 1

el said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” **49** Nathan’ a-el answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” **50** Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.” **51** And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Reflection

The first chapter of John reminds us of the first book of the Bible, Genesis. Take a moment and read the first chapter of Genesis. When you read Genesis, take note of how many times that God spoke. For example: in the third verse, “And God *said*, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”

Verse five: “God *called* the light Day, and the darkness he *called* Night.”

There are at least fifteen times that the first chapter of Genesis points out God speaking as a part of creating the earth. It shows the very words of God have such power as to bring things into existence. God spoke, and things were created. The author of John evokes the creation story of Genesis in the first chapter of John. In Genesis, you have the spoken word of God bringing all things into being; in John you have the Word who was with God in the beginning and through whom all things were made. The Word is Christ; Jesus is the literal and figurative message of God.

Often, we think of Jesus and His redemptive power but the Gospel of John points out the creative power of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that if anyone is in Jesus, they are a “new creation”. When we accept the mercy and grace that is offered to us from the Creator of the Universe, we’re not simply forgiven, we are created anew.

Study Questions

What is a part of your life that needs the “newness” that God wants us to experience?

How can God use you to bring new life to someone you know?

Closing Prayer

Living Word,

Thank you for your message of love to the world. Let me carry that message in my heart and speak it through my words and actions. Help me to remember that I am a new creation, “the old has passed away” and I do not have to be held captive by my past. Today – let me live anew.

Amen.

WEEK 2: JOHN 2

Prayer before Reading

Word of God,

Speak to me today. I want to live a life that has joy and meaning. Help me to see examples in the way Christ lived on earth and apply those same values to the way I live. Open my mind to you.

Amen.

John 2

1 On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; **2** Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. **3** When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” **4** And Jesus said to her, “O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” **5** His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” **6** Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. **7** Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. **8** He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.” So, they took it. **9** When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom **10** and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.” **11** This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him. **12** After this he went down to Caper’na-um, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days. **13** The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **14** In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. **15** And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. **16** And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; you shall not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” **17** His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for thy house will consume me.” **18** The Jews then said to him, “What sign have you to show us for doing this?” **19** Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” **20** The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” **21** But he spoke of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. **23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did; **24** but Jesus did not trust himself to them, **25** because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.

Reflection

The second chapter of John begins with a very famous story from the life of Christ. Jesus was at a wedding in Cana of Galilee when the wine ran out. Weddings in the Ancient Near East were community events would typically last for seven days. It is fascinating to see that Jesus not only attended the wedding, but also that He would provide more wine for the celebration. The Gospel of John lists the miracle of wine as the first miracle Jesus performed. Of all the miracles, this one seems to be the most unlikely candidate for the first miracle. Why was this miracle recorded at all?

The author of John is showing Jesus as human and divine. On a very basic level, the story shows that Jesus attended a wedding reception. We don’t usually think about Jesus going to parties, but here we see that celebrations were a part of His life. We need to make time to celebrate with others in their important moments of life. We need to show that people are important to us and the best way to do this is to rejoice with them in their happiness and grieve with them in their loss. But the story also reveals the divine nature of Christ. Mary went to Jesus on behalf of the bridal party. It would have been embarrassing for them to not have enough wine for

WEEK 2: JOHN 2

their guests and so she thought about their feelings and asked her Son for help. When the wine ran out, He provided. Once again, the author of John is showing the creation power of Jesus.

Study Questions

Who do you know that needs help?

Do you spend time in your prayers talking about others?

Being part of someone's special moments in life shows that their lives matter to you. Think back on the past year – what weddings, funerals, birthday parties did you attend?

Closing Prayer

Gracious Lord,

Help me to look for opportunities where I can show people how important they are to me and to you. In the busyness of life, remind me to make time for the special moments. Thank you for being there for all of my moments in life and loving me.

Amen.

WEEK 3: JOHN 3

Prayer before Reading

Dear God,

Prepare me to hear your word. Help me to set aside all other thoughts for the next few minutes and focus on you. Speak to me that I might truly understand.

Amen

John 3

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2** This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him.” **3** Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **4** Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” **5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’ **8** The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.” **9** Nicodemus said to him, “How can this be?” **10** Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this? **11** Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. **12** If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? **13** No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. **14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” **16** For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. **18** He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. **19** And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. **21** But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. **22** After this Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained with them and baptized. **23** John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people came and were baptized. **24** For John had not yet been put in prison. **25** Now a discussion arose between John’s disciples and a Jew over purifying. **26** And they came to John, and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, here he is, baptizing, and all are going to him.” **27** John answered, “No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven. **28** You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. **29** He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. **30** He must increase, but I must decrease.” **31** He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks; he who comes from heaven is above all. **32** He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony; **33** he who receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. **34** For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit; **35** the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. **36** He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.

Reflection

John 3:16 is one of the most familiar Bible verses. People hold up signs with “John 3:16” at sporting events all the time or quote it in discussions about salvation. It’s a beautiful passage of how much God loved the world. Unfortunately, it is sometimes misunderstood

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WEEK 3: JOHN 3

to focus on who can be saved or how. People have a natural desire to feel secure about eternity and so they find scriptures that speak to what they need to do or say to make it happen. They focus on John 3:16 and feel that the emphasis of that passage is on believing in Christ so that they could achieve eternal life. But here is the most important thing – if you want assurance, if you want eternal life... you can never achieve it. Only God can give eternal life. And if we want the assurance of how much God loves us, it won't be found in what we do, but rather, what God does. Assurance and eternal life are found in the first part of John 3:16 and in the following verse:

“For God so loved the world...For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

Study Questions

Do you believe that God loves you?

When you think about eternal life, is your confidence based on doing the right things or the love of God?

If someone asked you how they could find eternal life, what would you tell them?

Closing Prayer

Loving God,

You are all that we need. Help us to put our trust in your love rather than anything we've done or not done. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Remind me to live as someone who is confident in your love so that I can fully share that same love with others.

In the Name of your Son,

Amen.

WEEK 4: JOHN 4

Prayer before Reading

Dear God,

As I read your word, help me to embrace the message you would want me to hear. Transform my thoughts and actions; make them your own. Help me to be the person you created me to be.

Amen.

John 4

1 Now when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John **2** (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), **3** he left Judea and departed again to Galilee. **4** He had to pass through Samar'ia. **5** So he came to a city of Samar'ia, called Sy'char, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. **6** Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. **7** There came a woman of Samar'ia to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." **8** For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. **9** The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samar'ia?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. **10** Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." **11** The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? **12** Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" **13** Jesus said to her, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." **15** The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." **16** Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." **17** The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; **18** for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly." **19** The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. **20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." **21** Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. **22** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. **24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." **25** The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things." **26** Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." **27** Just then his disciples came. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but none said, "What do you wish?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" **28** So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, **29** "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" **30** They went out of the city and were coming to him. **31** Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." **32** But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." **33** So the disciples said to one another, "Has any one brought him food?" **34** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. **35** Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. **36** He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. **37** For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' **38** I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." **39** Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his word. **42** They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." **43** After the two days he departed to Galilee. **44** For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. **45** So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast. **46** So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Caper'na-um there was an official whose son was ill. **47** When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come

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down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. **48** Jesus therefore said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” **49** The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” **50** Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. **51** As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was living. **52** So he asked them the hour when he began to mend, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” **53** The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live”; and he himself believed, and all his household. **54** This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

Reflection

In the fourth chapter of John are two accounts of great faith. The first is the story of the woman from Samaria and the second is the story of an official in Capernaum. The woman by the well is a familiar story. The people from Samaria were so despised by Jews that Jews would often take the long way around when traveling to avoid the area (and the people) all together. The enmity between the Jews and Samaritans stemmed from the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C.E. The Assyrians were a brutal nation and sent many of the Jews living in the Northern Kingdom into exile. Some were allowed to stay and they intermarried with the Assyrians (a long-time enemy of the Hebrew people). Five hundred years later the people of that same area developed their own place of worship and recognized it, rather than the city of Jerusalem of the Southern Kingdom. The people of the two areas would continue to despise each other through the time of Jesus. It would have been unusual for a teacher like Jesus to lead his disciples into Samaria. Even more unusual that he would sit down to talk with a Samaritan, and a woman of who had a questionable reputation. It is isn't a coincidence that Jesus stopped to talk to the Samaritan who was an outcast among a people of outcasts. Jesus was demonstrating that the views that society had of a certain person were not the views of God.

Then the chapter continues and Jesus was met by an official in Capernaum whose child was dying. This was the opposite situation – Jesus was reaching out to a man of status and means. Jesus did not turn the man away because of his power or wealth just as he didn't turn the woman at the well away for her lack thereof.

These stories illustrate that God's love doesn't stop at any borders – physical, spiritual, or economical. God loves every person.

Study Questions

Are there ways that you judge people differently? Are you more likely to think more highly of a person of poverty or someone who is wealthy? How do you think God views them?

In the time of Christ, people thought that anything bad that happened in someone's life was a punishment from God. Consequentially, people who were destitute were seen as the ones who committed some crime against God to warrant the circumstances that made them poor.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly God,

Help me to see people the way you see them. Today I want to focus on sharing your love with others. Give me opportunities to be kind and make a difference.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

WEEK 5: JOHN 5

Prayer before Reading

Lord of Life,

Thank you for all the ways you have brought healing to my life. You have restored me time and again. Breathe new life into me once more; let your word speak to the areas of my soul that need your touch.

Amen.

John 5

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **2** Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. **3** In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed. **4** * [No text*] **5** One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. **6** When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" **7** The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." **8** Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." **9** And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day was the sabbath. **10** So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." **11** But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.'" **12** They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk'?" **13** Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. **14** Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you." **15** The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. **16** And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the sabbath. **17** But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working." **18** This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God. **19** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. **20** For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel. **21** For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. **22** The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, **23** that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. **24** Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. **25** "Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, **27** and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man. **28** Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29** and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. **30** "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. **31** If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; **32** there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true. **33** You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. **34** Not that the testimony which I receive is from man; but I say this that you may be saved. **35** He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. **36** But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. **37** And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; **38** and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. **39** You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; **40** yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. **41** I do not receive glory from men. **42** But I know that you have not the love of God within you. **43** I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. **44** How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? **45** Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. **46** If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of

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WEEK 5: JOHN 5

me. **47** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

* Other ancient authorities add, wholly or in part, *waiting for the stirring of the water; 4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well from whatever disease that person had*

Reflection

Through the ages there have been societal traditions, laws, and perceptions that have worked against those who were most in need. Here in the fifth chapter of John is another example. There was a place in Jerusalem called Bethzatha, also known as Bethesda, which had a pool of water that supposedly had healing properties. And so, people who were in need of physical healing would congregate near the waters edge. Verse 3 says that there was a “multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed” there. But the healing nature of the water only occurred when the waters moved or were troubled. The tradition was that an angel of God would come and stir the waters and then the first person in the water after that occurred would be healed. Can you imagine the frustration of needing to be healed and yet not being fast enough to make it to the water first?

There was a man who had been by the waters for a long time, never being the one to be first to the pool. He had been sick for 38 years. And Jesus noticed him and asked the man if he wanted to be healed. Now consider what happened – the man was focused on a local legend that would always be beyond his reach, when the Lord of Life was asking him if he wanted to be healed. Sometimes we have a tendency to focus on ways to relieve our pain and suffering, when the one true Way is always with us. Most of the time we focus elsewhere because we think our wellbeing is all on us. We certainly have a role to play in the attitudes we choose and what kind of healthy/unhealthy habits we choose for our lifestyle. But our wellbeing is found in God. Waiting years on a “magical” pool of water will never accomplish the peace of mind that living each moment in Christ will.

Study Questions

Are there areas of your life that you are hoping will be “fixed” or “healed”?

How have you sought help?

What does the wellbeing of your soul look like for you?

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,

I do want to be healed of anything that holds me back in my relationship with you or others. Free me for a life of joy and meaning. Empower me to bring healing in the lives of others.

Amen.

WEEK 6: JOHN 6

Prayer before Reading

Almighty God,

Forgive me when I doubt. I believe, but I do not always understand. Help me in the midst of my questions and doubts. Let me have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Amen.

John 6

1 After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiber'i-as. **2** And a multitude followed him, because they saw the signs which he did on those who were diseased. **3** Jesus went up on the mountain, and there sat down with his disciples. **4** Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. **5** Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a multitude was coming to him, Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" **6** This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. **7** Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." **8** One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, **9** "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?" **10** Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place; so the men sat down, in number about five thousand. **11** Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. **12** And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost." **13** So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten. **14** When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!" **15** Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. **16** When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, **17** got into a boat, and started across the sea to Caper'na-um. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. **18** The sea rose because a strong wind was blowing. **19** When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat. They were frightened, **20** but he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." **21** Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. **22** On the next day the people who remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. **23** However, boats from Tiber'i-as came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. **24** So when the people saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Caper'na-um, seeking Jesus. **25** When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" **26** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. **27** Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal." **28** Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" **29** Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." **30** So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform? **31** Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" **32** Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." **34** They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always." **35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. **36** But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. **37** All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. **38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; **39** and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. **40** For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." **41** The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." **42** They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we

WEEK 6: JOHN 6

know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" **43** Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. **44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. **45** It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. **46** Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. **47** Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. **48** I am the bread of life. **49** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **50** This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." **52** The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" **53** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; **54** he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. **55** For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. **56** He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. **57** As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. **58** This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever." **59** This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper'na-um. **60** Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" **61** But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? **62** Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? **63** It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **64** But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. **65** And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." **66** After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. **67** Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" **68** Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; **69** and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." **70** Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" **71** He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him.

Reflection

The sixth chapter of John opens with a very familiar story: the feeding of the five thousand. Each of the Gospel writers tell the story in their own way. John includes the information about a little boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus had told the disciples to feed all the people who had come to listen to him, but the disciples told him that it would take 200 denarii to feed everyone (the average wage for a worker then was 1 denarius/day.) In the midst of the disciples trying to explain to Jesus why it would be impossible for them to feed everyone, Andrew, the brother of Peter, stepped up with a little boy and said that the child had five barley loaves and two fish to share. Imagine that moment. The rest of the disciples thought the task could not be achieved and then they hear Andrew say that he had five loaves and two fish. Can you imagine the look they gave Andrew? They must have thought that at least Jesus was suggesting to buy enough food for everyone; Andrew was suggesting to stretch a boy's lunch enough to feed the crowd. As soon as he made the suggestion, he seems to become embarrassed and retract the offer as he says, "but what are they among so many?". Yet, his offer that appeared foolish to the disciples and then to him, was exactly the source that Jesus used to feed the entire crowd.

Study Questions

Are there times in life that you let the fear of embarrassment or ridicule prevent you from doing more in life?

Do you become uncomfortable at the thought of dancing at a wedding? singing aloud in church? praying in front of others?

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WEEK 6: JOHN 6

When is the last time you learned or did something new?

Closing Prayer

Dear God,

You have given me life; help me to live it to the fullest. Let me dream new dreams for myself and others. I want to put aside any fear I have of looking silly or feeling embarrassed – I would rather experience more!

Amen

WEEK 7: JOHN 7

Prayer before Reading

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for revealing love to the world. You have shown us the way to a better world – by how we live in it. Help me to live in such a way that I make a difference. Let my life make the world a better place.

Amen.

John 7

1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee; he would not go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. **2** Now the Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand. **3** So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples may see the works you are doing. **4** For no man works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." **5** For even his brothers did not believe in him. **6** Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. **7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil. **8** Go to the feast yourselves; I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." **9** So saying, he remained in Galilee. **10** But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. **11** The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" **12** And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." **13** Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him. **14** About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. **15** The Jews marveled at it, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" **16** So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; **17** if any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. **18** He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. **19** Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" **20** The people answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" **21** Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel at it. **22** Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man upon the sabbath. **23** If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a man's whole body well? **24** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." **25** Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? **26** And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? **27** Yet we know where this man comes from; and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." **28** So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord; he who sent me is true, and him you do not know. **29** I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." **30** So they sought to arrest him; but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. **31** Yet many of the people believed in him; they said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" **32** The Pharisees heard the crowd thus muttering about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. **33** Jesus then said, "I shall be with you a little longer, and then I go to him who sent me; **34** you will seek me and you will not find me; where I am you cannot come." **35** The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? **36** What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?" **37** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. **38** He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" **39** Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. **40** When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This is really the prophet." **41** Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? **42** Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" **43** So there was a division among the people over him. **44** Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. **45** The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" **46** The

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officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!” **47** The Pharisees answered them, “Are you led astray, you also? **48** Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? **49** But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.” **50** Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, **51** “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” **52** They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee.” **53** They went each to his own house,

Reflection

There are several times in scripture that people had a hard time understanding the teachings of Jesus. What is interesting is that Jesus did not stop everything and make sure that people did understand. He didn't stop his teaching to reexplain or teach it in another way or break things down in really simple steps. Most of the time he let people wrestle with what they thought he meant. This reveals a couple important things. First, Jesus did not force people to believe a certain way. Since he was teaching them, he wanted to change their thoughts and actions, but he did not force people. Jesus gave them freedom to think and believe. Second, if questioning and doubting were life-ending actions, Jesus would probably have taken more time to make sure people had all the information in all the ways they needed to be able to come to the right solution. There must be something about wrestling with the truth that Jesus felt was beneficial to people. Perhaps we are too hard on ourselves with we struggle with our beliefs. Maybe there is a lot to be gained when we really grapple with the difficult passages.

Study Questions

What scriptures or parts of the Bible do you find difficult to read?

What are the passages that make you feel uncomfortable?

Are there portions that you have trouble believing?

Do you find that you are more apt to avoid troublesome passages or engage them?

The next time you come to such a passage, why not take time to remember that: Christ is with you and wants you to learn something; Christ is with you and wants to reveal the passage to you; Christ is with you if you continue to struggle. Discuss the passage in your prayer time with God. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns/doubts/confusion. Don't avoid the struggle – it will make you stronger.

Closing Prayer

Holy God,

I believe; help my unbelief! (Mark 9:24b)

Amen

WEEK 8: JOHN 8

Prayer before Reading

Merciful God,

Here and now I give myself to you. Show me the way. I want to know you. I want to live you in all that I say and do.

Amen.

John 8

1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. **2** Early in the morning he came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. **3** The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst **4** they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. **5** Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?” **6** This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. **7** And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” **8** And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. **9** But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. **10** Jesus looked up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” **11** She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.” **12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” **13** The Pharisees then said to him, “You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true.” **14** Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come and whither I am going, but you do not know whence I come or whither I am going. **15** You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. **16** Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone that judge, but I and he who sent me. **17** In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true; **18** I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me.” **19** They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also.” **20** These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. **21** Again he said to them, “I go away, and you will seek me and die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.” **22** Then said the Jews, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?” **23** He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. **24** I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” **25** They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Even what I have told you from the beginning. **26** I have much to say about you and much to judge; but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” **27** They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father. **28** So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. **29** And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.” **30** As he spoke thus, many believed in him. **31** Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” **33** They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to any one. How is it that you say, ‘You will be made free’?” **34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not continue in the house for ever; the son continues for ever. **36** So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. **37** I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you. **38** I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” **39** They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did, **40** but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did. **41** You do what your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.” **42** Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. **43** Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. **44** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and

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has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **45** But, because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. **46** Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? **47** He who is of God hears the words of God; the reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.” **48** The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” **49** Jesus answered, “I have not a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. **50** Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it and he will be the judge. **51** Truly, truly, I say to you, if any one keeps my word, he will never see death.” **52** The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, as did the prophets; and you say, ‘If any one keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ **53** Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you claim to be?” **54** Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God. **55** But you have not known him; I know him. If I said, I do not know him, I should be a liar like you; but I do know him and I keep his word. **56** Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” **57** The Jews then said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” **58** Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” **59** So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Reflection

The people had numerous thoughts about Jesus. They accused Him of being a liar, a Samaritan, and a demon. But their thoughts about Him, didn't define Him. His very nature established His identity. There are too many times when we allow the opinions of others to tell us who we are. But it is our nature as beings created by God and made in God's image that gives us our identity as children of God. We may live lives contrary to our true identity; we may allow the words or labels put on us by others to guide our lives, but this is a choice we make. Whether consciously or unconsciously, we choose how we live.

Study Questions

If someone asked you to describe who you are, what would you say?

Would you use more words of doing or being? (Painter, runner vs father, daughter)

What does it mean to you that you are called “Child of God”?

Closing Prayer

Almighty God,

You created me and gave me life. I am made in your image. Help me to continually listen to you for who I am.

Amen.

WEEK 9: JOHN 9

Prayer before Reading

Christ with me, Christ before me,

Christ behind me, Christ in me,

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ on my right, Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise.

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me. – Prayer attributed to St. Patrick

John 9

1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. **2** And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. **4** We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” **6** As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, **7** saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Silo’am” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. **8** The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, “Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?” **9** Some said, “It is he”; others said, “No, but he is like him.” He said, “I am the man.” **10** They said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” **11** He answered, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Silo’am and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight.” **12** They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” **13** They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. **14** Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. **15** The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” **16** Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was a division among them. **17** So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” **18** The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, **19** and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” **20** His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; **21** but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” **22** His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. **23** Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.” **24** So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” **25** He answered, “Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” **26** They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” **27** He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?” **28** And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. **29** We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” **30** The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. **31** We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. **32** Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. **33** If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” **34** They

WEEK 9: JOHN 9

answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. **35** Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of man?” **36** He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” **37** Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” **38** He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” **40** Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?” **41** Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

Reflection

Have you ever met a painter who is self-taught? Someone who never went to art school or who was properly trained, yet, had the ability to produce incredible works of art? Or maybe a person who was one of the best teachers you ever knew, yet never had gotten a degree or a teaching certificate? The blind man who was healed by Jesus in John 9 was better in his theology than the Pharisees who had been formally trained in the Law. His exchange with them is brilliant:

“Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” John 9:30-33

The Pharisees were missing the content of the man’s message because he didn’t have the credentials. Their pride got in the way of them being witnesses to a divine miracle.

Study Questions

Are there moments where you miss the message because you’re too focused on the lack of qualifications of the messenger?

Do you ever dismiss someone because you have already determined that they have nothing really of value to say? For example, do you ever listen to voices of a different political party, voices from those of a different generation (older or younger), voices that are different than yours?

“Truth is truth anywhere it is spoken.” Tony Hale

Closing Prayer

God of Truth,

Speak to me as you will.

Speak to me where you will.

Speak to me when you will.

And – let me hear.

Amen.

WEEK 10- JOHN CHAPTER 10 & 11

Prayer before Reading

Dear God,

Open my heart and mind to your word today. Let me see your truth and way of life. Illumine areas of my life that are not what they need to be and help me to embrace the life that Christ offers.

Amen.

John 10

1 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; **2** but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. **3** To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. **5** A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” **6** This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. **7** So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. **8** All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. **9** I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. **10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. **11** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12** He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. **13** He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. **14** I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, **15** as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. **17** For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. **18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father.” **19** There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. **20** Many of them said, “He has a demon, and he is mad; why listen to him?” **21** Others said, “These are not the sayings of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” **22** It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; **23** it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. **24** So the Jews gathered round him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” **25** Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness to me; **26** but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; **28** and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. **30** I and the Father are one.” **31** The Jews took up stones again to stone him. **32** Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?” **33** The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God.” **34** Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’? **35** If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), **36** do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? **37** If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; **38** but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” **39** Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. **40** He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John at first baptized, and there he remained. **41** And many came to him; and they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” **42** And many believed in him there.

Reflection

In the last half of John 10:10, Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” What does it mean to have abundant

WEEK 10- JOHN CHAPTER 10 & 11

life? One clue comes from the same verse. Jesus is comparing who He is as the Shepherd to others who sought to harm the sheep. Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” Steal/kill/destroy vs. life/abundant life. Since it is fairly easy to see that “kill” and “life” are directly opposed to one another, one could make the argument that “abundant life” is that kind of life which is the opposite of stealing and destroying. If the “thief” steals life and destroys life, Christ builds life up into something abundant.

The truth is, we understand this concept very well because we encounter it all the time. There are certain television shows we watch that lift our spirits – they add to our lives. Then there are those tv shows that we feel we need to remind ourselves that it’s just a show. There is music that inspires us and then some that we need to explain by saying, “I just like it for the beat; I don’t pay attention to the lyrics.” We listen to jokes that make us laugh without guilt and others that make us blush. We know the kind of things that enhance, inspire, and uplift. We know what abundant life looks like because we know the moments that demean, steal, and destroy.

Study Questions

What are your favorite songs that lift your spirits?

Think of a time that you watched a movie that left you feeling bad about yourself or someone/something else. What was it about that movie that left you feeling that way?

What is a way that you can help to bring abundant life for someone else?

Closing Prayer

Lord of Life,

Live in me. Remind me to turn away from the things or situations that only serve to diminish life. Help me experience abundant life and help others to do the same.

In the Name of the Shepherd,

Amen

WEEK 10- JOHN CHAPTER 10 & 11

Prayer before Reading

Holy One,

You alone are God – who was, who is, and who always will be. I place my life in you.

Amen.

John 11

1 Now a certain man was ill, Laz'arus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'arus was ill. **3** So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." **4** But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Laz'arus. **6** So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. **7** Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." **8** The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" **9** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. **10** But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." **11** Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Laz'arus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." **12** The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." **13** Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. **14** Then Jesus told them plainly, "Laz'arus is dead; **15** and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." **16** Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." **17** Now when Jesus came, he found that Laz'arus had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. **20** When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." **23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." **24** Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" **27** She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world." **28** When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." **29** And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. **30** Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. **31** When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. **32** Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." **33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; **34** and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." **35** Jesus wept. **36** So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" **37** But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" **38** Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. **39** Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" **41** So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. **42** I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me." **43** When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Laz'arus, come out." **44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." **45** Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him; **46** but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. **47** So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council, and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. **48** If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." **49** But one of

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them, Ca'iaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; **50** you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." **51** He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, **52** and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **53** So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death. **54** Jesus therefore no longer went about openly among the Jews, but went from there to the country near the wilderness, to a town called E'phraim; and there he stayed with the disciples. **55** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. **56** They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?" **57** Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

Reflection

Jesus was friends with sisters Mary and Martha as well as their brother Lazarus. When Lazarus became sick and died, Jesus waited before he went immediately to their house. There was a traditional thought that an angel hovered near a person after their death and would remain there for three days. Jesus delayed so that people would know that it was God who resurrected Lazarus, not an angel. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth from the tomb and he did so. He was wrapped in his burial shroud. Apparently (and probably not surprisedly) the people were stunned and so Jesus had to tell them to remove the burial cloths from Lazarus. It made no sense for him to continue to be dressed like the dead when he was fully alive!

Study Questions

What was the message that Jesus was wanting the people to understand in the resurrection of Lazarus?

Now, because Lazarus was human, there finally came a day when he would die, again. And on that occasion Jesus wasn't there to call him from the tomb. – how do you think Mary, Martha, and Lazarus experienced the deaths of loved ones from that point on?

Closing Prayer

God of eternity,

Thank you for this life here on earth. I am grateful for the beauty that surrounds me and my friends and family. Give me strength to face my own mortality and to better understand the idea of eternity with you. Help me to see the life I am called to live here and now and evermore.

Amen.

WEEK 11- JOHN CHAPTER 12 & 13

Prayer before Reading

Hosanna to the King of Kings!

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!

Hosanna!

John 12

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Laz'arus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. **2** There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Laz'arus was one of those at table with him. **3** Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. **4** But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, **5** "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" **6** This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. **7** Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. **8** The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." **9** When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Laz'arus, whom he had raised from the dead. **10** So the chief priests planned to put Laz'arus also to death, **11** because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. **12** The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" **14** And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, **15** "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!" **16** His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. **17** The crowd that had been with him when he called Laz'arus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. **18** The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. **19** The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him." **20** Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. **21** So these came to Philip, who was from Beth-sa'ida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." **22** Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. **23** And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. **24** Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. **25** He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him. **27** "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. **28** Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." **29** The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." **30** Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. **31** Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; **32** and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." **33** He said this to show by what death he was to die. **34** The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" **35** Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. **36** While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." When Jesus had said this, he departed and hid himself from them. **37** Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him; **38** it was that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" **39** Therefore they could not believe. For Isaiah again said, **40** "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn for me to heal them." **41** Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him. **42** Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: **43** for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. **44** And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who

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sent me. **45** And he who sees me sees him who sent me. **46** I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. **47** If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. **48** He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. **49** For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. **50** And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me.”

Reflection

The Ancient Middle Eastern scholar, Kenneth Bailey, discusses the importance of the woman anointing the feet of Jesus with her hair. At that time, Jewish women did not wear their hair down. Most often the woman would not show her hair to a man until after they were married. So for Mary to let down her hair to wipe the feet of Jesus had a very profound meaning. It was her display of making a covenant with Him, a sign of deep love. As soon as she had anointed him, Judas Iscariot showed contempt for her actions saying that she wasted money on the ointment instead of giving it to the poor. Jesus defended Mary saying that her gift would prepare His body for burial. In this passage of scripture you have the opposite actions of Mary and Judas Iscariot. Mary risked ridicule for performing such a tender act toward Jesus in the midst of a dinner party. She spent her own money on the extravagant gift; by letting down her hair, she could be seen as a less than respectable woman. Judas Iscariot wanted to appear more generous than Mary and so he complained her expensive gift was wasted. He never acknowledged that Jesus was worth such an incredible gesture. Her bold gesture overshadowed his false piety.

Study Questions

Why do you think Mary anointed the feet of Jesus?

How do you show your love for Christ?

What is the most extravagant gift you have ever given?

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,

I love you with my whole heart. Forgive me for the times that I have fallen short of what you've wanted for my life. Forgive me when I have wounded you or others. Fill me with your presence and let my life be my gift to you.

Amen.

WEEK 11- JOHN CHAPTER 12 & 13

Prayer before Reading

Gracious Lord,

Help me to focus on you during this time. Let me see your message in the scripture. Let me hear your word for me today. Meet me here and show me the way.

Amen.

John 13

1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. **2** And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, **4** rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. **5** Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. **6** He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" **7** Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." **8** Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." **9** Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" **10** Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you." **11** For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "You are not all clean." **12** When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? **13** You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. **14** If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. **16** Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. **17** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. **18** I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen; it is that the scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' **19** I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. **20** Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me." **21** When Jesus had thus spoken, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." **22** The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. **23** One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast of Jesus; **24** so Simon Peter beckoned to him and said, "Tell us who it is of whom he speaks." **25** So lying thus, close to the breast of Jesus, he said to him, "Lord, who is it?" **26** Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. **27** Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." **28** Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. **29** Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast"; or, that he should give something to the poor. **30** So, after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night. **31** When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; **32** if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. **33** Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' **34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." **36** Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward." **37** Peter said to him, "Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." **38** Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times.

WEEK 11- JOHN CHAPTER 12 & 13

Reflection

The disciple Peter was nothing if he wasn't passionate and impetuous. When Jesus knelt down to wash the feet of Peter, the disciple refused. He didn't want Jesus to humble himself to the lowly task of washing his feet. That was something a servant would do. But Jesus told Peter the act was necessary for him to be part of Jesus' ministry. And so, with as much fervor as he had shown in his refusal, now Peter declared that he wanted Jesus to not only wash his feet, but his entire body! Jesus calmed Peter down and said that the feet would suffice. At the end of the chapter there is another scene where Peter interacts with Jesus. Peter exclaimed that he would readily lay down his life for Christ. Jesus told him that Peter would deny Him three times.

Peter made mistakes in his life, but he was full of love. He wanted to do the right thing; he wanted to be loyal to Christ and a leader in ministry but his eagerness to do so often showed itself before he could think through what he was saying. It is important to see that Jesus never gave up on Peter. Jesus looked beyond the words and actions and into the real person. Jesus believed in Peter and knew him better than Peter knew himself.

Study Questions

Can you identify with the overzealousness of Peter?

How would you feel if Jesus knelt before you, took off your shoes, and washed your feet?

Do you believe that Jesus knows you and believes in you?

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for loving me. Help me to follow you in life. Give me the words to say when I need to speak and help me to be silent when that is best. Strengthen my self-control and allow me to be more focused on you.

Amen

WEEK 12- JOHN CHAPTER 14 & 15

Prayer before Reading

Speak to me, O God. Share your message of love and comfort. Open my ears to your Word.

John 14

1 “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. **2** In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3** And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. **4** And you know the way where I am going.” **5** Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. **7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him.” **8** Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.” **9** Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. **11** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. **12** “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. **13** Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; **14** if you ask anything in my name, I will do it. **15** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. **18** “I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. **19** Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. **20** In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **21** He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” **22** Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” **23** Jesus answered him, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. **25** “These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. **26** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. **28** You heard me say to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. **29** And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. **30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; **31** but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go hence.

Reflection

“Let not your hearts be troubled.”

“In my Father’s house are many rooms...”

“And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself...”

“I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.”

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you...”

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 12- JOHN CHAPTER 14 & 15

Some of the most comforting passages of scripture are found in the 14th chapter of John. They are not trite sayings, but rather the passionate words of a man facing death to his friends. When a person knows that they only have a short time to live, every moment counts. They do and say the things that matter most. In this mid-section of John, you have Jesus telling the disciples (and us) the most important things He wants them to know.

Study Questions

If you knew that you had a day to live, what would you most want to say to your loved ones?

What could you tell them now?

What are the comforting phrases from the 14th chapter of John that you hear Christ speaking to you today?

Closing Prayer

Merciful Christ,

Thank you for your tender mercies. Your love sustains my life. Give me courage to share how much my friends and family mean to me – and not risk leaving things unsaid. Help me to speak your message of love to those in need so they might be consoled by you.

Amen.

WEEK 12- JOHN CHAPTER 14 & 15

Prayer before Reading

Holy One,

I give this time to you. Change me through your message. Help me to grow through a deeper knowledge of You.

Amen.

John 15

1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **2** Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. **3** You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. **7** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. **8** By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. **9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** ”This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. **17** This I command you, to love one another. **18** “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. **19** If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. **20** Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. **21** But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** He who hates me hates my Father also. **24** If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. **25** It is to fulfil the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’ **26** But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; **27** and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.

Reflection

John 15:11 records the words of Jesus, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” Jesus was speaking to His disciples knowing that His time on earth was growing short. He wanted them to know that His joy involved them and He wanted their joy to be full. Then He proceeded to tell them the way to find joy:

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12-13

One of the secrets in life is that in serving, we are fulfilled. When we give of ourselves, we receive the most.

Study Questions

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 12- JOHN CHAPTER 14 & 15

In addition to Christ, who is someone that is an example of John 15:13 in your life?

What are ways you lay down your life for others?

When are moments that you have had incredible joy?

Closing Prayer

Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which you have given us, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us. Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day.

Amen. – Prayer of St. Richard

WEEK 13- JOHN CHAPTER 16 & 17

Prayer before Reading

Open my eyes, that I may see

glimpses of truth thou hast for me;

place in my hands the wonderful key

that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee,

ready, my God, thy will to see.

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine! (Clara H. Scott)

John 16

1 “I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. **2** They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. **3** And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me. **4** But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. **5** But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ **6** But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. **7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **8** And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: **9** concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; **10** concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; **11** concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. **12** “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. **14** He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. **15** All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. **16** “A little while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me.” **17** Some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” **18** They said, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he means.” **19** Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him; so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’? **20** Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. **21** When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world. **22** So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. **23** In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. **24** Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. **25** “I have said this to you in figures; the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father. **26** In that day you will ask in my name; and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; **27** for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father. **28** I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.” **29** His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure! **30** Now we know that you know all things, and need none to question you; by this we believe that you came from God.” **31** Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? **32** The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. **33** I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

WEEK 13- JOHN CHAPTER 16 & 17

Reflection

One of the most used and perhaps most misunderstood passages of scripture is found at John 16:23 where in the latter half of the verse Jesus says, "...whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you." Some have thought this phrase as a source of power, that you can ask God for anything and as long as you tack on the words "in Jesus name" to the request, God is bound to fulfill it. Obviously, Jesus did not treat His Heavenly Father as some sort of genie who had to honor His requests if He said the magic words – nor should we. The whole emphasis of the discourse of Jesus with His disciples at the Last Supper is about relationship. Jesus knew that His time on earth was coming to an end and that the disciples would face grief, fear, and confusion. One of the things that He wanted to convey to them was that even when they no longer saw Him, that they would not be alone. His death would not abandon them. He was sharing with them that the relationship that He had with them would continue and that the relationship He had with His Heavenly Father would be theirs as well. "Whatever you ask the Father in my name" is not about how to get your prayers answered but that they, like Christ, could have the confidence to approach God in prayer as He did.

Study Questions

Do you think that God hears your prayers?

How does that belief affect your prayer life?

Have there been times that you felt "unheard" in your prayers?

Do you remember times that you had an answered prayer?

Closing Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen. Peace Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

WEEK 13- JOHN CHAPTER 16 & 17

Prayer before Reading

Here and now, I give this time to you. My heart and mind are yours. Speak to me, O God.

John 17

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, **2** since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. **3** And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. **4** I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; **5** and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made. **6** “I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. **7** Now they know that everything that thou hast given me is from thee; **8** for I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me. **9** I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine; **10** all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. **11** And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. **12** While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. **13** But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. **14** I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **15** I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. **18** As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. **20** “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, **21** that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. **22** The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **23** I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. **24** Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. **25** O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. **26** I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Reflection

It is interesting to note that there are no verses regarding the birth of Jesus in the Gospel of John. There are 70 verses regarding His arrest and crucifixion, but there are 154 verses covering the evening of the Last Supper. Twice as much space given to the Last Supper as to the death of Christ.

What is it about that evening that the author of John felt was so important to communicate?

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 13- JOHN CHAPTER 16 & 17

Study Questions

If you were writing a biography about Christ, what portions of His life would get the most coverage?

If you were writing an autobiography, what portions of your life would get the most coverage and why?

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit,

Let my life tell the story of God's love for the world. In all my words, thoughts, and actions – let me share Your message.

Amen.

WEEK 14- JOHN CHAPTER 18 & 19

Prayer before Reading

Loving God,

Let your Word speak to me today. Breathe into me and fill me with your presence.

Amen.

John 18

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples across the Kidron valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. **2** Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with his disciples. **3** So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. **4** Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" **5** They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. **6** When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. **7** Again he asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." **8** Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he; so, if you seek me, let these men go." **9** This was to fulfil the word which he had spoken, "Of those whom thou gavest me I lost not one." **10** Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. **11** Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" **12** So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him. **13** First they led him to Annas; for he was the father-in-law of Ca'iaphas, who was high priest that year. **14** It was Ca'iaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. **15** Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. As this disciple was known to the high priest, he entered the court of the high priest along with Jesus, **16** while Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door, and brought Peter in. **17** The maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." **18** Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. **19** The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. **20** Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly. **21** Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said." **22** When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" **23** Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" **24** Annas then sent him bound to Ca'iaphas the high priest. **25** Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?" He denied it and said, "I am not." **26** One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" **27** Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed. **28** Then they led Jesus from the house of Ca'iaphas to the praetorium. It was early. They themselves did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. **29** So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" **30** They answered him, "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over." **31** Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." **32** This was to fulfil the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die. **33** Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" **34** Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" **35** Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" **36** Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world." **37** Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice." **38** Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again, and told them, "I find no crime in him. **39** But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover; will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?" **40** They cried out again, "Not this

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 14- JOHN CHAPTER 18 & 19

man, but Barab'bas!" Now Barab'bas was a robber.

Reflection

After the Last Supper, Jesus led His disciples across the Kidron Valley to a garden. From the accounts in the other gospels we know that this was the Garden of Gethsemane. It was an olive grove that was a place of prayer and Jesus often went there to pray. Judas knew this about Jesus and used it as the place to lead the officials to arrest Him.

Prayer was important to Jesus. In His greatest moments of need He cried out to His father. Jesus didn't hesitate to express His anguish and concern. If Christ needed to spend time in prayer, how much more so do we?

Study Questions

How much time do you spend in prayer each day?

What do you think that Christ gets out of our praying with Him?

Where and when do you feel most comfortable in prayer?

Closing Prayer

Loving God,

Thank you for all the ways that you meet me where I am. Throughout my life, in moments of joy and ones of loss – you have been there. Even when I felt alone, I wasn't. Remind me each and every day to make time to talk with you and to listen for your guidance.

Amen.

WEEK 14- JOHN CHAPTER 18 & 19

Prayer before Reading

Open my eyes,

Open my ears,

Open my heart,

Open my life to You.

Amen.

John 19

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. **2** And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; **3** they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. **4** Pilate went out again, and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him." **5** So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" **6** When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." **7** The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." **8** When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; **9** he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. **10** Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" **11** Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." **12** Upon this Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." **13** When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gab'batha. **14** Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" **15** They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." **16** Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. **17** So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Gol'gotha. **18** There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. **19** Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." **20** Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. **21** The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" **22** Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." **23** When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; **24** so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfil the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." **25** So the soldiers did this. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Mag'dalene. **26** When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" **27** Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. **28** After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the scripture), "I thirst." **29** A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. **30** When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **31** Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that

WEEK 14- JOHN CHAPTER 18 & 19

sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. **32** So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; **33** but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. **34** But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. **35** He who saw it has borne witness--his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth--that you also may believe. **36** For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." **37** And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." **38** After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. **39** Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. **40** They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. **41** Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. **42** So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Reflection

Many times in artwork you will see the sign on the cross read, "INRI". It is the representation of when Pilate told them to place a sign that said, "The King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek on the cross where Jesus was crucified. "INRI" is the first letter of the words, "Jesus Nazareth King of the Jews" in Latin: Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum.

The birth story of Jesus isn't included in the Gospel of John, but from the gospel of Matthew we are told of the wise men who went to King Herod and asked him where the King of the Jews was born. And so, from the moment He was born to His crucifixion we are told of His title, "King of the Jews."

Jesus was Jewish. He was born Jewish and He also practiced the traditions of the faith. It is important for us to remember that Jesus spoke, taught, and acted from a Jewish perspective. The more we learn about ancient Judaism, the more we understand the message of Christ.

Closing Prayer

Jesus,

You are our Savior, the Messiah. You are the One who is, who was, and who always will be. You have shown us the ultimate expression of love and we commit our lives to you. We worship you. We praise your holy Name. Let our lives be a pleasing sacrifice to you.

Amen.

WEEK 15- JOHN CHAPTER 20 & 21

Prayer before Reading

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

John 20

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Mag'dalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. **2** So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." **3** Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. **4** They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; **5** and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, **7** and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples went back to their homes. **11** But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; **12** and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. **13** They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." **14** Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." **16** Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rab-bo'ni!" (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." **18** Mary Mag'dalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. **19** On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." **20** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. **21** Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." **22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." **24** Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." **26** Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." **28** Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." **30** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection

Why was the stone rolled away from the tomb? Was it to release Jesus? Certainly the One who conquered death would not be trapped by a stone. The stone was rolled away to reveal the tomb was empty. Time and again God reveals things to us – if we only have eyes to see and ears to hear.

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WEEK 15- JOHN CHAPTER 20 & 21

Study Questions

Where in your life do you need the stone rolled away so that you might be better able to see the nature of Christ?

What worries/guilt/anger/busyness has obscured your sight from a greater vision of the glory of God?

Closing Prayer

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL
WEEK 15- JOHN CHAPTER 20 & 21

Prayer before Reading

Almighty God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

I worship you today.

I give you thanks for the gift of life and the beauty you have created in this world.

Reveal to me the mysteries that seem ever before me. Whisper your truth and let me hear.

Amen.

John 21

1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tibe'ri-as; and he revealed himself in this way. **2** Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathan'a-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zeb'edee, and two others of his disciples were together. **3** Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing. **4** Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5** Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." **6** He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish. **7** That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. **8** But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. **9** When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. **10** Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." **11** So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. **12** Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. **14** This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. **15** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." **16** A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." **17** He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. **18** Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." **19** (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me." **20** Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" **21** When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" **22** Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" **23** The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" **24** This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. **25** But there are also many other things which 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.

WEEK 15- JOHN CHAPTER 20 & 21

Reflection

After the Resurrection, Jesus would appear to the disciples. But we can't fault them for having trouble believing what would seem to be impossible to any of us. They returned to fishing. Perhaps they didn't know what else to do. Perhaps they were disillusioned. Perhaps they were afraid. But they returned to fishing and in this situation had not caught anything after fishing all night. Jesus appeared to them on the beach but they didn't recognize Him. When He told them to throw the nets on the other side of the boat, they caught more fish than they had ever caught before. The disciple John pointed out to Peter that the man on the beach was Jesus. As soon as he got dressed, Peter jumped into the sea to make his way to Him. Even though Peter still felt guilt over his denial of Jesus before the Crucifixion, his love and excitement couldn't be contained and he wouldn't wait – even though the text says the boat wasn't that far from shore. Yes, Peter made mistakes in his life, but his love for Christ continually brought him back.

Study Questions

What is preventing you from jumping in to get to Jesus as fast as you can?

How do you show your love for God?

What can you do next to deepen your relationship?

Closing Prayer

“I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.” Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

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NOTES

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS

Downtown Campus

8:30 AM- TRADITIONAL SERVICE | 9:40 AM- LIFELIGHT CONTEMPORARY SERVICE
10:50 AM TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Edmond Campus

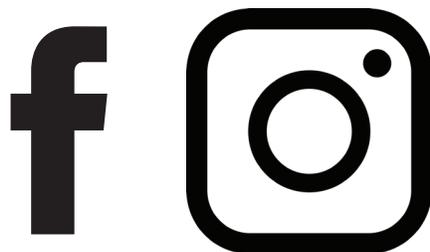
9:15 AM- LIFELIGHT CONTEMPORARY SERVICE | 11:00 AM TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Asbury Campus

10:40 AM TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Online

10:50 AM TRADITIONAL SERVICE, LIVE STREAMING FROM DOWNTOWN CAMPUS



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THROUGHOUT THE WEEK!**

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