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An Invitation to Meet Jesus in the Gospel of John

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## Introduction: A Note from Pastor Bill Yaccino

about what to look for in this Gospel...

People did crazy things when they met Jesus! Whenever people crossed paths with Jesus, the encounter always had a sudden impact. Tax collectors gave money to the poor. Prostitutes changed careers and became faithful to only him. Children sat on his lap and danced and sang. Paraplegics walked home to see their families. Blind men saw beautiful sunsets. People sat for hours hanging on his every word. Roman soldiers asked him for favors. One person spent a year's wages to buy perfume to spill on his feet. Some religious leaders worshiped him as God. Others became his murderers. After his death, his followers refused to deny him – even though it meant they would be tortured and killed.

## What made people so devoted to Jesus? You are about to embark on an adventure to decide for yourself!

As you observe Jesus interacting in all kinds of situations, you'll also find answers and hope for change in your own life. You'll learn the spiritual secrets Jesus revealed on a dark night on the side of a mountain. You'll discover how you can experience the healing power of Jesus. You'll find the keys to experiencing life beyond the grave. And, hopefully, you too will laugh with Jesus, learn from him, and stand in awe of his power. Most of all, you'll discover why he's considered to be the most compelling figure in the history of the world! Perhaps after encountering him for yourself, you'll do some of the crazy things too! So... we invite you to COME & SEE!

### My Encounter with the Gospel of John

During my early college years at Purdue University, I ran into a group of Christians that were pretty excited about their faith. Almost immediately after meeting them, they asked, "Have you ever read the Gospel of John?" I learned that this group and others around the world commonly gave John's letter to new believers and seekers as the best way to examine the foundations of the Christian faith and explore who Jesus was and what he came to accomplish.

On one hand, John is perfect for the newbie because it paints a simple picture of Jesus for the common person. On the other hand, especially after this most recent dive into John's masterpiece, I am convinced it is a book that keeps morphing in the soul of Jesus followers and endlessly challenges the wise. In other words, this river keeps getting deeper and deeper! Of all the gospel letters, John is the most Christocentric (Christology), that is, when we read it, the person and promises of Jesus Christ seem more immediate and available. The invitation to "follow me" is clear.

Our aim with this Lent 2022 devotional is to provide an opportunity for you to immerse yourself, alone or in the company of others, in the life of Jesus and thereby become better acquainted with the One who was in the beginning, the One who is with us, and the One who will never leave us of forsake us. Are you curious about how to experience "eternal life" here and now? Then COME & SEE—Jesus is waiting to have an encounter with you!



Walking with Jesus, Pastor Bill

### What is Come & See?

It is a fresh way for us to discover God through His Word and prayer as we seek to grow in Christ and become more like Him. Through this experience, we believe God will meet us in amazing ways. Over the 42 days of Lent 2022, we will walk together through the entire story of the ministry of Jesus, as it is told by John. Each day's guide is broken into three sections:

- THE GOOD NEWS For your convenience, we've included the text of the story in the New Living Translation (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996). We've found this translation helps us understand the story in a relevant way and helps us enter the story ourselves. As you read the passage, try to read it from the perspective of the disciples and the other people who interact with Jesus. What is it like to go through this experience with Jesus?
- DIGGING DEEPER This section briefly explores aspects of the day's story that might be especially interesting or potentially confusing. It offers some historical notes and references that might help to interpret the story, frames some of the issues or questions addressed, and gives suggestions of ways to look at the story and what it might mean for us.
- COME & SEE In this section, we offer some suggestions for how the day's reading might apply to you (My Life), to your 3 (My 3), and to NorthBridge (My Church).

### What does it look like to participate in Come & See?

Come & See is designed to help us experience a revitalization of our faith and our hope in the God who loves us, who laid down His life for us, and who wants us to look to Him for direction, purpose and fullness in life. Over the next 6 weeks, 3 concrete steps will be at the heart of Come & See:

### STEP 1: ASK GOD TO MOVE IN MY LIFE

A lot of what you are hoping for in life can't happen unless God first transforms you from the inside out! You will have the opportunity to ask God to shape your thinking and your living to reflect his work in your life. When you learn how to seek God first and have the courage to follow his voice, he not only gives you great gifts (wisdom, discernment, provisions, peace, direction, etc.), he fills the gifts with joy and encouragement. So why not take these six weeks and ask God to move in a fresh way in your life?

### STEP 2: PRAY THAT GOD MOVES IN MY 3

All of us know at least 3 people that we'd love to see experience Jesus' goodness in their lives in ways that they haven't experienced thus far. Who wouldn't want to see Jesus bless 3 of their friends or family? Here are some suggestions to step deeper into this part of Come & See – this is where it gets rich and sometimes risky! Ask Jesus to reveal himself to these great folks. Ask him to concretely bless them in such a way that they would recognize God's goodness and presence in their lives. During this time, why not ask God to show you ways He can use you to be a blessing to them?

- Initiate social time with one of your 3
- Ask one of your 3 for prayer requests and/or pray with them in person
- Tell a story about how Jesus has blessed you
- Invite them to weekend service or to discuss the service afterwards

Take a few minutes and talk to God about who your 3 could be. Write their names below. Maybe only a couple names come to mind right now, but keep praying about who you could add to complete My 3, then come back and add their names here:

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### STEP 3: PRAY THAT GOD MOVES IN MY CHURCH

We are convinced that God has significant plans for us as a church. We'd like to see God help us love thousands of people in our community and around the world who feel far from God and who otherwise would have no access to his love and grace. We are praying God will bring people into our community who never thought they had a seat at the table, and who long to find a place to belong. We want God to continue building us into the kind of church that our neighbors are thankful for. We want to love the poor at an entirely new level. We are praying for an unprecedented number of people to invest more of their time, talents, and treasure here at NorthBridge Church, and that God will make us increasingly generous people. So... will you pray for NorthBridge Church each day during Come & See? Steps for you may look like: committing to a deeper level of involvement or service or giving over and above what you currently give (with a joyful heart). What step(s) is God calling you to take in regard to you being a part of the NorthBridge family? Journal these things as you make your way through Come & See!

### SUMMARY - Goals for YOU during Come & See:

- That you grow spiritually and experience deeper joy as you see God at work all around you.
- That you see some of your friends and family experience God in new ways. Specifically, we
  are asking you to identify THREE friends, neighbors, or family members that you want to see
  experience God during this season. We are calling this group "MY 3" –the three special people you
  will be praying for over the next six weeks.
- That you dive deeper into what God is doing here at NorthBridge.

### SUMMARY - Goals for NorthBridge during Come & See:

- That we come to a new level of making disciples who make disciples.
- That we come to a new level of loving others in our community.
- That more people who attend NorthBridge (in-person or online) will become deeply involved in our mission.

### AT A GLANCE

### What about the Author?

Over the next 42 days, we will walk through the story of Jesus' ministry as it was told by the Apostle John, also known as John the son of Zebedee. John 21:20-24 bears proof that John, 'the disciple Jesus loved', was the disciple "who has written these things". John is also credited with writing Revelation and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John making him the second most prolific writer of the New Testament.

He was one of Jesus' closest followers and a member of the twelve original disciples. He had a front row seat to the intimate life and discussions of Jesus for over 3 years. Therefore, when reading this story we get the first-hand record from someone who knew the land, customs, and culture of the setting as well as the interests, thoughts, conflicts and hopes of the original disciples.

### When was John written?

John probably wrote this book later in his life while still active in ministry. Much of the way the book is written, a fresh perspective on familiar stories, implies that John was involved with the second-generation church. There is evidence (such as the lack of the mention of the Sadducees, who ceased to be a religious sect after A.D. 70) to suggest he authored the book after the destruction of the Jewish temple in A.D. 70. A few early church fathers suggest a date close to A.D. 90. If this date is accurate, this gospel account would be the last of the four written, providing more context for its unique style.

### Who was John written to?

Several internal clues, such as explaining and interpreting Jewish customs, names, and sites, indicate that John wrote this book to a non-Jewish audience living outside Palestine. Yet he still expounded on important Jewish and Old Testament foundations suggesting his faithful commitment to a Jewish audience.

The structure and themes covered hint that John intended both new believers, who needed confirmation in their growing faith, and the unconverted to read his writing. In other words, John wrote this account for a mixed community that represented a large portion of society. It is believed, based on early accounts and tradition, that John penned this book from Ephesus, modern day Turkey, an important bustling center of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor. Therefore, his original audience was made up of both Jew and Gentile, living during the turn of the first century in the Greco-Roman world.

### What was the main purpose of John?

Almost half the book is dedicated to the last few days of the Jesus' earthly ministry. It might seem obvious then to conclude that these moments are of extreme importance to why John was telling his version of the story. In these chapters, John retells important teachings and thoughts that Jesus imparted to His disciples just before enduring the cross. In other words, he shared the 'inside conversation and instruction' between a teacher and his students that nobody else has told.

John also explains plainly in chapter twenty verse thirty-one his purpose for writing. He desired to tell the story of Jesus so people would believe that Jesus is the son of God, the Christ, and through knowing Him, could find eternal life.

### Are there some key themes highlighted by John?

While much of the writing of John is framed in theologically charged private discourse, a handful of themes become obvious.

First, Jesus was the incarnation of the perfect eternal God. John establishes this fact early in 1:1-2 and carries it all the way through the book to 20:28-31. The titles Son of God and Messiah are used frequently to establish his deity as well as the prolific use of the 'I am' statements sprinkled throughout (4:26, 6:20, 6:35, 8:12, 8:24, 9:5, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1, 18:5).

A second theme established is Jesus as the atonement for our sins. The first section of the book is peppered with exclamations similar to 1:29 where John the Baptist proclaims "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

A third prominent theme is Jesus as the giver of eternal life, also referred to as a "rich and satisfying life" (11:25-26). Eternal life is a gift given by Jesus (3:15-16, 10:10) to those who believe, obey and follow him (3:36, 5:24, 20:31).

Lastly, the theme of belief is a major subject discussed in this book. Belief is punctuated through the use of many illustrations of physical activities such as: receiving or accepting (1:12), following (1:40), drinking (4:10-14, 7:37-38), responding (4:51), eating the bread of life (6:35, 47-48) and his flesh (6:53-54), walking (8:12), worship (9:38), remaining or abiding (15:7). John portrays belief as an active response to the person of Jesus while often showing both the method and result of one's faith.

### What is unique about the Gospel of John?

John is different than the other three gospels in several ways. One of these differences is that Jesus more often teaches through encounters with specific people and groups. Compared to Matthew, Mark and Luke, these encounters are often longer and/or more detailed.

John is masterful storyteller, and this account is full of symbolism. He uses items in the physical world as reference points to get to Jesus. Light, bread, water, door, wind, and many other items are employed to both capture our imagination and ground our wonder to everyday objects or references. He often uses items in the extreme contrast to highlight his meaning (e.g., love vs. hate; disease vs. health; life vs. death, light vs. darkness).

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John intentionally uses seven 'signs' that Jesus preforms to punctuate his identity as the Messiah:

- 1. Turning water into wine 2:1-11
- Healing the official's son 4:46-54
- 3. Pool healing 5:1-17
- Feeding five thousand 6:1-13
- Walking on water 6:16-21
- Healing a blind man 9:1-7
- Resurrection of Lazarus 11:1-44



Scan this QR code to easily access a video introduction to John 1-12 by The Bible Project



Scan this QR code to easily access a video introduction to John 13-21 by The Bible Project

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## Daily Reading Schedule

Bolded dates indicate group discussion guides (available at www.northbridgechurch.org/comeandsee)

WEEK ONE

Monday, March 7: John 1:1-18—The Word Becomes Flesh Tuesday, March 8: John 1:19-34—John the Baptist Points to Jesus Wednesday, March 9: John 1:35-51—Jesus Calls His First Disciples Thursday, March 10: John 2:1–12 – Jesus Turns Water into Wine Friday, March 11: John 2:13-25 - Jesus Clears Out the Temple Court Saturday, March 12: John 3:1-2—Jesus and the Confused Professor Sunday, March 13: John 3:22–36—John the Baptist Points to Jesus (Again)

WEEK TWO Monday, March 14: John 4:1-27 – Jesus Talks with a Desperate Woman Tuesday, March 15: John 4: 28-42 - Many Samaritans Believe Wednesday, March 16: John 4:43-54—Jesus Heals the Official's Son Thursday, March 17: John 5:1-18—The Healing at the Pool

Friday, March 18: John 5:19–47 – Testimonies About Jesus Saturday, March 19: John 6:1–21 – Jesus Feeds 5K AND Walks on Water

Sunday, March 20: John 6:22-40 - Jesus is the Bread of Life

WEEK

Monday, March 21: John 6:41-71 - Many Disciples Desert Jesus Tuesday, March 22: John 7:1-24—Jesus Teaches at the Feast THREE Wednesday, March 23: John 7:25-53—Division & Unbelief Thursday, March 24: John 8:1-20—Throwing Stones & Missing God

Friday, March 25: John 8:21-41—The Truth Will Set You Free Saturday, March 26: John 8:42-59—Jesus' Claims About Himself

Sunday, March 27: John 9:1-17—A Lifelong Blind Man is Transformed

WEEK *FOUR*  Monday, March 28: John 9:18-41 - Spiritual Blindness Tuesday, March 29: John 10:1–21 – Jesus is the Good Shepherd Wednesday, March 30: John 10:22-42 - Yet More Conflict

Thursday, March 31: John 11:1-16—Jesus Interacts with a Grieving Family Friday, April 1: John 11:17-44 - Lazarus Raised from the Dead

Saturday, April 2: John 11:45–12:11 — Plots and Adoration Sunday, April 3: John 12:12-33 - Jesus' Big Entry & Prediction

WFFK **FIVF**  Monday, April 4: John 12:34-50 — Belief & Unbelief Tuesday, April 5: John 13:1-20 - Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet Wednesday, April 6: John 13:21-14:-7 - Betrayals, Predictions & Comfort Thursday, April 7: John 14:8–31 – Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit & Peace

Friday, April 8: John 15:1–27—The Vine & Branches Saturday, April 9: John 16:1-33—The Spirit, Joy & Peace Sunday, April 10: John 17: 1-26-Jesus Prays for Himself & Us

WEEK SIX Monday, April 11 John 18:1-14—Jesus is Arrested Tuesday, April 12: John 18:15–27 – Peter Denies Jesus Wednesday, April 13: John 18:28-40-Pilate Questions Jesus Thursday, April 14: John 19:1–16 – Jesus is Tortured & Sentenced Friday, April 15: John 19:16-42 - Jesus is Crucified and Buried

Saturday, April 16: John 20:1–31 – Jesus Appears to a Demanding Sceptic

Sunday, April 17: John 21:1-25 - Fish Fry & Peter Reinstated

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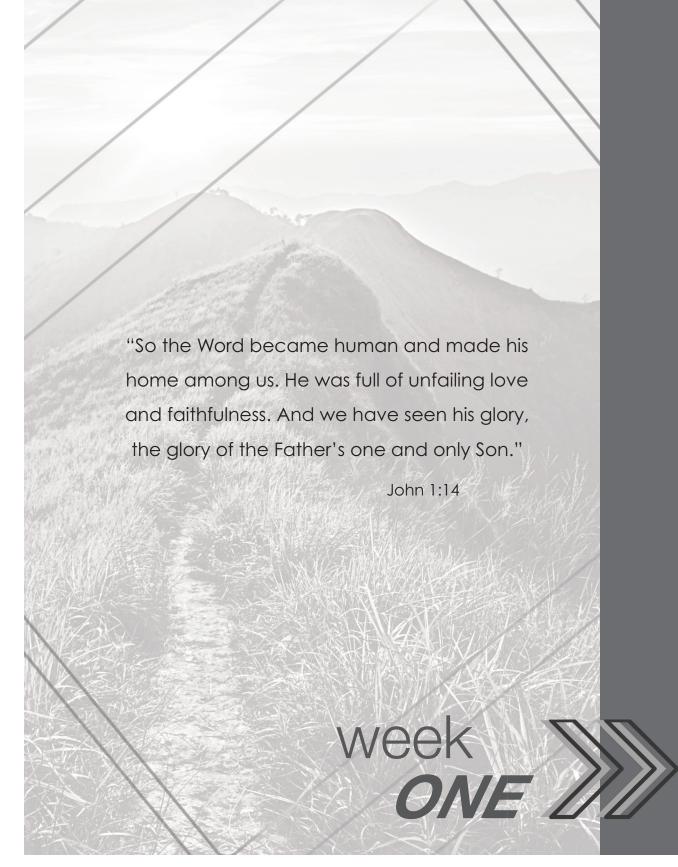
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### Spiritual Practice of the Week:

### **WORSHIP AND PRAISE**

As you read the devotional guide this week, begin or end your time by thanking God for your day. Make a list of good things about your day. Continue adding to your list throughout the week. You might also start or end your time by singing or listening to a worship song.

For your group or family, begin or end your time by thanking God for your day. Have each member speak out at least one good thing about their day. But don't feel limited to just one thing. Feel free to go crazy! See just how long you can make your lists. Alternately, you might start or end your time by singing a worship song together. Briefly discuss what you liked and what you might not have liked about this particular spiritual practice.



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# Monday, March 7 John 1:1–18 — The Word Becomes Flesh



### THE GOOD NEWS

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'" From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.



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- 'In the beginning'—John starts his gospel with the same words as the Bible itself (Genesis 1:1). Interestingly, the first words of the Gospel of Mark are also 'The beginning,' but Mark's beginning is Jesus' baptism in his adulthood. Matthew and Luke go farther back than Mark; they start their stories with Jesus' birth. John, however, goes all the way back, to the beginning of the world. Imagine John reading Mark's 'The Beginning,' and exclaiming, 'My friend, the story goes back way farther than that!'
- 'The Word already existed'—Genesis starts, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.' John eventually gets there, but first he introduces a character unknown to Genesis, the Word. In Genesis, God speaks and creation begins. John, however, personifies those words. The words are so much a part of God that they are, in fact, God. The Word seems to be what turns God's intentions into reality. John may be borrowing from one or two places as he describes this Word of God. First of all, he speaks of the Word in terms very similar to how the writer of the biblical book of Proverbs describes Lady Wisdom:

By wisdom the LORD founded the earth; by understanding he created the heavens (Proverbs 3:19).

So, in Jewish biblical terms, the Word is God's wisdom, or at least plays the same role. Secondly, John may be referencing Greek philosophy. The Greek word used here for 'Word' is logos. While on the one hand simply meaning, 'word,' it had also been adopted as a Greek philosophical term meaning 'that which gives shape, form, or life to the material universe' (Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992. 'Logos'). If John is intentionally evoking both Proverbs and Greek philosophy, he seems to be saying that no matter who you are, Jew or Greek (the two people groups into whom he would mostly have divided the world), this Word is the one you would think of as having started it all.

- 'John the Baptist'—This is not the same person as John the author. Though the author John is fairly
  disinterested in telling us so, John the Baptist is Jesus' cousin. He's famous for being a sort of
  throwback to the prophets of the old days. He hears from God and speaks for God in a way no one
  has for hundreds of years.
- 'not with a physical birth'—John is describing a second work of the Word. The same one who got
  the very universe started is now offering people the chance to re-start their lives. This time around,
  the Word's work is spiritual, not physical.
- 'the Word became human and made his home among us'—Today's passage is a preview for us
  of John's whole story. And here it is in a nutshell: 'I'm telling you the story about when God's very
  Word became one of us.'



My Life As we start reading an entire book about Jesus, take a moment to think about him. What thoughts and feelings come to mind? Journal those thoughts. In this passage, John gives a handful of descriptions of Jesus: the Word, the light, the Son, etc. Can you relate to any of these? There seems to be an endless number of ways to experience Jesus. Make a list of ways you would describe Jesus.

**Family/Household Option:** Together, make a list of ways you would describe Jesus. Consider sharing a story or two that goes along with one of your additions to the list.

My 3 John paints a picture of Jesus coming to us right where we are, in a form we should be able to recognize. Pray that Jesus would indeed show himself to your 3 in a way they can relate to. Pray that your 3 would find him tangible, real, and nearby.

My Church One thing John makes sure to repeat in this passage is that Jesus is full of unfailing love and faithfulness. It's hard to entirely wrap our minds around what true unfailing love and faithfulness

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### Tuesday, March 8

John 1:19-34 — John the Baptist Points to Jesus



### THE GOOD NEWS

This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?"

He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

"Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?"

"No." he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"

"No."

"Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"

John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the LORD 's comina!"

Then the Pharisees who had been sent asked him, "If you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?"

John told them, "I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal." This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel." Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God."



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### DIG DEEPER

- 'I am not the Messiah' The Messiah is God's special agent, who is supposed to repair everything that is wrong with the world. By the time of John the Baptist, the Jewish people have been waiting for hundreds of years for this Messiah to come and do his work.
- 'Are you Elijah?' Elijah was perhaps the flashiest of the Israelite prophets. He was famous for his spectacular miracles, and his exit, which was one of the most dramatic ever! He didn't exactly die. Instead, he hopped on to a flaming chariot and was carried away to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). A later prophet said that Elijah would come back again before the time of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5). If John the Baptist isn't the Messiah, they wonder if perhaps he is the second coming of Elijah, and therefore a sort of high-quality warm-up act for the Messiah.
- 'Are you the Prophet?' Before Moses died, he promised that God would send another prophet just like him so that the people would not be left stranded (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). This promise was, to a degree, fulfilled immediately when Joshua, Moses' protégé, succeeded Moses. But from early on, it was also taken as a prophecy with more cosmic implications, the idea being that Moses was a mere foreshadowing of an even bigger and better Prophet to come. If John the Baptist isn't Elijah, they wonder if he could be this Prophet (IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

- 'the pharisees who had been sent'—The pharisees are one of the two dominant politico-religious parties in roman judea. They are known for their expertise in the law. It's unclear whether this entire delegation from jerusalem consists of pharisees, or if it's a multi-party group, but only the pharisees among them have the guestion.
- 'The lamb of god'—John the baptist is probably referring to the passover lamb. In the time of moses, the israelites were slaves in egypt. God rescued them by inflicting the egyptians with increasingly severe punishments until they finally agreed to let the israelites go. On the night of the last plague, god sent an angel to kill the oldest child in every egyptian house. The sign that a house was israelite instead of egyptian was some lamb's blood sprinkled on the door frame; whenever the angel saw the lamb's blood, that house was spared, or passed over (exodus 12:1-13).
- As the word, Jesus is bringing about a new kind of creation. As the lamb of god, he is performing a new rescue.
- 'who takes away the sin of the world'—It's intriguing that singular 'sin' here is used, not 'sins.' Jesus isn't so much focused on some endless list of immoral actions that have been performed; he's concerned with one particular way we tend to get off track. I wonder if this 'sin of the world' has anything to do with what john says in yesterday's passage about the world not recognizing the light (1: 10). We have a hard time recognizing and pointing ourselves toward what would make our lives better. Jesus came to take care of that problem.
- 'the one who will baptize with the holy spirit'—While meaningful in its way, john the baptist's baptism is, in a way, play-acting when compared to the work of the one who follows after him. John's baptism is in water, one of the world's most ordinary substances. Jesus will instead be baptizing people in the very essence of god. That's no small upgrade.



My Life Don't you love how confidently John knows his purpose in the world? Wouldn't it be great to have that type of assurance? Is there a situation in your life right now in which you're not quite sure what your role is supposed to be? Maybe a project at work? A friend in need of help? Take a moment to ask God to show you what God would like your role to be. Pray that you would have John's sense of confidence as you continue to be involved.

My 3 It seems like John knows how to respond to Jesus because God had revealed to him ahead of time things about Jesus he couldn't have known otherwise. Pray that God would reveal Jesus to your 3 in specific ways.

My Church While John knows that he gets to play a key part in the exciting things Jesus is about to do on earth, he also has to spend a good deal of time simply waiting or just plugging away at the day to day of his life. Ask God to help our church to do both of these things well: earnestly believe for big promises from God, while also faithfully and joyfully living out the everyday routine of our lives.

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### Wednesday, March 9

John 1: 35-51 - Jesus Calls His First Disciples



### THE GOOD NEWS

The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!"

When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them.

They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

"Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"). Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus.

Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter").

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me."

Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

"Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel – a man of complete integrity."

"How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."

Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God-the King of Israel!"

Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth."

## DIG DEEPER

- 'When John's two disciples heard this, 'they followed Jesus'—Yesterday, John the Baptist made a general pronouncement of the coming Messiah. Today, he is more direct as he sees Jesus walk by. It's as if he says, 'You guys might be interested to know that he (pointing to Jesus) is the Lamb of God!' Apparently, his direct approach worked! The two disciples left John the Baptist and followed after Jesus. Disciple means, 'follower.' It was the term used for someone who was being trained under a particular teacher. It was similar to what we might know as an 'intern' or 'apprentice.' These two are essentially transferring schools to study with a different professor.
- 'We have found the Messiah (which means "Christ")'—As mentioned earlier, the Messiah is God's Special Agent in the world. Various Old Testament prophets spoke of some servant of God who would come along and fulfill people's deepest longings or accomplish the impossible or finish the work that God had started. Later readers figured out that all of these different servant prophecies were actually describing the same person, whom they gave the title the Messiah. Christ is just Greek for 'Messiah.' Apparently, John's audience is mostly Greek speaking; so he translates the Hebrew

- 'you will be called Cephas'—Cephas and Peter mean 'Rock' in Aramaic and Greek respectively.

  Jesus boldly gives Simon a new name the very first time they meet. Jesus looks at Simon, and he doesn't just see Simon as he is now; he sees clearly into Simon's future.
- 'Can anything good come from Nazareth?'—As far as we know, Nazareth is a perfectly respectable, but small, unimportant, and forgettable town (IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament)
- 'and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway'—From now on, there will be frequent traffic between heaven and earth. 'Son of Man,' by the way will become a favorite title Jesus has for himself. It's a bit like John the Baptist calling himself 'a voice in the wilderness,' unassuming and at the same time full of prophetic import. It also evokes a famous picture of the Messiah:

As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)



My Life The disciples followed Jesus because he was what they had been looking for. Jesus called them to "come and see," thus extending an invitation for them to experience him firsthand. As we start Come & See, take some time to think about how you would like to experience Jesus firsthand. Write down a few of those ways and spend a couple minutes talking to Jesus about becoming more connected and intimate with Him.

Family/Household Option: Share with your family (or friends) what you're looking for from Jesus. Pray together that you would each experience Jesus firsthand for yourself

My 3 Each time a disciple meets Jesus, the first thing they do is tell their friends about what just happened. It seems natural to share good things in our lives. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why we post things on Facebook, and why we 'like' other peoples' posts. First of all, pray that God would do good things for your 3. Pray they would want to share about it. Secondly, ask God for a chance to share genuinely with each of your 3 something good God has done for you recently.

My Church Don't you love how instantly and intimately Jesus knows his disciples? He gives them new names and knows exactly where they were before they met. Ask God to make our church a place

where people feel instantly and intimately known—both by God himself and by other people.					

term for them.

Come&See.indd 7-8

# Thursday, March 10 John 2:1–12–Jesus Turns Water Into Wine



### THE GOOD NEWS

The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

"Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.



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### DIG DEEPER

- 'The wine supply ran out during the festivities'—This, as you might imagine, would be quite an embarrassing failure on the part of the hosts. In all likelihood, it was a very real possibility that the party would have come to a premature end.
- 'Dear woman, that's not our problem'—Mary has an inkling that Jesus could do something about
  the situation. Jesus doesn't disagree, but at least for the time being, he is trying to mind his own
  business. Filling the role of a wedding coordinating wasn't his mission! Loving people and meeting
  their needs through gifts of grace is!
- 'Do whatever he tells you'—There's something charmingly domestic about the way Mary simply ignores Jesus' hesitation. Jesus may be the eternal Word, the Lamb of God, the Holy Escalator between heaven and earth, but he's also the son of a mother who is unwilling to take, 'No,' for an answer when she asks her boy for something. It puts the humanity of Jeus in full view.
- 'you have kept the best until now'—What could have been a humiliating experience of trying to economize just a little too much on the cost of the wedding ends up looking like extravagance instead. When the guests are too tipsy to care, the host brings out the good stuff. A great example of Jesus redeeming our 'mistakes' or 'misses'.
- 'the first time Jesus revealed his glory'—Jesus spends his first miracle on saving a family friend from embarrassment. I find it extraordinarily kind. It is reminiscent of when Moses wanted to see God. 'Show me your glory,' Moses asked. 'I will make all my goodness pass before you,' God responded (Exodus 33:19). As far as God is concerned, God's glory is God's goodness. 'God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ' (John 1:17).
- 'his disciples believed in him'—None of the other guests even know what happened, but the disciples get a private glimpse of just how special the person they are following is.



My Life The situation at the wedding looks pretty bad, and the servant doesn't know how it will turn out. All he knows is that he is asked to fill six big jars with water and take some of the water to the master of ceremonies. Without knowing the result, he does what he is asked, and somewhere along the way, the water turns into wine. Everything works out! Is there any situation in your life where things are looking bleak? Ask God to give you faith that, despite how it looks, things could work out for the good. Is there anything God is asking you to do or act on that requires this type of faith?

Family/Household Option: Talk about the situation you identified and what possible action God may be asking from you.

My 3 One of the results of Jesus' behind the scenes miracle is that the bridegroom receives abundant honor instead of shame. Ask God to honor your 3 today. Pray that God would honor them in front of their family, friends, and coworkers. Ask God if there is a way that you could show honor to your 3.

My Church Jesus' first miracle meets a very practical need. Jesus is willing to give attention to something that might seem trivial. Pray today for the practical needs of our own church, all the somewhat basic things that we need to operate. Also, pray for the practical needs of all the people in our church community. Ask God to abundantly provide for even the most basic of things.

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Come&See.indd 9-10 2/9/22 8:21 AM

### Friday, March 11 John 2:13-25 - Jesus Clears Out the Temple Court



### THE GOOD NEWS

It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume

But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

"All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

"What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?"

But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people. No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart.

## DIG DEEPER

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- 'so Jesus went to Jerusalem' Properly speaking, every Jew was supposed to travel to Jerusalem each year to celebrate the Passover holiday (Deuteronomy 16:5). In reality, attendance was by no means perfect. It seems that from the very beginning, Passover observance could become a bit lax (Nehemiah 8:17). By Jesus' time, the Jewish people were so numerous and so far flung that it was simply impossible for all of them to gather in Jerusalem every year. Nonetheless, spending Passover in Jerusalem was considered especially blessed.
- 'exchanging foreign money' Imprinted as they were with pictures of foreign gods, normal coins were not allowed in the temple. Before they could be offered or spent in the temple, they would have to be exchanged - for a fee - for the special, religiously approved temple currency.
- 'in three days I will raise it up'-It's verses like this that lead scholars to believe that John is aware of the other gospels, and even assumes knowledge of them among his readership. The other gospels slowly build toward a dramatic climax in Jesus' death and resurrection. John suddenly, and rather poetically, refers to Jesus' death in chapter 2. Jesus' death and resurrection are not surprise plot twists in John's story; they're the backdrop against which the entire story takes place.
- 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple'—In fact, the temple still wasn't quite finished. Herod the Great, a terribly unpopular usurper, began major renovations on what had been a rather modest building in order to gain some favor with the people (after having just killed off the entire royal family and taken the throne for himself). Continuing long after Herod's death, the project transformed the

- 'he meant his own body'-The temple is essentially the physical manifestation of God's presence among God's people. In that case, Jesus himself is a far better temple than a pile of stones funded by a bloody tyrant and filled with profiteers.
- 'after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said'-Many teachings of Jesus had a hidden context for understanding. It wasn't until later when the full context for His teaching had arrived, his death and burial, that the disciples understood what He meant. Jesus knew this and therefore had grace and patience on His disciples. He even eluded to it in John 14:26 'he (Holy Spirit) will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you'.
- 'Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him'—His displayed power and glory garnered trust from some people. This was a trust however that could not be built upon. It was a selfish trust because it relied on what made the immediate situation or surroundings 'better' and not on a relationship with the Almighty God.
- 'Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature' Everybody enjoys a good fight, and everyone loves an underdog. So the people are entertained by Jesus' face-off with the temple officials. But Jesus is not under any illusion that they are in some fundamental way on his side.



My Life Far from being impressed by the Jewish leaders' dedication to the temple, Jesus is actually infuriated by how it has driven them and others away from God. Take some time today thinking about the things in your life you have worked the hardest at or invested the most in. What is it that you're pouring your time and resources into? Take some time to ask God what he thinks about that. Have you been spending your energies in the right direction? Has your big dream at all gotten in the way of you simply drawing closer to God?

My 3 Ask your 3 what their experiences of church or places of worship have been like? Did they have good experiences? Bad? Are they, like Jesus at the temple, infuriated by hypocrisy they've seen? If past experiences of churches or places of worship are hindering your 3 from connecting with God, ask God to heal those hurts. Pray that your 3 would find a place or community—maybe it's a church, or maybe it's not-where they could easily connect with God.

MY Church Most of us think we've greatly advanced since the days of the den-of-robbers temple described here. However, don't you wonder if what's described here is indicative of the natural tendency of any place of worship to somehow lose focus? All sorts of clutter builds up and gets in the way of people experiencing God. Ask God to protect our church from that tendency. Ask God to remove any barriers that we have created ourselves, and ask God to make our church a place where people can easily come and experience God without distraction.

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temple into one of the more impressive buildings in the entire Roman empire. But all of that is beside the point Jesus is trying to make.

2/9/22 8:21 AM Come&See.indd 11-12

### Saturday, March 12 John 3:1–21—Nicodemus is Taught by Jesus



### THE GOOD NEWS

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

## DIG DEEPER

- 'After dark one evening'—Nicodemus is curious enough about Jesus to seek him out, but embarrassed enough that he doesn't want to be seen.
- 'unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God'—Nicodemus might have expected gratitude or relief from Jesus: 'Thank you. It's good to know that some of you religious leaders are on my side.' Instead, he either gets complimented on his good taste or insulted on his ignorance. Either way, it throws the conversation into some confusion.
- 'How can an old man go back into his mother's womb'—We'll notice in John's Gospel a certain tendency for Jesus and other people to talk past one another. Jesus will use a spiritual metaphor, and the other person— either out of genuine misunderstanding or willful misrepresentation—will take him literally.
- 'you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from'—Nicodemus wants it all locked down. What exactly is being born of the Spirit? What's the step-by-step process by which it is accomplished? What's the checklist by which you know whether or not someone is born of the Spirit or not? He wants it all laid out, clearly defined, in black and white. Jesus replies that this new birth is

more like the wind. Nobody knows exactly what wind is or where it comes from. You can't capture the wind in a bottle. And yet everyone knows that wind exists, and everyone can feel it when it blows. What is this being born again? Well, you know it when you experience it.

- 'as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness'—When the Israelites in the desert were plagued by poisonous snakes, God commanded Moses to sculpt a bronze snake and lift it up on a pole; whoever looked up at the bronze snake was unharmed by the poison (Numbers 21:8-9). Moses, with the help of the law, brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and to a new land of their own. Jesus, with the help of the Spirit, is leading people out of slavery to sin and into eternal life.
- 'people loved the darkness more than the light'—It's like there's been a power outage, and Jesus has gotten the electricity working again. When the lights go back on, a surprising number of people, instead of cheering, scramble to hide what they've been doing in the dark. Jesus seems to be saying here that he doesn't care so much about what people were doing when the lights were off; he's simply there to turn the lights on.



My Life Jesus tells Nicodemus that he can try as hard as he wants to understand and be close to God, but in the end, it won't really matter at all unless Nicodemus receives the Holy Spirit. Tell God that you want more of God's presence and as much of the Holy Spirit as you can have. If there are any situations right now that you just can't seem to make better on your own, ask God for more of the Holy Spirit's help there.

My 3 In this passage, Jesus talks about the strange attachment we can sometimes have to the dark parts of our life. Do you see in any of your 3 a tendency to stay entrenched in things that clearly aren't working out well for them? Pray that they would have the courage to leave those things behind and step into a new light-filled life.

My Church Ask God to help our church be one that truly conveys just how much God loves the

for our church to somehow play a part in tangibly loving the whole world.

world. Pray that our church would be able to grasp this love and that we would be able to convey it. Pray

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2/9/22 8:21 AM

### Sunday, March 13

John 3:22-36 — John the Baptist Points to Jesus (Again)



### THE GOOD NEWS

Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people.

At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. (This was before John was thrown into prison.)

A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

"He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."



### DIG DEEPER

- 'Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people'—We've seen Jesus at work in his home
  in Galilee, and in the capital Jerusalem. Now he moves on to the major center of Jewish population,
  the less urban parts of Judea.
- 'You yourselves know how plainly I told you'—As far as John is concerned, the fact that people are
  leaving him to follow Jesus is no reason for alarm. In fact, it's a sign of success. All he has ever tried
  to do is introduce people to Jesus.
- 'how few believe what he tells them' Far from being disappointed at how many people are abandoning him for Jesus, John the Baptist is disappointed at how few people are accepting what Jesus is offering.
- 'God gives him the Spirit without limit'—Apparently, John the Baptist saw his ministry as limited. Jesus will never run out of the Holy Spirit he uses for his baptism. John the Baptist has experienced the Holy Spirit only in small drops here and there. Jesus is filled to capacity and has plenty in which to shower other people around him as well. It's a whole new experience of God.
- 'has put everything into his hands'—Jesus has been given the keys to the Father's unlimited supply (cf. John 13:3).
- 'will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment'—Jesus offers limitless connection with the living God through the Holy Spirit. But if you reject the offer, there's nothing he can do for you; you're left with only your own limited supply of power and wisdom and strength.



My Life You can imagine John's disciples felt a little offended at and slightly jealous of Jesus. From their perspective, they were losing business and popularity and not getting the respect they deserved. Is there a situation in your life where you feel like you're being overlooked or not getting the credit you deserve? Maybe you used to be the star, and now there's a new kid in town. John the Baptist tells his disciples that Jesus has something better to offer, even if it means they don't get credit. Ask Jesus to show you what better offer he has for you.

 $My\ 3$  As Jesus moves quickly from place to place and thing to thing, he somehow manages to carve out time with the people he is closest to. Time is not an easy thing to come by these days. Ask God to give your 3 time to both do the things they love the most and spend time with people they care about the most. Also, ask and look for quality time to spend with your 3.

My Church Ask God to give our church John's gift of preparing a way for others. Ask God to make

our church a place where people are prepared to do what God is ultimately calling them to do. This truly is

at anyone's success and growth in God.				

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2/9/22 8:21 AM

### Spiritual Practice of the Week:

### **PRAYER**

In addition to the prayer time in the Devotional, try using Breath Prayer this week as a way to connect with God throughout the day. Ask God to give you a breath prayer... a short sentence you can pray with one exhale and one inhale. For example, exhale, "I release \_\_\_\_\_\_." Inhale, "Fill me with your goodness." You can also inhale a name for God (Father, Lord, Jesus, Holy One, Kind Shepherd, etc.) and exhale a specific desire or need. For instance, "God of Comfort, be near me today." Practice the same prayer throughout the week or a new one each day.

Each time your group or family gathers for the Devotional Guide this week, try incorporating prayer into your time. You might pray for each other, a friend, or multiple people depending on the ages and attention spans of your children. Try using the model "Sorry. Thank you. Please." One day this week: start by apologizing for anything that you feel bad about (to the person or to Jesus); then thank Jesus for something good that happened; finally, pray that Jesus would act in a situation you're concerned about. At the end of the week, think about what you liked and what you might not have liked about this particular spiritual practice. Share your thoughts with each other.



Come&See.indd 17-18

### Monday, March 14

John 4:1-27 - Jesus Talks with Samaritan Woman



### THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

"Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

"I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

"Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"

Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"

Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?"

# DIG DEEPER

'baptizing and making more disciples than John'—We see the popularity of Jesus growing to a very large number. Enough to grab the attention of the Pharisees and cause him to move on.

- 'though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did'—Why would Jesus baptize people in water, when John the Baptist had very clearly talked about water baptism as an inferior model soon replaced with Jesus' Spirit baptism?(1:26, 27, 33) Jesus isn't baptizing in water, only his disciples are. Therefore, it's not that John the Baptist has been replaced but rather has been given reinforcements. John the Baptist now has the help of Jesus' disciples to prepare people for the new baptism Jesus is bringing.
- 'So he left'—Jesus didn't want to dispute with the Pharisees over water baptism. He wasn't afraid of the confrontation rather he was more intentional and strategic about his confrontations.
- 'He had to go through Samaria'—It's about as easy to get to Galilee from Judea without passing through Samaria as it is to get to Kenosha without passing through Pleasant Prarie. This is a huge bummer to the Jews, because they hold an extreme dislike for the Samaritans. The Jews and the Samaritans had previously been one nation, called Israel. In a civil war, about a thousand years earlier, they broke off from one another and they'd been feuding ever since. The Jews hate the Samaritans in the way you can only hate someone who's a lot like you in many ways, but different enough that it galls you to no end. Basically, the Samaritans are that cousin the Jews just can't stand.
- 'and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well'—A glimpse into the humanity of Jesus. He got tired from long walks. He needed to sit and rest after hard work.
- 'The woman was surprised'—The Jews would do their best to hurry through Samaria without having to actually interact with any Samaritans. Jesus, however, goes out of his way to make conversation.
- 'you would ask me, and I would give you living water'—Jesus isn't empty-handed. In exchange for water from the well, he would give her water that could quench her soul's thirst.
- 'Go and get your husband'—This seems to come out of the blue. Is Jesus just trying to let her know that he doesn't have ulterior motives? Perhaps he mentions it because it's something she is ashamed of. He brings it up just to let her know that he is more interested in who God created her to be than her past. Jesus' offer of living water is open to everyone.
- 'They were shocked...but none of them had the nerve to ask'—Lack of nerve can indicate fear or
  respect. Here we see the disciples unified in response to the breaking of custom by Jesus. Jesus is
  constantly separating Himself from the expectations of others. Here he refuses to let a thousandyear-old prejudice and custom to stop his kingdom from advancing.



My Life The woman at the well is not the kind of person Jesus would be expected to pay much attention to. But he does, and the conversation goes in an amazing direction. Take a moment to ask Jesus if there is an unlikely person he would like to bring to your attention. Ask God for an opportunity to talk to them and pray that your conversation would bring something unexpected and good into that person's day.

My 3 Jesus' decision to initiate a conversation with the woman is as shocking to her as it is to his disciples (though for different reasons). As surprised as she is by the conversation itself, you can imagine that she's all the more surprised that it goes so well. Jesus offers her encouraging words and a remarkable offer. Ask Jesus to do the same for your 3. Pray that he would take them by surprise. Pray he would show up with good news and a good offer for whatever they need.

My Church Five husbands in first century Palestine isn't exactly the moral badge of honor. Regardless of who was at fault, this woman was considered an outsider and shunned by her community. Jesus seems both fully aware of the woman's past and not at all bothered by it. His hope for her far outweighs her status and challenges. Ask Jesus to give our church the same type of wholehearted, overabundant hope for others. Spend time thinking of God's best for all the people in our church and for our church as a whole. Then ask Jesus for those things and thank him for all the things he is already doing.

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### Tuesday, March 15 John 4:28–42 – Many Samaritans Believe



### THE GOOD NEWS

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something."

But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about."

"Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other.

Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."

Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."



### DIG DEEPER

- 'left her water jar beside the well'—The water from Jacob's well is now completely forgotten, as the worth of Jesus' living water sinks in.
- 'Come and see'—She makes the exact same offer to the village as Jesus gave to the disciples
   (1:39). Ironically this is the same town that the disciples just came from. They had the same
   exposure, namely that Jesus is the Messiah, but did not go into the town excitingly telling everyone
   they met to come and see.
- 'a man who told me everything I ever did'—Apparently, she identifies her life and accomplishments through the lens of the six men she has lived with. In any case, she apparently has a similar experience to Simon and Nathanael; she feels instantly known by Jesus in a fundamental way.
- 'I have a kind of food you know nothing about.'—First he talks with the woman about a non physical
  water that is a riddle to her, and now he talks to the disciples about a non physical food that is a
  riddle to them. Jesus is constantly using things of the physical world as starting points for larger
  teaching.
- 'My nourishment comes from doing the will of God'—Jesus is constantly trying to point beyond the surface toward a far more satisfying kind of life. Why settle for mere H2O when the source of something that will eternally refresh your soul is right in front of you? Why fix your attention on a sandwich when you could instead be fed by the experience of working side by side with God? Yesterday's passage points out that Jesus is, in fact, thirsty (and presumably hungry), but he completely forgets his physical hunger and thirst in light of the far better spiritual satisfaction he has just experienced.

- *'The fields are already ripe for harvest.'*—The teaching that the disciples are going to enter into the labor of spiritual significance. As he was saying this, the villagers were crossing the fields towards them.
- 'he stayed for two days'—This village starts out as a place they were forced to pass through and becomes a destination trip!
- 'long enough for many more to hear his message and believe'—There is a contrast between the Jews who long to see signs (which we will see tomorrow) and the Samaritans who hear his words and believe.
- 'Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.'—The first indication of the universal scope of his mission and kingdom.



My Life It seems as if working side by side with God is so nourishing to Jesus because he is doing exactly what he was created to do. Have there been times in your life when you felt like you were working side by side with God? Or times when you felt like, "This is what I was created to do!" What was it like? Was it as life- giving as Jesus describes? Ask God for opportunities that feel deeply nourishing to you—things that you feel like only you were created to do.

My 3 Ask Jesus to make it easy for your 3 to talk about things at a spiritual level. Pray that Jesus would take conversations beyond just the everyday chatter to the deeper things that matter most to them.

even more unexpected that Jesus and the disciples would stay in Samaria, and yet again that all sorts of

My Church Yesterday we mentioned the unlikeliness of Jesus interacting with the woman. It's

the entire pe	ld start believing eople group off fr didates would fin	om God's attent		ch a place where	
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21

2/9/22 8:21 AM

## Wednesday, March 16

John 4:43-54 - Jesus Heals the Official's Son



### THE GOOD NEWS

At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee. He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.

As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick.

When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.

Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?"

The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies."

Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!" Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.



- 'He himself had said'—Jesus did not say this in John's gospel. He does say this in Mark (6:4) and Matthew (13:57). Maybe this is another indicator that John assumes knowledge of the other gospels. At the very least, it's pretty clear that John is not terribly interested in telling us the details of Jesus' teaching and actions in the order in which they occur. Instead, he mentions details, sometimes in sort of an offhanded way, as they become relevant to the development of his theme.
- 'for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.'— John does an excellent job of connecting events in this book. John 2:23 tells us that many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.
- 'There was a government official in nearby Capernaum'—Here is the second non-Jewish person
  to receive Jesus' attention and grace. Cana and Capernaum were about 15 miles from each other.
  Evidenced by later verses this was not just an hour walk away. News about Jesus travels, especially
  to those looking for a miracle.
- 'the man believed what Jesus said'—Jesus' complaint, if we take it precisely, is that people aren't believing until they see (unlike the Samaritans). So, maybe what bothers Jesus about the father's request is the father's insistence that Jesus must come in person to the bedside. As it turns out, the father believes before seeing; he takes Jesus at his word without any visible proof and finds out later things happened just as Jesus had said.
- 'This was the second miraculous sign'—John labels both miracles as 'signs.' The significance of a sign is not in itself, but what the sign points to. For example, a Starbucks sign is good news for someone who wants coffee, but only because it leads to a coffeehouse. Without the coffeehouse, the sign is useless. The miracles John tells us about are meant to turn our attention beyond themselves. In this case, a son on his death bed gets up again, alive and well. Perhaps this is a sign of what will happen to Jesus. Maybe this is why it's so important to Jesus that they believe before seeing.



My Life Even in very difficult circumstances, the officer believed Jesus' words that his son would be healed. What things do you find hard to believe that Jesus said or did? Pray for faith in Jesus' words, even in the most difficult circumstances.

**Family/Household Option:** Try to come up with any examples of having faith in Jesus' words in difficult circumstances. Then, pray together for faith in Jesus' words, even in the most difficult circumstances.

My 3 Pray today for any of your 3 or your 3's family members who are in dire physical condition. Ask Jesus to heal them.

My Church Spend some time thanking Jesus for all of the ways he has shown our church how

to love the community over the years. Thank Jesus for his willingness to give us these opportunities pray that our faith would be increased by them.			ortunities a		

23

2/9/22 8:21 AM

### Thursday, March 17 John 5:1-18—The healing at the Pool



### THE GOOD NEWS

Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. Crowds of sick people-blind, lame, or paralyzed-lay on the porches.

One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"

"I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me."

Jesus told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!" Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, "You can't work on the Sabbath! The law doesn't allow you to carry that sleeping mat!"

But he replied, "The man who healed me told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk."

"Who said such a thing as that?" they demanded. The man didn't know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd.

But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, "Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you." Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him. So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules.

But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I." So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

## DIG DEEPER

- Crowds of sick people lay on the porches'—Apparently, this pool is known for its (real or imagined) therapeutic properties. It seems people think the water is particularly beneficial when the spring is bubbling.
- 'I have no one to put me into the pool'—As the man hoping that Jesus will offer to help him into the pool? The man has built up an explanation of why he is sick; it's because he can never manage to be the first in. Imagine how disappointing it would be to see people getting into the pool and all you can do is lay there and remain sick. Thankfully, Jesus has more to offer. The man doesn't even need to get into the pool. Jesus invites him to simply get up and walk.
- 'You can't work on the Sabbath!'-The Sabbath is the weekly day of rest prescribed by Moses. This situation reminds us of John 1:17: 'the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.' Jesus is concerned with the heart of the law, to produce heavenly realities on earth.
- 'so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you'-It may be hard for this man to imagine, but Jesus thinks there are even worse things than being sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus would hate to heal the man's body, only to see his soul die. Why does Jesus consider it so urgent to warn this man to stop sinning? What sin is he in such immediate danger of being seriously harmed by? Much like the conversation with the Samaritan woman, it seems certain that Jesus does not have being a better rule follower in mind.

'tried all the harder to find a way to kill him'-It appears that the 'something worse' Jesus is warning about has already happened to the leaders if, in the name of God, they try to stop one man being healed and try to kill another one, all over carrying a mat!



My Life The crippled man in this passage blames others for not putting him in the healing waters - for 38 years! He gets so wrapped up in his bad circumstances that he doesn't notice the amazing offer of help Jesus gives him. Do you let blaming others or complaining about what has happened take all of your attention or energy? Ask Jesus to give you a way to move out of both your bad circumstances and your bad mood and pray that blaming and complaining won't get in the way.

Family/Household Option: The crippled man in this passage blames others for not putting him in the healing waters - for 38 years! Talk about circumstances in your life now that you are tempted to complain about . Each person's experience will be different but complaining should not get in the way of moving forward. Commit to each other that blaming and complaining won't take the place of love and service.

My 3 As discussed above, it may be the case that the man at the pool gets a little too wrapped up in blaming others for his illness. Then again, he has in fact been desperate and alone for a long time. His words, 'I have no one who can help me,' are somewhat striking. Pray today about the ways that your 3 have the same sense of helplessness. If there are any ways that your 3 feel doomed in their current situation, ask Jesus to pull them out like he did for this man.

MV Church Being in Jerusalem for the Jewish Holy Days was probably somewhat similar

to being at the mall three days before Christmas; it wasn't exactly a moment for thoughtful

reflection. Isn't it great that in the hustle and bustle of all of the holiday activity, Jesus takes

notice of one man among the crowds and sees that God might have something to offer him?

Ask God to give our church the ability to slow down and see what God is doing. Pray that we wouldn't overlook how God is working because we are too consumed with all of the busyness that surrounds us.

25 26

2/9/22 8:21 AM Come&See.indd 25-26

### Friday, March 18 John 5:19-47 — Testimonies About Jesus



### THE GOOD NEWS

So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished. For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants. In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

"And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man. Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

"If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid. But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true. In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true. Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved. John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message.

But I have a greater witness than John-my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face, 38 and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you. "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

"Your approval means nothing to me, because I know you don't have God's love within you. 43 For I have come to you in my Father's name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God. "Yet it isn't I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes. If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

# DIG DEEPER

'the Son can do nothing by himself '-In today's passage, Jesus is addressing the leaders' outrage at his claiming to be God's son. We can basically sum up his answer as something like, 'Get used to it, you'll be seeing more of this!' (Pastor Bill paraphrase) Jesus points out that if they reject his claim to be God's Son, they have to explain how he performed a miracle. 'If God didn't want me to heal on the Sabbath. I couldn't have.'

- "Whatever the Father does, the Son also does" Far from going against God's wishes, Jesus is simply doing what he has seen God do, just like children imitate their parents. Like Father, like Son.
- 'he has given him authority to judge everyone' Jesus told Nicodemus that God did not send him to judge, but to save (John 3:17). Here, though, he is given broad authority to judge. Then again, it seems that even here his primary intention is to give overflowing life, not to execute judgment. Perhaps the authority to judge is something God has given Jesus in case of emergency. He'll judge if he has to.
- 'the Scriptures point to me'-The Bible ('scriptures' here) is also a sign, pointing to something bigger. These leaders are very attached to studying the Bible. But the act of studying the Bible is not, on its own, going to get them the good life. They must actually pay attention to where the Bible is pointing them.
- 'Your approval means nothing to me'-Jesus is not explaining himself here because he needs their endorsement. He's explaining himself to give them a chance to turn around before they end up with judgment and death instead of eternal life.



My Life Does all this talk about life, death and judging seem a little hard to make sense of? None of us are quite sure how it all pans out after life on planet earth. What is clear is that Jesus has a better life he wants to offer. Ask Jesus to bring you more of his "full life" today? Talk to him about any of the things going on that seem to be especially lacking vitality. Ask him to show you how to become alive to God's love even in those circumstances.

MV 3 Jesus' audience refuses to come to him even though they are aware he probably has what they are looking for. Pray today about whatever reasons your 3 have for refusing to engage with Jesus. Ask Jesus to give them soft hearts and an openness to receiving what he is offering them.

My Church Jesus is watching for what God is doing and then joining him in his work. Ask God to help our church embrace the same strategy in everything we do. Ask Jesus to help us only do what we see him doing. Pray we would get really good at listening to and watching him instead of just relying on our own plans, ambitions, and timelines.

27 28

Come&See.indd 27-28 2/9/22 8:22 AM

### Saturday, March 19 John 6:1–21 – Jesus Feeds 5K AND Walks on Water



### THE GOOD NEWS

After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him.

(It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!" 8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

"Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted.

After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!"

When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

## DIG DEEPER

29

- 'It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration'—John is framing the meal that is about to happen as a new kind of Passover meal.
- 'He was testing Philip'—Jesus isn't genuinely confused and turning to Philip for help. Jesus has a plan; he's just curious what Philip would say about the situation.
- 'Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up.'—Is this a sign of faith on Andrew's part or just a statement of fact? Either way Jesus uses what was put in front of him.
- 'filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves'—
   There's such an abundance that, far beyond having more food leftover than they eat, they actually have more food left than they start with.
- 'Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!'—As with John the Baptist (John 1:21), they're referring to the 'Prophet like Moses' (Deuteronomy 18:15). They're so certain that Jesus is the Prophet like Moses because this multiplication of bread reminds them of one of Moses' big miracles; while the Israelites were wandering with Moses in the desert for forty years, God fed them every day with a miracle bread called manna.

- 'they were ready to force him to be their king'—Compare this to when Jesus tells his mother, 'That's not our problem. My time has not yet come' (John 2:4). When he turned the water into wine, Jesus' mother nudged him into performing a miracle. This time, however, he has his own plan and his own sense of timing.
- 'That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him.'—Why did they not go
  looking for Jesus? Sometimes we have the idea that the disciples were at the side of Jesus 24/7.
  Here we see the group head off to Capernaum about 5 or 6 miles away without knowing where
  Jesus was.
- 'They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat.'—Such a small segment of the story is dedicated to this awesome event. It was a profound demonstration over nature to only his closest disciples.
- 'Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!'—
  Jesus announcing His presence brings peace to the disciples. The word immediately intends to
  show a contrast between the before and after of Jesus being with them in the journey. His presence
  brings surety and security.



My Life Put yourself in Peter or Andrew's place in this story. You're in a situation bigger than yourself, and there's a need that you don't know how to fill. Can you offer Jesus what you have and trust him to make it into more? Try this with a situation that you're really facing.

My 3 Jesus is abundantly generous in how he provides for his followers. Ask Jesus to generously provide for your 3. Ask Jesus if there is a way that he would like to you to be abundantly gracious with one of your 3.

My Church It's hard not to notice that after Jesus somehow provides more than enough food for a small village worth of people, no one stops to say, "Thanks, that was really great." Maybe someone did, but John didn't mention it. A "Thank You" would have been nice! Instead, everybody moves immediately to deciding the next thing they would like Jesus to do for them. Spend time today thanking God. Thank Jesus for the good things he has done for you. Thank God for our church. Tell someone something specific about our church that you are grateful for.

30

Come&See.indd 29-30 2/9/22 8:22 AM

### Sunday, March 20 John 6:22–40 – Jesus is the Bread of Life



### THE GOOD NEWS

The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. 38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. 39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."

## DIG DEEPER

- 'went across to Capernaum to look for him'—They aren't giving up on this idea of making him king.
   They commandeer some boats and follow him.
- 'not because you understood the miraculous signs'—It might look an awful lot like they understood the sign, seeing how energetically they follow him; but they really don't. It is more like the conversation with the Samaritan woman. To the woman, he said, 'Don't settle for water that will just leave you thirsty again. Ask me, and I'll give you a new kind of water that truly satisfies.' To this crowd, his point is, 'Bread is too easy. I can make that for you out of nothing anytime. Look to me for eternal life instead.' They do indeed keep following after him, but Jesus knows that they're still just hungering for things that will make them hungry again.
- 'What can you do?'—Well, he has just fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and walked
  across a lake. They're just addicted to free bread and spectacle. They only want the signs, not the
  things they point to.
- 'The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat... I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did.'—They attributed the works of God to Moses. It was this kind of sloppy reading of scripture that brought self-confidence and clouded their ability to see who Jesus really was.

- 'those the Father has given me will come to me'—Jesus knows that he can't force anyone to read the signs. Whoever does in fact read the signs, that's who he is talking to.
- 'I will raise them up at the last day'—The last day is the end of the world. 'The last day,' effectively
  speaking, is also the last day of our lives. Whenever these people and the world part ways, either
  because the world ends or because their lives do, things only get better for them; they get lifted
  higher, rather than falling down.



My Life Jesus makes a big deal about people's responses to him. He cares deeply that we believe him and trust him. If you trust Jesus, tell him so. If you have questions, ask him those as well. Try picturing yourself with Jesus. How do you picture him? How do you respond to him? Look for ways during your day to remind yourself that Jesus cares deeply about you.

**Family/Household Option:** Take some time and share your testimonies with each other. Talk about the first time you told someone else you follow and trust Jesus with your life.

 $My\ 3$  It's clear the crowds have some interest in who Jesus is. He's like a popular author who they'll trek around the city to hear speak. However, they still want to keep him at an arm's distance. Ask God to bless whatever interest your 3 have in him. Pray that they wouldn't keep Jesus at an arm's distance but would embrace him.

My Church Even though many don't get what Jesus is all about, there are still large crowds of people coming from every corner to see him for themselves. Ask God to make our church a place that

	attracts crowds to come and experience Jesus with us. Pray that there would be a buzz that draws people from all different backgrounds to our church to connect with Jesus.
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32

31

2/9/22 8:22 AM

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE WEEK:

### Study & Memorization

Since the *Come & See* is a study, we already have a head start on this practice. This week, as you read, you might imagine yourself in the scene of the particular passage of scripture. What do you see? What do you hear? What are your reactions to what is taking place? How does it make you feel?

For families and groups this week, you could try adding some extra discussion and imagination into your reading of the passages. Some conversation-starter questions you might ask other members of your family or friends are, "What is your favorite part of this story? What does this passage makes you think about? What character would you be in this passage?"

Many people also find memorization helpful when studying the Bible. Here are some ideas for making memorization a game, not a chore:

- Put the verse to music.
- Write each word on a different index card, arrange them in order on a surface, then
  take away one each time you recite the verse.
- Add actions to the verse.
- Add character's voices as you say the verse.
- Try memorizing a couple of these famous passages from the Book of John:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - 3:16

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." - 6:51

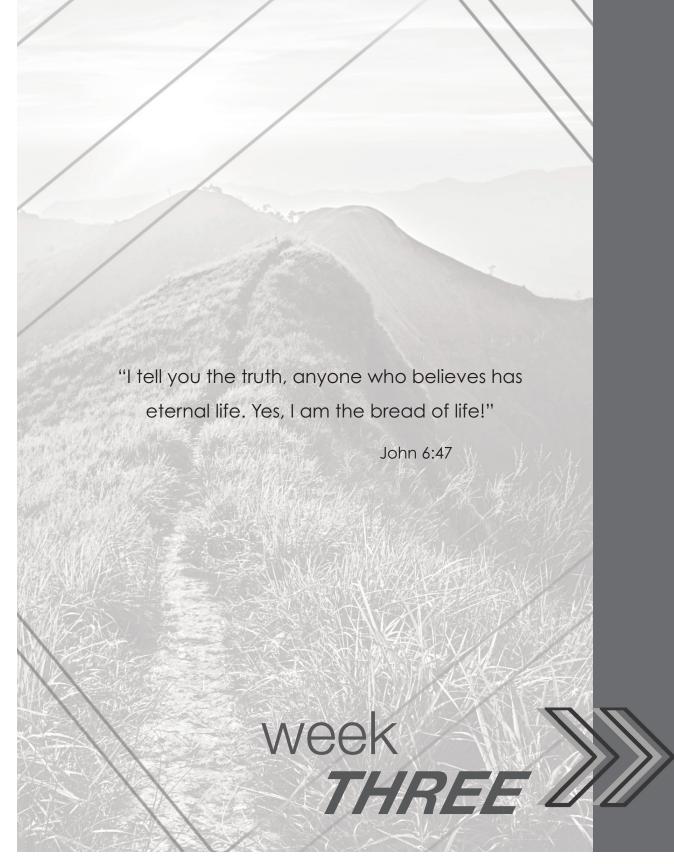
"Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, 'I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." - 8:12

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." - 10:11

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" - 11:25-26

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener." - 15:1

At the end of the week, think about what you liked and what you might not have liked about this particular spiritual practice. Share your thoughts with each other.



Come&See.indd 33-34

### Monday, March 21 John 6:41–71 – Many Disciples Desert Jesus



### THE GOOD NEWS

Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life! Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil." He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

## DIG DEEPER

- 'We know his father and mother'—Suddenly, Jesus has gone from being the 'Prophet Like Moses' to being Mary and Joseph's boy from down the street. They really don't like being told, 'No.' When Jesus refuses to give them more bread, they decide to put him in his place.
- 'They will all be taught by God'—This is Isaiah 54:13. It's part of Isaiah's description of what things will be like on 'the last day':

"All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace. In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you."

The Last Day is the day when fear and injustice die, when everything is beautiful and luxurious, when people live peacefully with one another and with God, when God himself is every child's favorite elementary school teacher, and when life is an unbroken series of blessings. This is what Jesus is promising to whomever draws closer to him.

- 'in the synagogue in Capernaum'—This is basically Jesus' old neighborhood. It seems over-familiarity with Jesus makes it hard to accept the claims Jesus is making and the invitation he is extending. Think of it as if you moved back to your old neighborhood. We're dealing with your parents' bowling team, your friends from high school, the kids you played pick-up games of street ball with, and your third-grade math teacher.
- 'At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.'—Jesus is the only religious
  figure in the history of the world who didn't 'care' about the size of his crowd. Rather, he cared
  about the depth of their development. Jesus almost pushes people away with the shocking
  statements in these verses.
- 'You have the words that give eternal life'—While Jesus has described his offer in numerous ways
  over the course of John, it seems that 'eternal life' has become his favorite label for it. It might be
  worth considering for a moment how the phrase 'eternal life' was understood:
  - 1. What is meant is more than life beyond death, although that is one element of it: 'Anyone who eats this bread ... will live forever' (John 6:58).
  - 2. It implies living a deep and satisfying life. Our needs and cravings are filled in a more fundamental, more complete, and more enduring way than they are in ordinary, non-eternal life: 'But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them' (John 4:14).
  - 3. It points towards the fullness in life that hasn't entirely arrived yet: 'the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem' (John 4:21).
  - 4. It also includes the life we can start to experience here and now: 'the time is coming, indeed it's here now [again, my emphasis], when the dead will hear my voice' (John 5:25).

In short, the 'eternal life' Jesus is offering is the kind of life we really want for ourselves. A sample is available now in increasing measure, without end. We might call it 'perfect life' or 'heavenly life' or 'the good life.'

'but one is a devil'—This is kind of a bummer note to end on. Jesus' point here is that the Twelve are proving to be who he thought they were when he called them. For eleven of them, that means that they are making their way toward eternal life; for the twelfth, regrettably, it's quite the opposite. It's curious why Jesus would invest in someone who he knows will end up working against him.

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Come&See.indd 35-36



My Life What's your favorite kind of bread? Think of one that tastes really good, that's good for you,	
and that you could eat every day without getting tired of it. Jesus says he is the bread of life. How do you feel when you spend time with Jesus (i.e. happy, grateful, satisfied, hungry for more, etc.)? What are some ways you could use a little taste of Jesus today?	
Family/Household Option: Talk as a family about your favorite type of bread. What do you like to put on your favorite bread (i.e. jelly, butter, etc.)? In what ways might Jesus be "the bread of life?	
$My\ 3$ Ask God to draw each of your 3 to closer to Jesus. As John points out we all actually need God's help to do that. Ask God to soften each of their hearts to Jesus. Ask God to give your 3 understanding of	
who Jesus is and what he is offering them.	
My Church Ask God to help our church be faithful. Pray that none of us would turn away as so many of Jesus' disciples did. Instead, pray that God would strengthen the community of our church and that we would stick with God even through hard times.	
and we would blok with dod even through hard times.	

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Come&See.indd 37-38

### Tuesday, March 22 John 7:1–24—Jesus Teaches at the Feast



### THE GOOD NEWS

After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!" For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. You go on. I'm not going to this festival, because my time has not yet come." After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee.

But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people." But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. The people were surprised when they heard him. "How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?" they asked.

So Jesus told them, "My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies. Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me."

The crowd replied, "You're demon possessed! Who's trying to kill you?"

Jesus replied, "I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed. But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses' law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath? Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly."



- 'it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters'—The Festival of Shelters is both a harvest festival and the commemoration of the Israelites' wandering in the desert during the time of Moses. For seven days, they live in tents, as a reminder that they were once homeless wanderers. It happens six months after Passover.
- 'even his brothers didn't believe in him'—Apparently they do, in fact, believe that he's capable of performing miracles—or, at least, they're kind enough brothers to be encouraging about them. What they don't believe is that Jesus is under orders from God, and that he is the provider of eternal life. They may think of him as someone trying to make a mid-life career change and break into the rabbi business. They can't believe he's not making use of all of the free publicity he could get for himself at a big religious festival.
- 'Jesus also went, though secretly'—He goes, but not for the reasons his brothers give. Today, we might picture someone who throws on a hat and some sunglasses to blend in with the crowd. He tries to go to the festival incognito simply to enjoy the holiday as a private person.

- 'no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public'—Fear and love are the two biggest motivators known to man. Fear was what the religious leaders used to manage people and systems. It gave them power. When Jesus came, he taught love. We see here that their love for him had not yet grown enough to conquer fear.
- 'My message is not my own'—He now tells the crowd what he told his brothers: he's not trying to
  make a name for himself. He's simply passing along a message from God which he knows will be
  helpful to anyone who cares to take notice.
- 'long before the law of Moses'—John takes Jesus' point even further than Jesus. Moses' laws aren't the be-all and end-all. Even the religious leaders themselves operate by this principle, by letting the laws of circumcision trump the Sabbath law. Circumcision is the ceremony of initiation into the people of faith. Circumcision began five hundred years before Moses, in the time of Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14). When the rules about Sabbath and circumcision conflict, the leaders follow the circumcision rules. Coincidentally (or perhaps not), the murder law also takes precedence over the Sabbath law; the murder law goes back even further than Abraham, to the time of Noah:

And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image (Genesis 9:5-6).

By their over-attention to the Sabbath law, they are condemning themselves to death by a law with greater precedence. The irony is only increased by the fact that they are trying to kill the one whose aim is to bring eternal life.



My Life Is there something that you're currently worked up about? Or is there routinely some part of your day or week that seems to be tense or stressful? Maybe it's your morning commute, a housemate not doing their chores, a particular child or friend who just has a way of getting under your skin. Take some time today to be still and ask God to show you what is going on 'beneath the surface.' Consider that the outer emotions you feel, are just a signal for something going on deeper. Next time this situation occurs, try paying more attention to what is going on at a deeper level and what God might be saying to you in it.

My 3 Pray today for your 3's friendships. Pray that, unlike Jesus' brothers, your 3's closest friends and relatives would be sources of good advice and strong support for them.

My Church They say that success is a matter of timing and John seems to agree. Five times in this passage alone, he talks about whether the timing is right or not for Jesus. Ask God to give us good timing. Pray that God would oversee the timing of all the many things that happen here: the things that are being dreamt of, the things that are up and thriving, and the things that need to end. Ask God to direct our timing in all of it.

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Come&See.indd 39-40 2/9/22 8:22 AM

### Wednesday, March 23 John 7:25-53-Division & Unbelief



### THE GOOD NEWS

Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah? But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from."

While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I'm not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don't know him. But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you."

Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. "After all," they said, "would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?" When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus.

But Jesus told them, "I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going."

The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. "Where is he planning to go?" they asked. "Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands? Maybe he will even teach the Greeks! What does he mean when he says, 'You will search for me but not find me,' and 'You cannot go where I am going'?"

On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, "Surely this man is the Prophet we've been expecting." Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others said, "But he can't be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born." So the crowd was divided about him. Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.

When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

"We have never heard anyone speak like this!" the guards responded.

"Have you been led astray, too?" the Pharisees mocked. "Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God's curse is on them!"

Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. "Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?" he asked.

They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!" Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.

## DIG DEEPER

'Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?'—Apparently the religious leaders' desire to kill Jesus was public knowledge. That being the case, everyone is confused as to why they would hold

back. The crowds come up with the radical idea that the leaders know Jesus is the Messiah and have nonetheless pitted themselves against him. They want to eliminate him, but they are—understandably—afraid of what might happen if they try.

- 'for we know where this man comes from'—In a way, they know where he comes from; he's Joseph and Mary's boy from Nazareth. In a more important way, however, they don't. They cannot see that he is a messenger sent from God.
- 'his time had not yet come'—Jesus sort of jumps the gun by coming out publicly at the feast, and the leaders respond in kind. But, as Jesus had told his brothers (John 7:6), the timing is not right. Mysteriously, he is protected from harm.
- 'he was speaking of the Spirit'—This time, John preemptively interprets for us: 'He's not talking about actual water. It's a metaphor for the Holy Spirit' as it was also in Isaiah 44:3.
- 'But the Spirit had not yet been given'—Everything we have seen so far is just a preview of what is still coming. Jesus has not yet gotten around to his real work of, as John the Baptist put it, baptizing with the Spirit (John 1:32-33).
- 'So the crowd was divided about him.'—Some of the crowd had well researched scriptural questions that stood in the way of belief. Others had fear and anger that he was challenging the system. Some others had hearts that were beginning to see the truth.
- 'We have never heard anyone speak like this!'—To the religious leaders' exasperation, even the police recognize Jesus is unique and powerful. When they find the man they've been sent to arrest, they think, 'Surely, they can't mean him.' He seems an awful lot more like a Messiah than a criminal.
- 'Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up.'—How did John know about the inner conversation of the guards and the leaders? Could it be Nicodemus, who met with Jesus in chapter 3, was now a believer, and informed John of these details? If this is true, then there is some literary irony that after the Pharisees question the guards and make an argument about none of them believing, Nicodemus is the very next voice to bring up a stronger and truer argument.

## COME & SEE

My Life Most of us like to think of ourselves as individuals who make up our own minds about things, but maybe we're a little more like the masses that follow Jesus than we like to admit; for better and worse, the 'crowd' around us helps to shape our view about who Jesus is. In today's passage, the crowd works together to figure out who Jesus is. Who are the people around you that help you better know Jesus? Do you feel like you have a great community of people around you, or is your primary community distracting you or pushing you further from Jesus? Ask God for an abundance of godly friends who will help you get a good picture of Jesus. If you have friends who are doing that for you, shoot them an email, text, or card to tell them what they mean to you.

My 3 Jesus' listeners are almost always operating on a strictly physical level, and Jesus is almost always seeing things from a spiritual level. It seems like understanding what's going on at a spiritual level sheds a lot of light on to what is happening on a natural level. Ask Jesus for spiritual insight as to what is going on with your 3. Ask Jesus to speak beyond what you can see and know and to give you discernment as to what is spiritually happening for your 3. Next time you're talking with your 3, ask Jesus to make you aware of what is happening spiritually.

My Church Ask Jesus to fill our church with the Holy Spirit. Pray that he would fill each and every person who feels like they are running a little dry. Pray that during Come & See, Jesus would meet our entire church in a fresh new experience of his presence.

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### Thursday, March 24 John 8:1-20—Throwing Stones & Missing God



### THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them.

As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?" They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger.

They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust. When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

"No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

The Pharisees replied. "You are making those claims about vourself! Such testimony is not valid."

Jesus told them, "These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don't know this about me. You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other."

"Where is your father?" they asked.

Jesus answered, "Since you don't know who I am, you don't know who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my Father." Jesus made these statements while he was teaching in the section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not arrested, because his time had not yet come.



- 'The law of Moses says to stone her'—The law of Moses actually says both the man and the woman should be executed (Leviticus 20:10: Deuteronomy 22:22), but somehow the man is missing.
- 'Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger'—There is indeed a thorny theological question here: why would Moses give such clear, harsh laws, if they weren't meant to be enforced? Jesus knows that they're not genuinely asking, and he refuses to be drawn into their trap. He does his best simply to ignore them. We know the religious leaders are being disingenuous for a couple of reasons. First, there is their obvious glee at putting Jesus on the spot. Second, despite their moral clarity that the woman ought to die, the death penalty was not generally enforced for adultery. There are numerous cases in the Bible itself of people being caught in adultery and not executed. The great King David himself being a prime example (2 Samuel 11 and 12). And the common practice in Jesus' time was to impose some other punishment (Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. 'Divorce'); in fact, it was illegal under Roman law for them to execute the death penalty (IVP Bible Background Commentary).

- 'he stooped down again and wrote in the dust' Did Jesus draw stick figures in the dirt, write something more profound such as other laws of Moses, or spell out all the deep hidden secrets of the accusers? John does not tell us, but it has an obvious impact on the crowd.
- 'beginning with the oldest' As they do a mental scan of Moses' laws, they recognize that if they start stoning, they'll keep stoning until no one is left standing. The ones with greater life experience recognize this first.
- 'Neither do I'—Jesus does what he was sent to do: 'God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him' (John 3:17).
- 'I am the light of the world'-If the dotted line doesn't make it clear, the language does. We're now back to what John wrote about the Word (Jesus) in the beginning and being the "light" of all mankind.
- 'you won't have to walk in darkness'-When Jesus releases the woman, it's with the words, 'Go and sin no more.' I don't think this is so much a stern warning-'I let you off with a warning this time, but next time I'll have to stone you'—as it is an invitation. Now that she's met Jesus, she has new light shining in her life. She doesn't have to go about life in the same, old stumbling-in-the-dark way.
- 'You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone.' Jesus is emphasizing what was just illustrated with the woman. Then he continues and contrasts their right to judge with his right to judge.



My Life Jesus says he wants to be like the light in a dark room. Are there parts of your life that make you feel like you're in a dark room: scared, confused and out-of-sorts? Ask Jesus to be like a light in your situation. Ask him to make things brighter, cheerier, and more obvious.

Family/Household Option: How does it feel when you are in a dark room? It's hard to see, right? Sometimes you bump into things or get frightened. What's it like when a light is turned on? How do you feel when you finally see the light? Discuss ways that Jesus is like a light to our lives. How can we bring more light into our lives?

My 3 Just as Jesus silences all of the voices of condemnation accusing the woman caught in adultery, ask Jesus to free your 3 from any condemnation. Whether it's fear of accusation, an internal sense of accusation, or actual accusation from others in their lives. Ask Jesus to protect them and set them free from condemnation.

in, or distracted by the Pharisees' complaints and games. Ask Jesus to help our church do th
same. Pray that whenever we are faced with such situations that Jesus would help us respon
calmly and not get distracted from him.

My Church Whatever it is Jesus writes (or draws), he doesn't get flustered by, caught up

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2/9/22 8:22 AM Come&See.indd 43-44

### Friday, March 25 John 8:21–41 – The Truth Will Set You Free



### THE GOOD NEWS

Later Jesus said to them again, "I am going away. You will search for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going."

The people asked, "Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, 'You cannot come where I am going'?"

Jesus continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM who I claim to be, you will die in your sins."

"Who are you?" they demanded. Jesus replied, "The one I have always claimed to be. I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won't. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful."

But they still didn't understand that he was talking about his Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I AM he. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him."

Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

"But we are descendants of Abraham," they said. "We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, 'You will be set free'?"

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there's no room in your hearts for my message. I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father."

"Our father is Abraham!" they declared. "No," Jesus replied, "for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example. Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. No, you are imitating your real father." They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

## DIG DEEPER

- 'You will search for me but will die in your sin'—Jesus is warning them that his offer doesn't stand forever. There will come a time when they realize that the eternal life Jesus offers is not only the best way to die, but the only way to live! Hopefully, they don't come to that decision too late.
- 'Is he planning to commit suicide?'—They perceive a deeper meaning to his words, knowing it has to
  do with his death, but they cannot comprehend all that he means. To them there is only one type of
  person who can know the limit of their own life, one who commits suicide. They have no category for
  who he is.
- 'You are from below; I am from above.'—John the Baptist comprehends and teaches this early on (John 3:31). The unpassable gulf between them is the gulf between heaven and earth or separation from God.

- 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man'—Here is the first time the Jews are identified as the
  instruments of his death, plainly showing that Jesus knows what was coming.
- 'You are truly my disciples if'—Jesus, who sees the heart, is not confident in their momentary
  conviction and tells them they must stay connected to his teaching.
- 'We have never been slaves to anyone'—Though they're originally enthusiastic about him, as soon as Jesus suggests that they might actually need something from him, they turn on him: 'Hold on there, buddy. Who said we needed rescuing?' A similar thing happens with Nicodemus (John 3: 4) and the people from Capernaum (John 6:41-42). They're huge fans of Jesus, as long as he leaves them alone right where they are. But he can't leave them alone right where they are, because his very nature is to offer them a better life than they currently have. They can't have anything to do with him unless they want more out of life.
- 'Our father is Abraham'—The people of Capernaum focus on Jesus' average upbringing. You might hear them saying something like, 'You're not such a hotshot. You're only Joseph and Mary's boy.' Isn't it interesting that they then focus on their ancient lineage? Perhaps they said, 'Don't you know who we are? We're children of Abraham!' Abraham was the first ancestor of all the Jews (he's the grandfather of Israel). He is also the Bible's primary example of what it means to live a life of faith, and he's described as the source of God's blessing for the entire world.
- 'Abraham never did such a thing'—Jesus responds, 'I knew Abraham. I don't see the family
  resemblance' (Pastor Bill paraphrase). The very thing that made Abraham special was a willingness
  to accept good gifts from God. That's exactly what they are refusing.



My Life Most of us can empathize with these people's resistance to admitting that they need something. Sometimes we know very well that things would be much better if we just asked for a little help, but we just can't get ourselves to do it. How do you feel about the idea of needing something from God or from others? What is something you need today? Wisdom? Rest? Encouragement? A meal? More time? Whatever it is, try telling Jesus. Look for ways today to tell Jesus that you need him and want what he has to offer.

My 3 Are your 3 facing any continual struggles they would like to be free from? Maybe it's worry or a bad job situation or a conflict with a family member. Ask Jesus to set them free.

My Church Sadly the people in this passage hold on to what's been passed down to them from

and just act out the models of church that have been passed down to them without much reflection. Ask Jesus to help our church be innovative, fresh, vibrant, and closely connected with him.

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Come&See.indd 45-46

### Saturday, March 26 John 8:42-59 - Jesus' Claims About Himself



### THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don't listen because you don't belong to God."

The people retorted, "You Samaritan devil! Didn't we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?"

"No," Jesus said, "I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me. And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!"

The people said, "Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, 'Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!' Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

Jesus answered, "If I want glory for myself, it doesn't count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, 'He is our God,' but you don't even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad."

The people said, "You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!"

At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.



### DIG DEEPER

- 'If God were your Father, you would love me' Obviously, there doesn't seem to be much brotherly or sisterly affection here from the people to Jesus.
- 'you are the children of your father the devil' Their claims of God as their father provoke an equal and opposite response from Jesus: 'The devil is more like it' (Pastor Bill paraphrase). What Jesus is saying here is that they miss the point so much, that it's like they're in completely different universes. Truth in his world are lies in their world. Still, calling them 'children of the devil' seems like it may just cause them to dig their heels in even more!
- 'I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!' Jesus seems genuinely perplexed as to why they are having such a hard time in this conversation. He is merely trying to offer them the gift of eternal life, and it's come to this.
- "I Am!"—This is God's name. When Moses and God first meet, Moses asks God to introduce himself. God responds that he is called I AM (Exodus 3:14). So, when they ask, 'Are you saying you knew Abraham and are better than him?' he answers, 'Yes, Yes, most definitely yes. I don't just know Abraham. I don't just know God. I AM God.'



My Life Whether it's his age, his family lineage, or the town he was born in, Jesus just is not what the people expected out of the Messiah. Is there a situation in your life in which you feel like you don't quite match people's expectations? Ask Jesus if he has any tips on how to handle the expectations others have of you. Ask Jesus to remind you of the things most true about you. Finally, ask Jesus to give you the same confidence he had to hold on to his true identity even when others thought he couldn't possibly be up to the task at hand.

My 3 Whether it's the Father or an angel who hides Jesus-or maybe the Pharisees are really slow at gathering stones for execution-it's impressive how timely and effective the protection is. Ask Jesus today to protect your 3 from any harm that might come their way.

My Church Ask Jesus to help our church hear him. Whether he is speaking literally or figuratively

in this passage, even though the people are right there next to him, they can't actually hear what Jesus is

saying. Picture a parent trying to get their child's attention, but the child can't hear because the TV is on too loud, or just because they are talking away themselves. Ask Jesus to help our church become bette at slowing down, being quiet, and have the space and posture to listen to him.		
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47 48

Come&See.indd 47-48 2/9/22 8:22 AM

### Sunday, March 27 John 9:1-17-A Lifelong Blind Man is Transformed



### THE GOOD NEWS

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" But the beggar kept saying,

"Yes, I am the same one!"

They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"

He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

"Where is he now?" they asked.

"I don't know," he replied.

Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!"

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?" The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet."



- 'Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?'-The disciples assume that blindness is a punishment from God. The fact that this particular man was blind from birth creates something of a puzzle. Obviously, he couldn't have done anything to deserve the punishment before he was ever born. So, was God punishing him in advance for crimes God knew he would commit later, or was God making him pay for his parent's crimes? That was the thinking as they asked this million-dollar auestion.
- 'so the power of God could be seen in him'-It's not the blindness that comes from God, but the healing. God didn't intentionally blind this man just so that Jesus could later heal him and show how powerful he is. That wouldn't show God's glory; that would be the cruelest, longest run-up to a magic trick ever. Rather, Jesus is suggesting that when we run across some terrible thing in the world, we should do what we can to make the situation better, not use it as an opportunity for philosophical dialogue on the nature of evil.

- 'The night is coming, and then no one can work'—Jesus has talked about a time coming when he would no longer be around, but thus far he's always talked about it like a good thing. And when he's spoken of the future, he's talked about the ways in which there would be traffic between heaven and earth. The idea that there's a future dark time is new.
- 'because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud'-Not this again! Once again, the Pharisees get so distracted by mud-making on the Sabbath that they totally miss the fact that a man born blind has been healed.



My Life The blind man wasn't the only who couldn't see in this story. The people couldn't see that the man was the same person who used to be a blind beggar, because they didn't believe that the man could be healed. Why do you think they had a hard time seeing this miracle? Sometimes it can be surprisingly tricky to remember good things Jesus does for us. List some of the gifts from Jesus you have seen or received.

Family/Household Option: Go around the circle as a family (or household or group) and each share an amazing gift from God you've seen or received. If you have trouble, help one another out, or ask God for help seeing and remembering.

My 3 While we only get a snippet of the blind man's story, don't you wonder about the rest of his story. Jesus becomes a key part of this man's entire life story. How well do you know the stories of your 3? Pray that Jesus would somehow find his way into the unique aspects of their stories. Next time you're with your 3 ask them more about the story of their life.

My Church Ask Jesus to show our church where our blind spots are. On behalf of our church, tell

Jesus we're sorry for the ways that we are in fact blind and unable to see. Ask Jesus to raise up people of

	wisdom to help guide and lead our church.
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49 50

2/9/22 8:22 AM Come&See.indd 49-50

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE WEEK: Confession & Forgiveness

How do you feel when you've done something wrong? Chances are you might say, "guilty," "heavy," or "bad." Jesus offers us freedom from the heaviness of our mistakes and bad choices. Think of something that you're sorry you did or said recently and talk to Jesus about it. Apologize and ask Jesus for forgiveness.

Ask if you should apologize to anyone else in person, and then do so if Jesus says 'yes'. At the end of the week, think about what you liked and what you might not have liked about this particular spiritual practice. For families and groups, share your thoughts with each other.



Come&See.indd 51-52 2/9/22 8:22 AM

### Monday, March 28 John 9:18-41 - Spiritual Blindness



### THE GOOD NEWS

The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his

They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

"I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

"But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?"

"Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

"Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

"You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

"You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

"Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment - to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."

Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?"

"If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.



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'they called in his parents'—The Jewish leaders are unwilling to take the man's word for it; so they call in further witnesses. According to the law of Moses, testimony is considered valid if it comes from two to three sources (Deuteronomy 19:15). Since the parents corroborate the man, the religious leaders have to accept as a legal fact that the man had been blind.

- 'His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders' The blind man's parents didn't want to lose their status because of what Jesus did for their son. Therefore, they threw their son under the bus and told the leaders to follow up with him. Fear won the day. Jesus gave their son sight, but they were afraid of what they saw in the threats of Jewish leaders.
- 'You were born a total sinner'—This goes back to the disciples' initial theological question (John 9:2): for whose sins is he being divinely punished? The leaders decide that it must be for the man's own actions. He's such a terrible person that he was struck blind for his wickedness before he was
- 'he found the man'—The synagogue is not only the center of worship, but the primary gathering place of the community. By throwing him out of the synagogue, the religious leaders are basically cutting the man off from society. Rough. He goes from being a blind beggar to being an outcast; it seems like normal life is really elusive to this man. Jesus doesn't let him stay in isolation for long! He meets him where he is at!
- "And he worshiped Jesus"—The revelation of Jesus' identity drew worship out of the blind man and hate out of the Jewish leaders.
- 'I entered this world to render judgment'—Where judgment fits into Jesus' mission is a bit difficult to nail down. Twice now, he proclaimed that he's not interested in judging (John 3:17 and 8:15). Another time, he has claimed broad authority to judge (John 5:22). And here he says that judging is exactly what he came to do. So, in summary, Jesus is completely uninterested in judging except in that it's the very thing most essential to his mission. Hmm. Hopefully this will become clearer as we go along. It is at least worth noting that whenever judgment comes up, it's in reference, not to people who might conventionally be thought of as sinners, but to the religious leaders. That certainly gives pause.
- 'because you claim you can see' Jesus can heal blindness, but he will not make someone open their eyes if they insist on keeping them shut.



My Life Spend some time today reflecting on your journey with Jesus. The blind man started out thinking of Jesus as some sort of mystical eye-doctor; a little farther down the road, he recognized him as sent from God. What were your first impressions of Jesus? When do you feel like you first knew him? What does your relationship with him look like now? Are you in desperate need of a miracle, like the blind man in the beginning? Do you feel like you're still just trying to figure out who Jesus is? Would you say you've come to the place where you fully believe in Jesus and his promises? Or do you actually feel more like the Pharisees, wanting everything to make sense at a head-level and not engaging at a heart level? Remember some key times in your life with Jesus then talk to him about where you feel like you're at now. Tell Jesus your feelings, questions, and thoughts about him.

My 3 Just as Jesus sought out the blind man, and brought him out of isolation, ask Jesus to bring your 3 out of any isolation they may be experiencing.

My Church While Jesus' relationship to judgment may be a little hazy, it's safe to say that:

- 1. The Pharisees are full of judgment; and
- We'd be best not to emulate them!

Ask Jesus to protect our church from being judgmental. Like the blind man, ask Jesus to help us focus our attention on him and not point fingers at others in a futile attempt to prove who is right and who is

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wrong.

### Tuesday, March 29 John 10:1-21 - Jesus is the Good Shepherd



### THE GOOD NEWS

"I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice." Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, so he explained it to them:

"I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep."

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd."

"The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him. Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?" Others said, "This doesn't sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

## DIG DEEPER

- 'I tell you the truth'—This passage is a continuation of what Jesus was saying at the end of yesterday's passage about the Pharisees and blindness. Having answered the Pharisees' question about blindness. Jesus remarks upon what has just happened to the formerly blind man.
- 'anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold' The sneaky ones here are the religious leaders, who assassinate the character of the blind man so that they don't have to face the fact that Jesus does indeed have miracle-working power. That makes them spiritual thieves, not spiritual shepherds.
- 'the shepherd of the sheep' Jesus is following in the tradition of a number of Old Testament passages which use shepherds as models of caring leadership (Ezekiel 34:10).
- 'He calls his own sheep by name' The image here is of several flocks being held in one pen. The shepherds separate out their flocks to take them to pasture by giving their own, unique call, which their sheep recognize. One of the complaints God makes of the bad shepherd in Ezekiel 34 is that they abandon the sheep. That's exactly what the religious leaders do to the blind man in yesterday's passage, by throwing him out of the synagogue. Jesus then calls the man, and the man follows him. It's a match. This man is part of Jesus' flock, and Jesus is this man's shepherd.

- 'My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life' Again and again, Jesus uses every opportunity to point people toward a richer and more satisfying life.
- 'I have other sheep, too'—Jesus is just getting started at gathering his flock.
- 'The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life"—This is a contrast yesterday when the father didn't want to disrupt his life based on the actions of the son. We learn here more of the divine plan of the cross, the power Jesus possessed to accomplish the plan, and the relationship between the Father and the Son within the plan.



My Life Jesus says he's the good shepherd who gathers, protects, and leads. Think about how Jesus has done some of these things for you. Take a moment and thank him.

Family/Household Option: Discuss with your family or friends what a shepherd's job is – for example: leading the sheep to good grass, clean water, providing protection, keeping them together, etc. Jesus says that he's the good shepherd who gathers, protects, and leads. Tell one another how Jesus has done one of these things for you and praise Him together.



Scan this QR code and watch this video together. It is a powerful example of what it looks like for a shepherd to call his sheep and for the sheep to recognize his voice. Take turns discussing different things you noticed about this video and how it relates to the passage?

My 3 Ask Jesus to give your 3 the rich and satisfying life he promises. Ask that nothing would get in the way of them receiving experiencing full life in Jesus today.

My Church Ask Jesus to bless all the leaders in our church. Ask him, as the good shepherd,

	to make our church a community that is filled with caring leaders who themselves emulate the characteristics of a good shepherd as well.
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2/9/22 8:22 AM Come&See.indd 55-56

### Wednesday, March 30 John 10:22-42-Yet More Conflict



### THE GOOD NEWS

It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Once again the people picked up stones to kill him.

Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?"

They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!'

And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,' why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father." Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them.

He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile. And many followed him. "John didn't perform miraculous signs," they remarked to one another, "but everything he said about this man has come true." And many who were there believed in Jesus.

## DIG DEEPER

- 'Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah'—It seems like in John's gospel, Jesus is always in Jerusalem for a holiday. Is John trying to make a further statement about Jesus' identity by setting the story during various festivals? Is Jesus basically claiming, 'I am Passover; I am Hanukkah,' just like he says, 'I am the light of the world; I am the bread from heaven'? Or is it just because his story is a very Jerusalem-based story, and the holidays are when Jesus is in Jerusalem?
- 'If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly'—He hasn't exactly been subtle. Just last holiday, he said he happens to have the exact same name as God (John 8:53).
- 'Once again the people picked up stones to kill him'—These people are fickle. They want Jesus to
  tell them that he is God's Special Agent but when he responds by saying that God and he are one,
  they're suddenly horribly offended.
- "I say, you are gods!"—This is Psalm 82:6. Jesus may be toying with them here, poking fun at the wooden and superficial way they treat the Bible. It is possible that Jesus is doing what we call prooftexting: taking a verse out of context and using it to prove a point it doesn't actually intend. Jesus' argument is, 'You see, God himself calls people gods. So, what's the big deal about me calling

myself merely a son of God?' But he's only using half of the stanza. Add the next verse in, and the overall point of the psalm's stanza is along the lines of, 'Say you were gods, I'd still knock you down like any mere mortal.' Quite a different spin.

'many who were there believed in Jesus'—While the focus of the story is firmly on the heated dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees, John still slips in the key detail that in the midst of it all MANY were still coming to Jesus and following him. With the camera narrowed in on the Pharisees, things look pretty grim for Jesus; but pan out a little and the Pharisees were not able to stifle the power of Jesus' invitation to the world (and to us!).

## COME & SEE

My Life Sometimes it's easy to overlook the many good things happening in our lives because our problems take center stage. What's bothering you the most today? Instead of focusing on it, shift your attention to the things in your life that you are grateful for. Remember past ways God has worked in your life. Consider current ways you see God in your life. See if you can find the MANY ways God is working around you.

 $My\ 3$  Pray that your 3 would hear Jesus' voice. Ask Jesus to give them the ability to hear and to speak to them personally in a way that makes sense to them.

My Church The argument in this passage seems especially pointless and hopeless. It's hard to

picture the Pharisees ever sitting down for coffee with Jesus and talking things out civilly. Disagreeing

well is a tough thing to pull off. Ask Jesus to help our church somehow be really good at it. Ask Jesus to help us know how to wade through conflicts, and the opinions and emotions that surround so many of our topics of conversation these days.

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Come&See.indd 57-58

# Thursday, March 31 John 11:1–16—The Death of Lazarus



### THE GOOD NEWS

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light."

Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!"

They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died. So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus."

## DIG DEEPER

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- 'This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume'—Again, John seems to be assuming that we're familiar with the general storyline: 'you know, the Mary with the perfume.' John is just filling in the story with his own favorite episodes, and with some of his own reflections on favorite episodes from the other gospels. It's possible that John mentions the perfume episode here to indicate that these people are Jesus' close friends.
- 'he stayed where he was for the next two days'—Jesus' close friend is sick, but he waits around for two days before going to see him. He knows that Lazarus will be fine. He has a bigger goal in mind, one that requires a little waiting.
- 'But his disciples objected'—His disciples object, not to waiting two days, but to going at all. When Jesus waits the two days, they're relieved that Jesus doesn't rush to his friend's bedside. Someday, the people of Jerusalem are actually going to throw those rocks. To use the passage from two days ago, the disciples are hired hands here; Jesus, the good shepherd, is willing to sacrifice his life for Lazarus (John 10:15).
- 'at night there is danger of stumbling'—Perhaps what Jesus is saying here is that Lazarus won't be
  able to find his way out of death without a guide.
- 'Let's go, too—and die with Jesus'—They might not believe what Jesus is saying about death being
  reversible, but they're willing to stick by Jesus to the death. That says something.



My Life Aren't you glad Jesus is in the business of bringing the dead back to life? Are there any aspects of your life that feel dead? Old dreams? Your finances? Core aspects to your personality that you've shut off? Dissolved relationships? Ask Jesus to bring life back to these places. Anywhere in your life that feels like it has no hope or future, ask God for his provision and back-from-dead power.

My 3 Even though Jesus' disciples disagree about when or whether to go to Bethany, once they decide to do it, Jesus and the disciples go together. There is some sense of community and togetherness as they face the situation in front of them. Ask Jesus to give your 3 a strong community of people who follow him. Pray that your 3 would find an abundance of support, love, and care as they face whatever is in front of them.

My Church Lazarus' illness and death is a complicated piece of news for the disciples to process.

There are so many factors at play: their friends' hardship and sadness; their feelings for their friend;

the danger it could put them in; etc. They seem incapacitated by the news and its implications. Jesus, though, sees a clear path ahead. Ask Jesus to help our church know how best to respond when surprising and complex news comes our way. Specifically ask Jesus to give us the wisdom to know when to wait, when to act, and how best to act.

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Come&See.indd 59-60

### Friday, April 1 John 11:17-44—Lazarus Raised From the Dead



### THE GOOD NEWS

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. Bethany was only a few miles[a] down the road from Jerusalem, and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

"Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life.[b] Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

"Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." So Mary immediately went to him.

Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

## DIG DEEPER

- 'for four days'—Lazarus was dead before news of his illness ever reached Jesus. Jesus wasn't
  waiting for Lazarus to die before he came; he was trying to show that he wasn't worried; this isn't an
  emergency situation.
- 'he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day'—Martha has caught on to Jesus' communication style. She anticipates that Jesus is going to take the situation in a spiritual, metaphorical direction; so she goes spiritual in her own interpretation of, 'he will rise again.' This time, though, Jesus is being literal.

- 'I am the resurrection and the life'—There is no reason why they have to wait until the last day for Lazarus to rise. Jesus is here. He's the resurrection. Why not do it now?
- 'a deep anger welled up within him'—It is hard to know what is at the core of Jesus' anger within him. Is Jesus angry at them for not believing? Angry at them because they don't understand the good news he has for them? Angry at the death of his friend? Or maybe, he is angry at the very existence of death.
- 'Then Jesus wept'—Regardless of where exactly the emotions are coming from, this is clearly a
  very emotional moment for Jesus. First anger, then weeping, then more anger.
- 'he has been dead for four days'—They think Jesus wants what we call a viewing, but it's a little
  late for that. I think John adds this detail in order to show that there's little chance that Lazarus
  is simply unconscious. He's been dead and in the grave for days. They expect that the body has
  already started to decay.

## COME & SEE

My Life Regardless of what the specific source might be, it's so great that Jesus gives himself space to feel the emotion and intensity of what is happening around him. Whether you are one who sheds lots of tears every day or one that sheds one tear every ten years, is there something intense that has happened in your life (either currently or previously) that you just need to take some time to process and feel? If nothing comes to mind, ask Jesus if there is anything you've been shoving out of sight that he would like to bring up. Take some time just to be still and reflect. Be open to feeling whatever emotions come to the surface. Talk to Jesus about the situation, how you are feeling and how to make sense of it. If you feel devoid of emotion, take the time to just recall whatever comes to mind and ask Jesus to show you what he wants you to learn to from this situation.

My 3 Just as Jesus' followers got hung up in wondering why Jesus didn't stop Lazarus from dying, consider what might be the 'why' questions your 3 are hung up on. Ask Jesus to help your 3 move past places they may be stuck or reasons they may be skeptical of Jesus (or church, or religion, etc.). In the midst of such hard questions, ask Jesus to show up powerfully for your 3 like he did for Lazarus' friends and family.

My Church It seems like no one has any idea of how good Jesus is or how miraculous the things are he is capable of. Just when everyone thinks Jesus has reached his limit, he takes his miracle-working to a whole new level. Ask Jesus to expand our imagination of the miraculous things he is capable of.

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### Saturday, April 2 John 11:45-12:11 - Plots and Adoration



### THE GOOD NEWS

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation."

Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, "You don't know what you're talking about! You don't realize that it's better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed."

He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus' death. As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began. They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, "What do you think? He won't come for Passover, will he?" Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.

Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus-the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.

Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

When all the people heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

## DIG DEEPER

- 'some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done'-This is like Jesus asking in Wednesday's passage, 'For which [of my good works] are you going to stone me?' (John 10:32). Somehow these people think that raising someone from the dead is some sort of misdeed for which Jesus should be reported to the authorities.
- 'it's better for you that one man should die' Caiaphas unwittingly plays Jesus' role of speaking on a deeper level. Caiaphas is simply saying that pure utilitarianism requires that they get rid of Jesus to

protect the whole nation from Roman retaliation. But there's a deeper truth to what he's saying. It is Jesus' own plan, from the Father, to face death on behalf of the entire world.

- 'to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world' While one stream of prophecy pictures the Messiah as a Jewish military hero, another stream portrays him as the one who brings the whole world together as a family under God. Isaiah 66:18 is a good example: 'And I, because of what they have planned and done, am about to come and gather the people of all nations and languages, and they will come and see my glory' (TNIV). In John's eyes, this is the more accurate and relevant picture of Jesus.
- 'the home of Lazarus The man he had raised from the dead' This isn't exactly a quiet return to the public eye. Jesus stays with a well-known man, who lives on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and who Jesus recently raised from the dead. Is Jesus now trying to cause a stir, or does he just not care?
- 'anointed Jesus' feet with it' Anointing was a ritual symbolizing God's favor and God's commissioning of a person for a special task. A prophet or priest poured scented oil over the person's head as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Mary doesn't consider herself worthy to anoint Jesus' head, so she anoints his feet instead.
- 'She did this in preparation for my burial' Corpses were treated with scented oils before burial. Jesus sees his death close enough that Mary may as well get started now with the funeral preparations.
- 'You will always have the poor among you' Jesus isn't being callous toward the poor here. He's merely saying that this is a special occasion, on which Mary's actions are more appropriate than the usual charitable giving. He's actually quoting a Bible verse which encourages generosity: 'There will always be some in the land who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share freely with the poor and with other Israelites in need' (Deuteronomy 15:11).



My Life Mary gives generously, whereas Judas looks at things from a viewpoint of scarcity. Time is often perceived as a scarce resource. What would it feel like to have an abundance of time this week? Pray that Jesus would create opportunities for you to experience time in this way.

Family/Household Option: Mary gives generously, whereas Judas looks at things from a viewpoint of scarcity. For families, time is often perceived as a scarce resource. How could you spend time with each other or for each other this week? Pray that Jesus would create opportunities for that time to be spent together.

My 3 It's not likely that any of your 3 have active death threats against them like Jesus did. Nonetheless, ask Jesus today to protect your 3 from any enemies they might have or anyone who is wishing them harm.

My Church The imagery of the house being 'filled with the fragrance' of the woman's offering is such a vivid one. Think of just how good, comforting, and welcoming it is when you walk into a room filled with a wonderful aroma. Imagine the smell of freshly baked bread or a fire burning in the fireplace or a favorite food being cooked for you when you step into the door. Obviously, the woman's offering smells wonderful because her offering is, in fact, a wonderful-smelling-perfume. But it's not a stretch to think that all our extravagant sacrifices to God fill the areas around us with a certain kind of sweetness. Ask Jesus to help our church be abundantly generous in our gifts and sacrifices to him. Ask Jesus for our church to be a place that is filled with a sweetness of people generously and abundantly offering gifts and sacrifices to him.

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Come&See.indd 63-64 2/9/22 8:22 AM

#### Sunday, April 3 John 12:12-33 - Jesus' Big Entry & Prediction



#### THE GOOD NEWS

The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

"Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!"

Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt."

His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him.

Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet him - because they had heard about this miraculous sign. Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!"

Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels - a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

"Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name.'

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again." When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

### DIG DEEPER

- 'the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city'—Jesus' stop in Bethany heightens the anticipation. Everyone is watching and wondering whether he would dare to actually enter Jerusalem itself. It seems everyone senses that if he does so, it signals a fundamental shift of some sort.
- 'Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'—They're quoting Psalm 118:25, 26. This was a common song for greeting pilgrim's arriving for the festival, though it seems to be invested with special significance in this circumstance.
- 'Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt'—This is from Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey- riding on a donkey's colt.

- 'Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me'-It's not so much that Jesus must die so that his followers don't have to. They're followers... even in death. It's the only way to get through to the eternal life on the other side. This is reminiscent of Psalm 23 when it says 'Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid'.
- 'Now my soul is deeply troubled' This isn't easy even for Jesus. He wants some other way. Just as his disciples trusted him to guide them, he trusted his Father to guide him.
- 'when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out' Perhaps we finally have the answer to our iudgment puzzle here. The object of Jesus' judgment is Satan, the great enemy of God, portraved here as a usurper. Jesus has not come to fight the Romans, but to wrest authority over the world from Satan.



My Life When Jesus comes to Jerusalem, it's like a big parade or celebration. Where would you like to be in this story? Imagine a parade for Jesus coming to town. Where would you like to be? Take a moment and imagine that scene.

Family/Household Option: When Jesus comes to Jerusalem, it's like a big parade or celebration. Have you ever been to a parade? What were you celebrating? Where would you like to be in this story? Why? Imagine a parade for Jesus coming to town. Where would you like to be? Do something together today to celebrate Jesus.

MV 3 It's reassuring that Jesus says it's his job to draw people to himself. Thank Jesus that he is drawing each of your 3. Ask him to keep it up and tell him you would like to be helpful in any way possible.

My Church Just as Jesus looks to God to help him actually complete what he to do, ask Jesus

the task feels dauntin	urpose. Ask des	us to empower ar	ia sustain our on

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#### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE WEEK:

#### Fasting & Service

Fasting is giving up something to make more room for God in your life. It's like you are telling God, 'You are more important to me.' Consider not eating a particular food or not doing a favorite activity this week. Use that time or space to have a conversation with God instead, or to serve another person. For example, you might give up TV or video games and use that time to pray or to help someone in your family by doing their chore, helping with their homework, or some other loving action. Or you could fast as an entire family, by eating an especially simple supper—bread and soup, for instance—and using the money that you would have spent on the rest of the meal to purchase canned goods to donate to your local food pantry (Open Arms Mission).

Keep your eyes and ears open for unexpected ways that God is speaking to you or multiplying your actions. At the end of the week, think about what you liked and what you might not have liked about this particular spiritual discipline. For groups and families, share your thoughts with each other.

"My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory." John 17:9-11 week S

Come&See.indd 67-68

#### Monday, April 4 John 12:34–50 – Belief & Unbelief



#### THE GOOD NEWS

The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture[a] that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?"

Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light."

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted:

"Lord, who has believed our message?
To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?"
But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said,
"The Lord has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts—
so that their eyes cannot see,
and their hearts cannot understand,
and they cannot turn to me
and have me heal them."

Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah's glory. Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say."



- 'Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?'—What Jesus is saying doesn't fit with their understanding of the Messiah. So now they start to wonder if 'Son of Man' is a prophetic character distinct from the Messiah, one they somehow have missed up until now.
- 'exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted'—Isaiah 6:10 and Isaiah 53:1. We may be tempted
  to think that the people's rejection of Jesus is a result of him not being clear or the people being
  ignorant. Actually, this rejection is all a part of the script, as outlined by the prophets.
- 'But they wouldn't admit it for fear'—In their heart of hearts, more people believe in Jesus than are
  willing to admit publicly. The political cost of coming out for Jesus is just too high for them. Sadly,
  they choose to take a pass on the spiritual and eternal benefits Jesus is offering. They are unwilling
  to pay the price in their ordinary life.

- 'Jesus shouted to the crowds'—Jesus is not always hidden or slipping away. It's interesting that this detail is here. He stood and shouted for the crowd to hear what he has to say. Unlike the 'many' mentioned a verse before, he isn't afraid. It's reminiscent of Proverbs 1:20.
- 'will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken'—Jesus doesn't have the time or interest to judge people who don't listen to him. He has better things to do, like bring light into the lives of people who are open to his invitation. That doesn't mean there are no consequences to refusing to listen. The consequences will come in time 'Those who love their life in this world will lose it' (John 12:25). Eventually, everyone will run out of life on their own. If they haven't asked Jesus for his eternal life, they won't have any life at all.
- 'his commands lead to eternal life—This passage begins with the crowd questioning Jesus about
  the Messiah and his eternal life. It ends with Jesus telling the crowd how he centers himself on
  what the Father says because it will lead to eternal life. He is giving them instructions to access
  eternal life for themselves.



My Life Are you intrigued by the religious leaders who believed in Jesus but were too scared to say so? We could talk for hours about how the whole story could have played out differently for everyone if these influential people had simply spoken up. What's striking is the personal costs for them of being held back by fear for their reputation. Where in your life are you scared about what other people think? Are there aspects of your reputation that feel at stake because of Jesus in some way? Ask Jesus to show you if there are ways you are being held back by fear. If there are, tell him what you're afraid of. Ask Jesus for his help in moving past that fear and ask him to show you what he is offering you. Consider telling Jesus that you care more about him than what others think.

My 3 Prayer #1 - In their heart of hearts, your 3 may believe in Jesus more than they are willing to admit publicly. For some or all of your 3, the political or relational cost of coming out for Jesus is just too high. Sadly, they choose to take a pass on the spiritual and eternal benefits Jesus is offering. Pray that your 3 would be willing to investigate the truths of Jesus despite some perceived risks keeping them at an arms distance currently.

<u>Prayer #2</u> - In the same way that Jesus was hidden from the crowds that were out to destroy him, ask Jesus to hide or protect your 3 from people or situations that are out to destroy them. Ask Jesus to let none of Satan's plans for your 3 come to pass. Pray that your 3 would sense Jesus' protection today.

My Church In our city, as in Jerusalem in Jesus' time, there are all sorts of questions about who Jesus is and how exactly he fits in. In this passage, Jesus' response seems to be simply, 'Try me. You'll like me' (Pastor Bill paraphrase)! For those who decide to trust him, it'll be like the light is turned on in a dark place. Ask Jesus to strengthen our church's trust in him, and that our light would shine more brightly than ever!

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Come&See.indd 69-70

#### Tuesday, April 5 John 13:1-20 - Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet



### THE GOOD NEWS

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.[a] It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas,[b] son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, [c] to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

"I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' [d] I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I am the Messiah.[e] I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."



- 'he loved them to the very end' Jesus is now in the final sprint; he wants to finish strong. He will keep doing what he has been doing all along, to the very end and to a greater degree than ever before.
- 'you will never ever wash my feet!' Peter is aghast that his rabbi would do something so lowly as wash his feet. He has it right that Jesus is his superior, but he doesn't really understand what that means. Master and slave isn't really the right analogy for their relationship. The one Jesus most recently used is shepherd and sheep. A shepherd looks to the needs of the sheep, not the other way around.
- 'does not need to wash, except for the feet' Peter then gets carried away in the other direction. Jesus responds, 'Let's not go overboard. We'll just wash what's dirty' (Pastor Bill paraphrase). Perhaps Jesus is trying to lighten the mood! There may be some spiritual metaphor Jesus is making, but John doesn't explain it.

- 'Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them'—Rather like with the people who believe in Jesus but won't admit it in yesterday's passage, the knowledge is no good unless it's put into action.
- 'I tell you this beforehand'—Betrayal and death are not the end of the story. Jesus wants them to know that even when things look bad, they're actually proceeding according to plan. It's important for them to know this for a couple of reasons. First, Jesus does not want them to be unsettled by Judas' betrayal. Second, he is preparing them for the fact that they too, won't always be popular and well-received. That doesn't mean they have gotten things wrong.

### COME & SEE

My Life How does this story make you feel. Imagine Jesus is washing your feet. What are you sensing? Jesus is showing his followers how to serve. Pray for God to reveal unique ways for you to serve others.

Family/Household Option: If you want, you could reenact this story by having a family feet-washing. Jesus washed his disciples' feet to set an example of how he'd like his followers to serve one another. Ask God for something you could you do to serve or help someone else in your family today. Then do it.

My 3 As Jesus' life comes to end, he somehow maintains focus on what's most important to him. Ask Jesus to give the same focus to your 3. Pray that they wouldn't be distracted by whatever feels urgent, but that they would really pursue what matters most to them. Ask Jesus for opportunities to talk with your 3 about the things that matter most to each of you in life.

My Church We're such an egalitarian society that it's hard to picture just what a big deal it was for

the disciples' rabbi, Jesus, to bend down and wash their feet. Think what it would be like if Pastor Mark

popping ways			

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2/9/22 8:22 AM Come&See.indd 71-72

# Wednesday, April 6 John 13:21–14:7 – Betrayals, Predictions & Comfort



#### THE GOOD NEWS

Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?" So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, "The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going. So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?"

And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later."

"But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you."

Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going."

"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

## DIG DEEPER

- 'Now Jesus was deeply troubled'—Jesus has just finished telling them not to be unduly rattled by the coming betrayal. When the betrayal comes, it just means that things are proceeding according to plan. Nonetheless, it's an emotionally upsetting circumstance. It doesn't cause Jesus to doubt, but it does make him sad.
- 'disciple Jesus loved'—Traditionally, Bible interpreters take this to be John the author.
- 'It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl'—This seems like an elaborate way of going
  about it. He could just whisper, 'It's Judas.' He may be consciously acting out Psalm 41:9. It almost
  serves as a cue for the prophesized action to start.

- 'God will be glorified because of him'—Jesus is glorifying God by trusting God with his very life.
  The glory Jesus receives in return is the glory of being raised from the dead. Jesus keeps talking
  about being 'lifted up' (John 3:14, John 8:28, John 12:32). It seems that the raising up will happen
  on three levels:
  - · He'll be literally raised up on a cross;
  - · He'll be raised from the dead;
  - · And he'll be 'raised up' as an example of faith in God and as a source of eternal life.
- 'Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples'—Love for one another
  is not just the way that they will survive Jesus' absence, it is also the way the world will know they
  are Jesus' disciples. When people see how they love one another, they will say, 'There's something
  Jesus-like about these people.'
- 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'—This reminds us once again of Jesus' saying to Nathanael in the very beginning: 'you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth' (John 1:51). Jesus himself is somehow the pathway to heaven. They may not yet know exactly how to follow the path, but they do know the path (Jesus).

## COME & SEE

My Life How would you feel if your name preceded the clause, 'the disciple Jesus loved'? You might not even feel like a disciple—not to mention especially loved—but for kicks let's try it:

	the Disciple Jesus Loved.
(your name)	•

How does that resonate with you? Does it feel true, or hard to accept? Ask Jesus to show you his love for you in a real way. Don't settle for just knowing it in your head; ask Jesus to speak to the core of your being about his love for you. Today, look for ways that Jesus is showing you how much he loves you. A fun way that many people practice receiving Jesus' love is called 'soaking.' It's a good way to force yourself to receive from Jesus. Here's how to try it: Play some quiet music, lie down or be somewhere you are super comfortable, ask Jesus to be with you, and then, like a sponge, allow the Holy Spirit to work on the inside. Your only job is to keep your heart attuned to Jesus; that's it.

My 3 Pray today about anything that is troubling your 3. Ask Jesus to help your 3 in those situations. Pray that your 3 would trust Jesus in the midst of whatever is troubling them.

My Church Being part of an entire community where everyone deeply loves and cares about everyone else sounds utterly remarkable, doesn't it? It is, of course, one of those 'easier said than done' things, but we still think it's worth aiming for. Of all the things we could be known for at our church, being known as a place that genuinely loves people does sound pretty compelling. Ask Jesus for his help to do it. Ask Jesus to fill us with so much of his love that it would easily overflow to others.

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# Thursday, April 7 John 14:8–31 – Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit & Peace



#### THE GOOD NEWS

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

"I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going.

### DIG DEEPER

- 'Lord, show us the Father'—This had to have been frustrating for Jesus. His entire nature and purpose was to be a picture of the Father: 'No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us' (John 1:18). Everything he does shows the Father. But even his closest friends don't guite understand.
- 'Just believe'—This may be Jesus' answer to Thomas' complaint in yesterday's passage (John 14:5) that they don't know the way.
- 'will do the same works I have done, and even greater works'—Jesus' death will not be an end to his own life. It also won't be an end to his work. He plans for signs of eternal life to continue and to increase, through the disciples including you and me.

- 'another Advocate, who will never leave you'—This won't keep happening to them. The next divine
  mentor will never leave. Good shepherd to the end, Jesus makes sure to arrange for a permanent
  replacement as he leaves the Holy Spirit.
- 'you are in me, and I am in you'—Note here that Jesus is describing his relationship with them in the same terms as he describes the Father's relationship with him. Jesus is inviting the disciples right into the family with the Father and him.
- 'Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me'—All along, we've talked about the remarkable lack of interest Jesus has shown in being a good follower of the rules. Here, rules make something of an entrance. It turns out that you do have to follow his rules if you want to follow him. His rules, however, seem to be quite a different set than the ones with which the Pharisees are concerned. The only commands Jesus has given his disciples are to trust him (John 12:36), to love one another (John 13:34), and not to worry (John 14:1). These rules have a much different feel from, 'If you carry a mat on the Sabbath, we'll kill you.'
- 'we will come and make our home with each of them'—In yesterday's passage, Jesus talked about taking them to the Father's house (John 14:2-3). Now, Jesus and the Father are coming to live with the disciples. Regardless of who moves where, they will all be together!
- 'He has no power over me'—It's not that the devil is stronger. Jesus could resist him if he wanted. But Jesus is purposefully using the devil toward the Father's ends.

### COME & SEE

My Life Have there been any times in your life when you have experienced deep, grounding peace? What level of peace or anxiety do you feel right now? Ask Jesus for his gift of peace—peace for your mind and for your heart. If you err on the anxious side and have a hard time receiving this gift, ask Jesus for help receiving what he is offering you. Is there a specific area in your life where you are particularly lacking peace? Ask God for peace in that very circumstance.

My 3 Are your 3 open to experiencing anything miraculous from God? Ask Jesus for more of the Holy Spirit for your 3. Ask Jesus to help your 3 be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Ask Jesus for opportunities to talk about and experience the Holy Spirit with your 3.

My Church If you had any big, outrageous dream for our church what would it be? Today, throw

caution, logistics, and practical-how-to-plans to the wind, and ask Jesus for whatever that big dream is,


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#### Friday, April 8 John 15:1-27 - The Vine & Branches



#### THE GOOD NEWS

"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.

"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. They would not be quilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures: 'They hated me without cause.'

"But I will send you the Advocate – the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

### DIG DEEPER

- 'cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit'—A gardener wants the most fruit they can get from their vines. To increase the yield, they'll cut off any branches that aren't growing fruit, so that valuable resources aren't being sent away from fruit-making. Like a gardener, God is looking for some sort of 'fruit' in people's lives. When God doesn't see what He is looking for, God stops wasting energy in that direction.
- 'he prunes the branches that do bear fruit' Even fruit-bearing branches are pruned, so that the energy goes toward the fruit and not unnecessary leafiness. Every branch faces some cutting. The choice is between being lopped off and being pruned.
- 'you may ask for anything you want' Whereas unfruitful branches get cut off, fruitful ones get more and more fruit. Keep asking!

- 'Yes, your joy will overflow!'—If you're doing it right, this type of life is richly satisfying.
- 'This is my commandment: Love each other—This seems to be the fruit the Father is looking for. Wherever the Father sees love, he pours out more love. When the disciples choose to love one another, they tap into the very love Jesus and the Father have for one another. Soon, love is flowing in all directions: Father to Son; Son to disciples; disciples to Son; disciples to one another. The love keeps getting bigger.
- 'But I will send you the Advocate'—They don't need to take notes. The Holy Spirit will remind them.



### COME & SEE

My Life What happens when a branch falls off a tree? Jesus says we need to stay connected to him, just like a branch stays connected to a tree. Think about the sort of spiritual practices that help us stay most connected to Jesus? Think about the spiritual practices we've tried during this Come & See adventure. Is there one or two that you'd like to keep doing after you finish?

Family/Household Option: What happens when a branch falls off a tree? Jesus says we need to stay connected to him, just like a branch stays connected to a tree. What spiritual practices help us stay most connected to Jesus? Think about the spiritual practices we've tried during this Come & See adventure. Which have helped you and your family stay better connected to Jesus? Has your family found one or two that you'd like to keep doing after you finish? Talk together about your thoughts.

My 3 Ask Jesus to show his love to your 3 today. Pray that they would begin to grasp his love as something personal and something good for them. Ask Jesus also to surround your 3 with people who truly love them.

My Church While pruning sounds better than being cut off entirely, the thought of pruning still

might make you wince. It sounds necessary, but uncomfortable. On behalf of our church, tell Jesus that

we want to bear good fruit, that we're willing to be pruned, and that we really want his help in the Ask Jesus to help us recognize good fruit, to recognize when pruning is necessary, and to embraping process.					
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#### Saturday, April 9 John 16:1–33—The Spirit, Joy & Peace



#### THE GOOD NEWS

"I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith. For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. This is because they have never known the Father or me. Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

"But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

"There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

"In a little while you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again."

Some of the disciples asked each other, "What does he mean when he says, 'In a little while you won't see me, but then you will see me,' and 'I am going to the Father'? And what does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand."

Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, "Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

"I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God. Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father."

Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God."

Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

## DIG DEEPER

• 'I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you'—It's not a surprise to Jesus that they are heading into rough times. He has known for a while, but it wasn't the right time to tell them. He's had higher priorities. Now, though, before he leaves, he's downloading everything he can.

- 'of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment'—The idea here is that some
  people will realize after Jesus' death, his resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit that they
  were wrong about Jesus. The Holy Spirit will give those people another chance to say, 'Yes,' to
  eternal life.
- 'your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy—It's unclear whether Jesus is referring to his
  resurrection, or to their own deaths (and full entrance into eternal life). The reaction he's describing
  sounds very much like what happens when they see him risen from the grave. But it also seems
  like he's talking about something that will happen later than three days from now.
- 'you will ask the Father directly'—Up until now, Jesus has been giving them, in himself, pictures of the Father. Shortly, he will be introducing them into direct relationship.
- 'using my name'—It's like they can get on the invite list for some very exclusive gathering by simply dropping his name: 'Just tell them you're with me' (Pastor Bill paraphrase)!

### COME & SEE

My Life Jesus says that the Holy Spirit knows everything, even the future; and the Holy Spirit is willing to share those things with us. Ask God, in His infinite wisdom, to reveal to you exactly what He wants you to know and listen to see if the Holy Spirit gives you an answer.

**Family/Household Option:** Jesus says that the Holy Spirit knows everything, even the future; and the Holy Spirit is willing to share those things with us. Ask God, in His infinite wisdom, to reveal to you exactly what He wants you to know. Then listen to hear if the Holy Spirit gives you an answer.

My 3 Pray that your 3 would have an expanded imagination of what they could ask for out of life. Jesus says that the Father is willing to do absolutely anything for anyone who asks in Jesus' name. Pray that your 3 would have God-sized hopes in their lives.

My Church The longer Jesus is with the disciples, the more he seems to tell them. It seems like he only tells them things as they are ready. Ask Jesus to expand our capacity as a church to listen to him. Pray that we would be good stewards of what we hear from God. Pray specifically today for our Prayer Team, Small Groups, and the various classes (Starting Point, Xplore, Financial Peace University) that help people get anchored in God's truth. Ask that these would in fact be great spaces for people to hear from Jesus and grow to be more like him!

2/9/22 8:22 AM

### Sunday, April 10

John 17: 1-26 - Jesus Prays for Himself & Us



#### THE GOOD NEWS

After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

"I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

"My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

"Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one -as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

"O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

## DIG DEEPER

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'I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do'-This prayer is like Jesus' final status report before departing. He wants the Father to know that he has successfully completed his to-do list. He also has a list of things that he is now handing off to the Father to continue. Please note, the cross has not yet occurred, and yet Jesus said his work was 'complete'. There is something powerful in the fact that Jesus considers his mission 'complete' when he prepared and equipped his disciples to carry on his mission. He made disciples that can now make disciples. This is now our mission as well!

'bring me into the glory we shared before the world began' - Jesus was able to raise Lazarus from the dead, but he won't be able to raise himself. He's putting his life into the Father's hands.

'they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you'-The Father commissioned Jesus to be a good shepherd to the disciples. As he has faithfully done so, he has gained a whole new level of affection for and devotion to them. So now he asks the Father to take special care of them as he leaves.

'They do not belong to this world'—It seems that Jesus uses 'world' here in several different ways. Maybe, you're finding it a little challenging to keep straight what he means in any given instance. Here are a few ideas that may clarify it a bit:

- 'before the world began'-In this instance, he seems to be talking about the material universe:
- 'the world hates them' Here it seems 'the world' is Jesus' name for the devil's domain. Confusing as it is (since he also uses the word in other ways), Jesus calls the devil's domain 'the world' because the devil's main work is to get people to settle for merely earthly satisfaction, instead of reaching higher for the real satisfaction Jesus offers. They want mere bread instead of the bread of life, water instead of the Spirit, to be Abraham's genetic heirs rather than his spiritual heirs.
- 'I am sending them into the world' and 'so that the world will believe' Here, 'the world' seems to refer to wider human society, beyond just our little group, whether that little group be the disciples or the entire Jewish nation. In this regard, 'the world' is Jesus' eventual aim. He eventually wants to include 'the world' in the loving relationship he shares with the Father and is now inviting the disciples into.

So, in summary, Jesus came to the world, to send his disciples into the world, to invite the world to leave the world behind and join him in eternal life. What could be clearer?

### COME & SEE

MY LITE Those of us who love to-do lists and accomplishments most likely love Jesus' recap to God the Father, It's a helpful synopsis as we near the end of John. Take some time to think back on the past year of your life and create a recap of your own. What happened? Were there some distinct spiritual seasons you noticed? Were there certain places you saw Jesus come through? Or certain things you did that seemed to bring you closer to Jesus? Further from Jesus? What were the highlights? The disappointments? Talk to God about what life has been like for you the past year. Ask Jesus for his insight into what's been going on in your life. Ask him to show you where he was at work in your life and what he is doing now. Ask Jesus if there are any lessons he wants you to remember from this past year.

My 3 The great pity in John's gospel is that so many of us get stuck in 'this world,' the world of shallow appetites and limited benefits. Pray that this wouldn't happen to your 3. Ask Jesus to give them tastes of what Jesus calls 'eternal life': truly, deeply satisfying life that lies just beyond what we can see or grasp ourselves.

My Church Pray that our church would bring God glory. If the word glory seems a little lofty and angelic, here is how Merriam Webster defines it:

- 1. praise, honor, or distinction extended by common consent: renown
- 2. worshipful praise, honor, and thanksgiving (giving glory to God)

Ask Jesus that among us, God would get all of the honor God deserves. Pray that our times together on the weekend would be filled with exuberant praise to God, and that everything we do as a church would bring recognition of and thanksgiving to God in the wider world.

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#### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF THE WEEK:

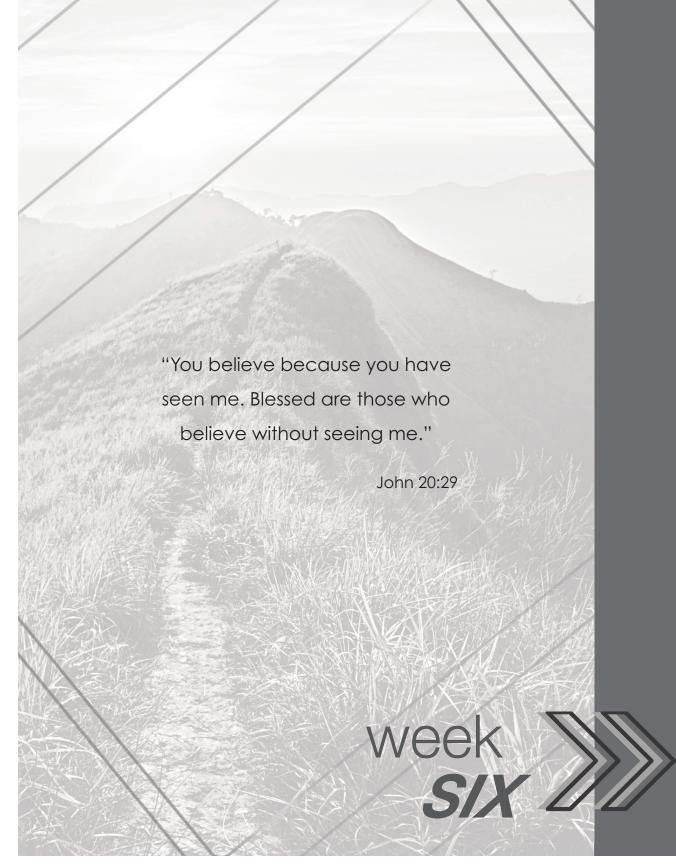
#### Thanksgiving

Reflect on your encounters with Jesus during this 42-day journey. Think about the highs and lows that you experienced along the way. Thank God for being with you! This week we encourage you to start a gratitude journal to keep a record every day of things you're thankful that God has done. This practice can help increase your awareness and confidence that God is good and that He is with you.

As you reflect on this year's lent study, "Come & See", think about which spiritual practices you especially liked. Consider incorporating them into your routine after lent ends.

For families and groups, reflect on your time together by sharing highs and lows you have encountered along the way. Thank God for being with you on this journey! Try starting a gratitude journal to keep a record every day of things you're thankful that God has done or take turns saying thanks to God every night before dinner.

As you reflect on this year's lent study, "Come & See", talk about which spiritual practices you especially liked. Consider incorporating them into part of your household or family's routine even after this study ends.



Come&See.indd 83-84

## Monday, April 11 John 18:1–14—Jesus is Arrested



#### THE GOOD NEWS

After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

"Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) As Jesus said "I am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground! Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

"I told you that I am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me."

Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

### DIG DEEPER

- they all drew back and fell to the ground'—Though he is on one level simply saying, 'I'm the one you're looking for,' he is also evoking God's name, I AM (Exodus 3:14). It's not just a bluff. There is such power behind the name "I AM" that it actually bowls them over.
- 'I did not lose a single one'—The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). Jesus gives himself up in such a way that his flock is safe.
- 'Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus'—This is both heroic and comical! Peter is putting his life in danger to rescue Jesus, and that is respectable. But Jesus doesn't need rescuing, and if he did, Peter wouldn't be the one to do it. Jesus does more damage to the mob merely by saying his name than Peter does by drawing a sword. It's clear that if Jesus wanted to, he could handle this mob fairly easily without Peter's help.
- 'they took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas'—Caiaphas is the official high priest as far as the Romans are concerned, but Annas may be considered the 'real' high priest by the Jewish people. Annas had been deposed by the Romans about fifteen years before, but as far as Jewish religious law is concerned, the office of high priest is a lifetime appointment (IVP Bible Background Commentary).



My Life Most likely, if any of us had a loud, angry mob of people coming after us, we would crumble in fear. But Jesus stands confidently in the face of the hostility and accusations that come his way. Are there things you feel accused of? This could be actual accusations from other people or an internal voice of criticism. Spend some time talking to Jesus about those things. The Bible tells us that accusation is the work of the devil, and that we don't need to tolerate it. If you feel like you can identify the specific accusation, consider praying something like this:

"I reject the lie of {insert accusation here} in Jesus name" or "I say to any accusation or criticism to go in Jesus name."

Jesus makes it his aim to bless and encourage. Ask Jesus to show you his encouragement and truth in those places where you feel accused.

My 3 The image of Jesus' three small words sending this huffy, war-like crowd to the ground reminds us a little bit of the story of when David, a mere shepherd boy, takes down Goliath, a giant warrior! The power of God on your side is able to conquer anything. Ask Jesus to show that power to your 3. Just as the crowds are literally blown to the ground by the words of Jesus, pray that your 3 would also be blown away by Jesus—but in a good way.

My Church It's safe to say that this day counts as a very, very bad one for Jesus and his disciples.

Maybe because we know how the story ends, we easily overlook just how hard this would have been for

them in the moment. Ask Jesus to give us grace, confidence, and comfort to navigate our own hard times

well. Ask Jesus to make our church more like him-patiently enduring and staying faithful-and less like

Peter—unnelptully taking initiative and impulsively cutting oπ people's ears.	

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Come&See.indd 85-86

#### Tuesday, April 12 John 18:15–27 – Peter Denies Jesus



#### THE GOOD NEWS

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said."

Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"

Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Didn't I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?" Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.



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#### DIG DEEPER

- *'Everyone knows what I teach'*—Jesus has nothing to be ashamed of. Everything they're asking him about is public knowledge. I think Jesus is making an implicit comparison between Annas and himself. Jesus conducted all of his business in the public square, but Annas is conducting his investigation in private in the middle of the night. Who's the one doing the hiding?
- 'Ask those who heard me. They know what I said'—I think this is what we call being a difficult
  witness. It seems that, while Jesus is not trying to hide anything and he has, in fact, fully accepted
  that this process will lead to his execution he also doesn't feel a particular need to be respectful of
  or helpful to this kangaroo court.
- 'a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off '—Peter hasn't fully thought his plan through. It's tough to go undercover when just a moment ago you cut off the ear of someone in the same group you're trying to infiltrate.



My Life For many of us every time we read this passage, we judge Peter: 'How dare you deny Jesus? Aren't you supposed to be one of his closest friends? And c'mon Peter, didn't you just tell him you were willing to die for him.' Despite our impatience with Peter, truth be told, most of us may not have actually responded differently. Maybe it's because we often lose track of what our relationship to Jesus is. It's hard to speak up about Jesus when we can barely figure out how to describe him and our relationship to him. How would you answer the question, 'Who is Jesus to you?' Spend some time today reflecting on the past six weeks of Lent. How have you seen or experienced Jesus during this time? Is there anything new you've learned about Jesus or an aspect of Jesus that you've experienced for the first time? Consider writing about these things to Jesus.

 $My\ 3$  The religious leaders and the crowds have accused Jesus for so long that they've lost their ability to hear him. He could have said, 'You just won the lottery,' and they still would only hear him as spouting utter blasphemy. Ask Jesus to break any false accusations your 3 have made against Jesus. Maybe it was a result of a bad experience at a church or with a judgmental Christian. Ask Jesus to give your 3 the ability to truly see and hear what Jesus is actually saying, and what they have assumed him to be saying.

My Church Annas holds his court in secret, while Jesus is open and public about what he says

and does. Jesus seems to get a great deal of strength and confidence from the fact that he has nothing to

hide. Pray that our of to be typified by a s	church would be a patrong, confident, fre	place where dest ee, and life-giving	tructive secrets has openness.	ave no place. Pray	for our church

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Come&See.indd 87-88

## Wednesday, April 13 John 18:28-40-Pilate Questions Jesus



#### THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

"We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.

"Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. (This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.)

Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this 'King of the Jews'?"

But they shouted back, "No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!" (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

### DIG DEEPER

- 'Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning'—John doesn't bother to report on Jesus' audience with the actual high priest; apparently there's no new information of any significance. It's worth noting that this trial presided over by the official high priest is highly irregular; it's done off-hours.
- 'because it would defile them'—Jewish religious law contains a long list of items and actions that are
  considered prohibited or unclean. We know these rules today as 'keeping kosher.' Not eating pork
  is perhaps the most well-known way of observing the kosher laws. Notice how Jesus wasn't defiled
  from being our sacrifice upon entering Pilates headquarters.
- 'take him away and judge him by your own law'—The Romans gave the Jewish council a fair amount
  of autonomy to govern internal, and particularly religious, affairs for themselves. In most instances,
  however, the Jewish council did not have the authority to assign a capital punishment (IVP Bible
  Background Commentary).
- 'This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die'—The preferred Jewish form of execution is stoning. The Romans instead used crucifixion. Despite the repeated attempts to stone him (John 10:31), Jesus has been insisting that he'll be 'lifted up,' as the Romans would do (John 3:14, John 8:28, John 12:32). Think also of Moses and the bronze serpent (Num. 21:4-9).

'What is truth?'—In a 'live and let live' sort of way, Pilate is perhaps the most this-worldly person we've encountered in John's gospel. If Jesus were claiming to be King of the Jews, or of Galilee, or really of any political entity of any kind, no matter how small, it would be of vast concern to Pilate. But King of Truth? No problem. Pilate scarcely believes in something as conceptual as truth. I am certain the concept of eternal life was completely beyond his imagination or concern. 'King of Truth? That's it? Knock yourself out.

### COME & SEE

My Life Pilate may allegedly be the person in charge, but it's hard to get over how he seems entirely powerless, trapped as he is stuck between two groups (the Roman government and the Jews). Can you relate to Pilate at all? Is there some place you feel trapped? Trapped in anxiety? Trapped in dept? A bad relationship? An addiction? A job you hate? Ask Jesus to free you from whatever you feel is currently holding you in some form of bondage. Are there parts of your identity that have been buried as a result? Ask Jesus to restore you to who he intended you to be.

My 3 In this passage, the Pharisees are able to influence everyone around them in pursuit of their hatred of Jesus. Pray today about the things and people that influence your 3. Thank Jesus for all the good influences that your 3 have in their lives. Ask Jesus to provide more people and places to positively influence your 3 towards him. If there are situations that negatively influence your 3, ask Jesus to protect them.

My Church We haven't heard Jesus explicitly mention his kingdom very much, but it does seem like the whole time he has been trying to demonstrate what that kingdom is like: blind people see, everyone is fed, and there is a whole lot of love. Ask Jesus for more of his kingdom here at our church. Ask Jesus to make our church a place where people would come to experience his kingdom firsthand. Can you imagine living in a place where everyone got along, sick people were healed, and the hungry were fed? Tell Jesus that our church wants to be like that and ask him for his help in doing so.

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Come&See.indd 89-90 2/9/22 8:22 AM

#### Thursday, April 14 John 19:1-16 - Jesus is Tortured & Sentenced



### THE GOOD NEWS

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty." Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!"

When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"Take him yourselves and crucify him," Pilate said. "I find him not guilty."

The Jewish leaders replied. "By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?"

Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar."

When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!"

"Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!"

"What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back.

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus away.



#### DIG DEEPER

- 'Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip'—I think this is letting someone off with a stern warning, Roman-style. Pilate seems to hope that the crowd will be satisfied with a good beating.
- 'understand clearly that I find him not guilty'-It seems as if the truth is bothering. He still seems perfectly willing to execute an innocent man, but he wants to make sure the religious leaders know that's what he is doing.
- 'Why don't you talk to me?' Perhaps Jesus doesn't talk to him because Pilate has already told him that they have nothing to talk about. They have nothing in common: Jesus is king of truth, and Pilate is governor of Judea; there's no point of connection.
- 'Don't you realize that I have the power to release you' Pilate might be more accurate to say that he has the authority to release Jesus. His actual power doesn't quite seem to match his authority. He lacks the courage to stand up to the crowd and release Jesus, as he clearly wants to do.

'We have no king but Caesar'-This hearkens back to about a millennium before, when the people of Israel first requested a king of the prophet Samuel, who had been leading them up until that point:

Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance. "Do everything they say to you," the Lord replied, "for it is me they are rejecting, not you. They don't want me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment (1 Samuel 8:6-8).

### COME & SEE

My Life Authority is often associated with police, judges, military officers, and government officials. However, if we think of authority simply as something you are both responsible for and have the ability to influence, all of us have authority. What do you hold authority in? Officially speaking, Pilate had more authority than most of us ever will, but he didn't seem to do much with it. Talk to Jesus about how you might use your position, status, responsibilities, knowledge, or job for good. Ask Jesus if there is a way he would like you to leverage your authority.

My 3 Pilate's meager attempts to claim Jesus' innocence demonstrate that he understood that there is something to Jesus. However, there is too much pressure on Pilate and too little time for him to really consider what that is. Ask Jesus to help your 3 pay attention to whatever inklings they have that there might be something to Jesus. Ask Jesus not to allow anything to get in the way of them exploring who he is.

MY Church Does this story feel outrageous and infuriating to you? Obviously, to the Pharisees it seems like a perfectly sound and fair plan. Looking back on the cross, we want to yell about how unfair the whole thing is. Of course, gross injustice isn't limited to 1st Century Rome. Ask Jesus to help our church be a place that advocates for justice. Ask for our church to be a place that doesn't simply roll with the status quo or popular opinion but is compelled to see everyone in our society treated fairly.

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2/9/22 8:22 AM Come&See.indd 91-92

#### Friday, April 15 John 19:16–42 – Jesus is Crucified and Buried



### THE GOOD NEWS

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus away. Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"

Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing." So that is what they did.

Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," and "They will look on the one they pierced."

Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

## DIG DEEPER

- 'Pilate posted a sign over him'—These would be the charges against Jesus.
- 'They divided my garments among themselves'—This is Psalm 22:18. This psalm is both strange and amazing. In it, David, writing a thousand years before Jesus, talks about some of his own suffering in terms that eerily evoke Jesus' crucifixion. Take a look, if you're inclined.

- 'the day of preparation'—The day of preparation is when the Passover lamb is made. The religious leaders are concerned because they don't want these executions to get in the way of the big, busy holiday schedule. John, however, seems to be mentioning it because he is presenting Jesus as a new Passover lamb. The Passover lamb, you may recall, is eaten in memory of God sparing the Israelites during the plague of the firstborn in Egypt (Exodus 12). Way back in chapter 1 (v.29), John the Baptist had called Jesus, 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' The story is now catching up to John the Baptist's pronouncement.
- 'didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath'—They don't have a
  problem killing an innocent man, but doing a funeral on the Sabbath is unthinkable.
- 'hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken'—Broken legs would make it harder for them to keep breathing, which would require raising themselves up a little (IVP Bible Background Commentary).
- 'This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account'—It's possible John is saying that he
  saw this happen with his own eyes. Since we know that the 'disciple Jesus loved' is nearby (v.26),
  this lends extra credence to the idea that this beloved disciple and the author are one and the
  same.
- 'Not one of his bones will be broken'—Perhaps a reference to Psalm 34:20: 'For the Lord protects
  the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!' It could also be another way in which John
  is connecting Jesus to the Passover lamb, the bones of which were supposed to remain unbroken
  (Exodus 12:46).

## COME & SEE

My Life Talk to Jesus today about how you feel physically. Are you in pain? Sick? Are you exhausted? Hungry? Out of shape? Jesus' dying request for something to drink reminds us of just how basic and human our needs (even Jesus') often are - a good meal, more sleep, exercise, health. Ask Jesus for a good relationship with your body (we seem to tend to idolize, hate, or ignore our bodies) and for good health. Ask Jesus if he has anything he wants to say to you about this. Is there something you could do that would bring you closer to Jesus. It could be a nap, making a really great meal, going for a walk,etc ... you decide.

 $My\ 3$  Ever wonder what it was like for Mary and Jesus' followers to watch Jesus be executed? It just sounds terribly traumatic - especially since they didn't necessarily know how the story would turn out, as we now do. Ask Jesus to heal any trauma that your 3 have experienced. Pray that your 3 wouldn't be defined by the trauma but instead that Jesus would meet them in any lingering pain.

My Church Joseph of Arimathea is a follower of Jesus who had gone completely under the radar until all of a sudden, he plays a key part in Jesus' story (being the one to claim and care for Jesus' body seems like a pretty big deal, right?) Ask Jesus to raise people up in our church who are flying under the radar. Our hunch is that there are a lot of people in our church with incredible things to offer, but for one reason or another they're unknown. Ask Jesus to remove whatever is holding people back and to raise more people into leadership. Who knows, maybe it's you?

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Come&See.indd 93-94

#### Saturday, April 16 John 20:1-31 — Jesus Appears to His Disciples



#### THE GOOD NEWS

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed - for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Then they went home.

Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

"Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with iov when they saw the Lord! Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him. "We have seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"

"My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.

Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

#### DIG DEEPER

- folded up and lying apart'—If someone had stolen the body, why would they leave the grave clothes behind or bother to neatly fold the head piece?
- 'It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him'-I could imagine that Mary would think he's a ghost, but its surprising that she doesn't recognize him at all. Apparently, the resurrected Jesus looks different. "Mary!" Jesus said' - there's something familiar in how he says her name. It echo's the teaching of the shepherd and the sheep: 'He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out ... and they follow him because they know his voice' (John 10:3-4).
- 'Peace be with you'-I imagine this is more than Jesus being polite. I am sure the eleven were shocked and surprised and frightened by the sudden appearance of someone they thought was dead! Jesus is trying to calm the situation.
- "Receive the Holy Spirit"—This is the moment to which the entire story has been building. Jesus is finally baptizing the disciples with the Holy Spirit, just as John the Baptist had foreseen (John 1:32-33). Jesus told the disciples that he would be going to the Father to get the Holy Spirit for them (John 16:6), and here the Spirit is.
- 'If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven'—Jesus promised that once they were filled with the Spirit, they would do even greater things than him (John 14:12). Surely, doing even more powerful miracles is a big part of that. But miracles do not seem to be the only thing Jesus has in mind. The 'greater thing' is forgiveness. It makes sense. All along, Jesus has been saying that his miracles are merely signs of the greater, spiritual work he wants to do.
- 'If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven' This seems like a lot of power to put into people's hands! This is not something Jesus intends for his disciples to hold over other people as manipulation. Rather, it is a responsibility and opportunity Jesus has given us to love like Jesus loves.
- 'the ones recorded in this book'-It sounds an awful lot like John is bringing things to a close, but as we'll see there's one chapter left. Because of this seemingly concluding statement, and because chapter 21 takes little account of the fact that Jesus has already appeared to the disciples twice in chapter 20, many modern scholars think that chapter 21 is a later alternate ending and chapter 20 was the original ending (New Bible Commentary). However, there is no manuscript evidence for that hypothesis (New Bible Commentary). As far as we know, John's gospel was only ever distributed with this somewhat peculiar double-ending. Perhaps chapter 21 is what we would call an epilogue.

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My Life Check out the three-step action plan Jesus has upon first seeing his disciples again: 1. He offers them peace; 2. They are filled with joy; and 3. They receive the Holy Spirit. Use that as your prayer guide today. Take some time to let the peace Jesus is offering settle on you. Ask Jesus to fill you with joy. Tell him that you want his joy to be what gets you through the day. And finally ask Jesus for more of the Holy Spirit. Tell him you want to receive as much of the Holy Spirit as you can possibly contain.  $My\ 3$  Just as Jesus called Mary by name before she recognized him, ask Jesus to call each of your 3 by name today. Pray that they would hear and recognize his voice. My Church Listen again to John's amazing words that all of this was 'written so that [we] may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.' It seems like he knew we might forget or need help to keep believing. Ask Jesus to help our church remain faithful. Pray that we would continue pursuing Jesus with the same faith and vigor as we did when our church first started—or when you first started attending.

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#### Sunday, April 17 (Easter) John 21:1–25—Fish Fry & Peter Reinstated



#### THE GOOD NEWS

Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing."

"We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. He called out, "Fellows, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they replied.

Then he said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

"Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn.

"Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep.

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"I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don't want to go." Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me."

Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, "Lord, who will betray you?" Peter asked Jesus, "What about him, Lord?"

Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me." So the rumor spread among the community of believers that this disciple wouldn't die. But that isn't what Jesus said at all. He only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate.

Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.



#### DIG DEEPER

- 'they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it'—They don't recognize his voice or appearance, but they do recognize the fish. One final time, John refers to a part of the story he never told. In Luke's version of the story, Jesus first grabs the disciples' attention with a similar miraculous catch following an empty-netted night (Luke 5:1-11). Here he does it again.
- 'they found breakfast waiting for them'—The big catch isn't even strictly necessary. Jesus already
  has plenty of fish for breakfast cooking over the fire. I love the fact that the resurrected Jesus just
  stops in for breakfast ... and cooks it!
- 'Then feed my lambs'—Peter isn't a fisherman anymore; he's a shepherd of Jesus' flock. Jesus brings together themes from a few of his major discourses from the last week before his crucifixion: the good shepherd and the hired hand (John 10:11-13); the feet-washing, at which Jesus says, 'you should also wash one another's feet' (John 13:14); and the story about the vine, when he gives his new commandment, 'Love one another' (John 15:17). Now that Jesus has moved on, it's not a time for Peter to go back to his old life, but to step forward, taking over Jesus' mission and experiencing the same love from the Father (16:27-28).
- 'A third time he asked him'—It seems a little redundant to keep at him in this way. Perhaps Jesus
  asks Peter three times because of Peter's three denials (John 18:15-18, 25-27). Peter now has an
  opportunity to recommit himself as many times as he denied Jesus.
- 'by what kind of death he would glorify God'—Peter, like Jesus, will be crucified; he'll be led to
  death as a prisoner, and he'll stretch out his arms for his death. Weirdly enough, this grim prediction
  might actually be Jesus' big affirmation of Peter. Earlier, Jesus had said Peter wasn't ready to follow
  him:

'But why can't I come now, Lord?' [Peter] asked. 'I'm ready to die for you.'

'Jesus answered, 'Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter - before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.'

Now, he's ready. Jesus believes that Peter does love him, and will feed his sheep, and will follow him, to the very end.

- 'This disciple is the one who testifies to these events'—The author finally reveals himself. He doesn't give us a name ('John,' for example), but he does tell us that he's the beloved disciple.
- 'we know that his account of these things is accurate'—Who is the 'we' here? Just the sentence before, the beloved disciple reveals himself as the author. Now, there's some 'we' who are doing the writing, vouching for him. Maybe this is just a one-line 'signature of witness' from a wider group of people. Or perhaps chapter 21 as a whole is an addendum written by someone else. It could even be after John's death, in which case the problem they're addressing is why John died when Jesus had allegedly promised he wouldn't. Maybe John died just before publication, or maybe this is something like a second edition, with a new afterword.
- 'the whole world could not contain the books that would be written'—One last time, John lets us know that he picked only a few examples of the things Jesus did. They're just a handful of signs that Jesus preformed, displaying what He can do for anyone who believes in him.

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My Life It feels a little strange that Jesus' final instructions are, 'Follow me.' Isn't that what they've been doing ever since John the Baptist first said, 'Look, it's the Lamb of God,' way back when (John 1:35-37)? Why tell them what they already know? Maybe Jesus knows that they would need some constant reminders to keep following him. In what ways do you feel like Jesus is currently asking you to keep following him? Where is Jesus leading you? Are there any open doors before you? Closed doors? Are there any inklings of what Jesus might be asking you to pursue during this season? Tell Jesus you want to follow him and ask for his help to do that today.	
My 3 The disciples are so blown away by Jesus' abundance that they awkwardly bumble through the water to get to him as quickly as possible. Pray that your 3 would be blown away by Jesus' abundance. Ask Jesus to give them a taste of that abundance today.	
My Church Breakfast on the beach with Jesus —don't you want in? The supernatural abundance of it, the togetherness, and feeling of relaxation is so awesome. Ask Jesus to help our church be like the breakfast feast he offers to his disciples. Ask Jesus to feed us, sustain us, and give us all that we need. Ask Jesus that all of our church's gatherings—whether large or small—would feel like an intimate gathering	
place of friends and Jesus.	

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### FINAL REFLECTIONS

What lesson(s) has been most rewarding in reading Come & See?
What have you learned reading through John?
How have you seen your faith grow during Come & See?
Did you make any new decisions or are you starting any new disciplines or habits because of your involvement in <i>Come</i> & See?



above questions online. Thank you!



We'd love to hear about your journey through this 40-day devotional! If you're willing, scan this QR code and take a few minutes to answer the

What did you experience or what answers to prayer did you get:

My Life?			
My 3\$			
My Church?			

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