

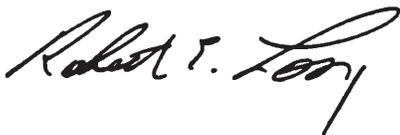
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN | A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 6: JOHN 6

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.



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 fulness 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 thing

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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-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?

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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.