

THE SON OF GOD

Jesus Through the Eyes of John

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PREFACE

The Word — The Lamb of God — The Light — Healer — Rabbi
The Bread of Life — The Good Shepherd — The Living Water — Lord
The Resurrection and the Life — The Way

THE SON OF GOD

The Gospel of John is packed full of names for Jesus, each one giving us a glimpse into who He is. Yet the most significant truth is that Jesus, while fully human, was also fully God: the Son of God.

Each of the Gospels shares a slightly different perspective on Jesus.¹ And looking at Jesus through the eyes of John, one of Jesus' closest disciples, gives us a unique look at who our great God is. In fact, over 90 percent of the writings of John are unique to and found only in his Gospel.²

So who is Jesus? Who is the Son of God? In this study we will journey with John to answer that question as he walks us through Jesus' time on earth.

When John penned his Gospel, he wasn't simply recording events. He was painting a portrait of the One who changes everything. The names John used aren't mere titles; they're doorways into experiencing Jesus. When we encounter Jesus as the Bread of Life, our spiritual hunger finds its answer. When we meet Him as the Light, our darkness is pierced. When we know Him as the Good Shepherd, our wandering hearts find home.

And yet, the question isn't just "Who is Jesus?" but also "Who are we becoming as we walk with Him?" How can the Gospel of John and what we learn from it impact us? How does it change the way we live out

¹Matthew announces Jesus as the promised King and Messiah, presenting Him to a Jewish audience as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Mark proclaims Jesus as the faithful Servant, writing to skeptical Romans who believed only in state power. Luke portrays Jesus as the Savior for all humanity, emphasizing His compassion and universal mission.

²Osborne, Grant, and Philip W. Comfort. *Life Application Bible Commentary: John*. Tyndale, 1995.

being the peace, power, and presence of Jesus in our spheres of influence each and every day?

These are the questions we'll explore together. As we walk through John's Gospel, we'll discover that knowing Jesus isn't just about gaining information—it's about experiencing transformation. When we truly see Jesus as the Living Water, we stop trying to quench our thirst with things that can never truly satisfy. When we understand Him as the Resurrection and the Life, we face our fears and losses with unshakeable hope.

This study is designed to help us not just learn about Jesus, but also to encounter Him personally and powerfully. Each week, we'll explore how the Jesus John knew—the One who healed the sick, fed the hungry, washed feet, and conquered death—is the same Jesus who meets us in our workplaces, our homes, our struggles, and our celebrations today.

So come. Come and see. Come and drink. Come and be fed. Come and be changed. Because when we truly encounter the Son of God, we are never the same again.

Who Was John?

John was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, part of the inner circle along with Peter and John's own brother, James. A fisherman by trade, John left his nets to follow Jesus and called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved"—not because Jesus loved him more than the others, but perhaps because John was uniquely aware of and responsive to that love. John witnessed Jesus' transfiguration, was present in the Garden of Gethsemane, stood at the foot of the cross, and was entrusted with caring for Jesus' mother Mary. His intimate relationship with Jesus makes his Gospel deeply personal and theologically rich.

When Did He Write His Gospel?

John's Gospel was written later than the other three Gospels, likely between AD 85-95. By this time, John was an elderly man, possibly the last surviving apostle. Decades of reflection, ministry, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit had deepened his understanding of who Jesus was and what His life, death, and resurrection meant. This later perspective allowed John to write with theological maturity, emphasizing the divine nature of Christ in ways that complemented the earlier Gospels.

Who Did He Write It To?

Unlike the other Gospel writers who had specific cultural audiences in mind, John wrote to a broader, more universal audience—both Jewish and Gentile believers who were part of the growing early church. His purpose was explicitly stated in **John 20:31**: *“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.”* Just like the earliest readers, we are invited to believe and have abundant life in His name.

JESUS SATISFIES

Lesson 1



THE STORY (Key Passages)

As you read the passages, circle or underline what stands out to you.

John 1:35-51

³⁵ *The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples.*
³⁶ *As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!"* ³⁷ *When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.*

³⁸ *Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"*

³⁹ *"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.*

⁴⁰ *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus.* ⁴¹ *Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ").*

⁴² *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").*

⁴³ *The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me."* ⁴⁴ *Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown.*

⁴⁵ *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."*

⁴⁶ *"Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"*

"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

⁴⁷ As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity."

⁴⁸ "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!"

⁵⁰ 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."⁵¹ 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."

John 2:1-12

^{2:1} The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration.³ The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵ But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled,⁸ he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

⁹ 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.¹⁰ "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!"

¹¹ This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

¹² After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

John 4:1-30, 39-42

^{4:1} Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John ² (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). ³ So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ⁴ He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵ Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

⁹ 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?"

¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ "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?" ¹² 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?"

¹³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ 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."

¹⁵ "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."

¹⁶ "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

¹⁷ "I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— ¹⁸ 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!"

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. ²⁰ 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?"

²¹ 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. ²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. ²³ 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. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus told her, "I am the Messiah!"

²⁷ 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?" ²⁸ The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, ²⁹ "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" ³⁰ So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

³⁹ Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" ⁴⁰ When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, ⁴¹ long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. ⁴² 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."

John 6:22-50, 57-69

²² The next day the crowd [those that had experienced Jesus miraculously feeding 5,000] 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. ²³ Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I

fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. ²⁷ 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."

²⁸ They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

²⁹ Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰ They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?" ³¹ After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

³² 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. ³³ The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

³⁵ 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. ³⁶ But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. ³⁷ 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. ⁴⁰ 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."

⁴¹ Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² 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'?"

⁴³ But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. ⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

⁴⁷ "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ Yes, I am the bread of life! ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. ⁵⁰ Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die.

⁵⁷ I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ 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."

⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

⁶⁰ Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

⁶¹ Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? ⁶³ The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ 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.) ⁶⁵ Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

⁶⁶ At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.

⁶⁷ Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

What grabbed your attention as you were reading?



THE ROOTS

(Old Testament Connections)

John's Gospel is saturated with Old Testament imagery. Jesus would have been familiar with these ancient writings and intentionally referred to them. To understand Jesus' claims, we must understand the story and context He was stepping into.

Genesis 28: Jacob's Ladder

When Jacob fled from Esau, he had a dream at Bethel: a ladder (or stairway) connecting heaven and earth, with angels ascending and descending on it. God stood at the top and renewed His covenant promises. Jacob woke and said, "This is the gateway to heaven" (**Genesis 28:17**).

In **John 1:51**, Jesus told Nathanael: *"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."* Jesus is claiming to be the ladder—the connection point between heaven and earth, the place where God and humanity meet. He is the gate to heaven. He is the way home.

The Wedding at Cana and Jewish Purification Rituals

The six stone water jars at Cana held water for Jewish ceremonial washing (**John 2:6**). These rituals were about external purity—washing hands, washing vessels, maintaining ritual cleanliness. They were good and God-given, but they couldn't change the heart.

When Jesus transformed this water into wine—and not just any wine, but the *best* wine—He was making a statement: The old covenant rituals had served their purpose. Something new and better had arrived. The external was giving way to the internal. Joy was replacing ritual. Abundance was replacing scarcity.

Exodus 16: The Manna in the Wilderness

When the Israelites grumbled in the desert, God provided manna—bread from heaven that appeared each morning. It sustained them physically but had limitations: it couldn't be stored (except on the Sabbath), and it only sustained for a day.

In **John 6**, after Jesus fed the 5,000, the crowd asked for a sign like Moses gave—they wanted more bread. But Jesus corrected their theology: “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” (**6:32-33**).

Then came His stunning claim: “I am the bread of life” (**6:35**). Jesus isn’t just like the manna; He is the true Manna. The Old Testament manna sustained physical life temporarily; Jesus sustains eternal life forever. The manna came down daily; Jesus came down once for all. The manna fed one nation; Jesus feeds the world.

Isaiah 55:1-2: The Invitation to come and be satisfied

Isaiah prophesied a day when God would invite all people to a feast:

Is anyone thirsty?

Come and drink—

even if you have no money!

Come, take your choice of wine or milk—

it’s all free!

Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength?

Why pay for food that does you no good?

Listen to me, and you will eat what is good.

You will enjoy the finest food.

The Messianic banquet Isaiah promised is here—and Jesus Himself is both the host and the feast (**John 4:14; John 7:37**). The invitation is free. The satisfaction is complete.



THE MEANING

(Theological Reflection)

Every person in these passages is searching for something. This is the universal human condition. We are hungry. We are thirsty. We are searching. We try to fill the void with relationships, achievements, possessions, experiences, even religion. But nothing satisfies. Into our places of longing, Jesus speaks: “I am the bread of life” (**6:35**). “I am the living water” (**4:10**). Not “I have bread” or “I can give you water”—but I am. Jesus does more than simply meet our needs. He Himself is the

answer to our needs. We don't need bread and water, we need Him. When we come to Jesus, we're not just getting our needs met—we're entering into a relationship with the One who made us, knows us, loves us, and will never leave us. The satisfaction He offers isn't circumstantial (our problems disappear) but substantial (He becomes our sufficiency in every circumstance).

And here's the beautiful thing: Jesus isn't afraid of our questions, our doubts, or our hesitations. He welcomes seekers. He engages skeptics. He meets people where they are—at wells, at weddings, in crowds, in private. The invitation is always open.



THE CONVERSATION

(Discussion Questions)

1

In **John 1:38**, Jesus asked His first followers, "What do you want?" How did the disciples respond, and what does their answer reveal about the nature of true seeking?

2

When the first disciples asked Jesus, "Where are you staying?" He responded, "Come and see" (**John 1:38-39**). What does this tell us about how Jesus invites people into a relationship with Him? How is this different from how we sometimes approach faith or invite others to faith?

3 Nathanael declared, “*Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!*” after Jesus truly saw him (**John 1:49**). “[Today, the Son of God] sees your situation, knows your backstory, is privy to the ‘fig trees’ where you thought you were all alone. Maybe God feels like a distant stranger, Jesus an odd curiosity. But the gospel invites you to come close to the One who’s already come close to you.”¹ Knowing that the Son of God sees you, how does that impact you? How would you like to respond to Him?

4 At the wedding, Jesus turned the water into wine and met both a physical and social need. “When you’ve run out, Jesus meets you with his fullness. When you’ve got nothing left to give, he gives you himself. When you feel lost and abandoned, sideswiped and stranded on the side of the road, he pulls up alongside and invites you to journey with him.”² Where in your life or someone else’s life have you seen Jesus meet a deep need? How can your group be praying for you in a place where you are waiting for Jesus to meet a need?

¹Butler, Joshua Ryan. *God Is on Your Side: How Jesus Is for You When Everything Seems against You*. Multnomah, 2025. xv

5

In **John 4**, what stands out to you about how Jesus engaged with the woman at the well?

6

Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst” (**John 4:13-14**). What is the difference between temporary satisfaction and the eternal satisfaction Jesus offers?

7

Jesus asked the Samaritan woman about her deepest pain and shame (her five husbands). Yet she didn’t run away—she stayed and received living water. What does this teach us about the kindness of Jesus and how He approaches our brokenness?

8

The woman at the well, after encountering Jesus, said to her town, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” (**John 4:29**). If you were to invite someone to “come and see” Jesus this week, what would you tell them about who He is to you personally?

9 In **John 6**, after Jesus declared Himself the Bread of Life, many disciples turned away because the teaching was too hard. Jesus asked the Twelve, “Do you want to leave too?” Peter responded, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” What kinds of teaching or life experiences have been hard for you? What keeps you following Jesus even when it’s hard?

10 Jesus repeatedly invited people who are thirsty and hungry to come to Him (**John 4:10, 6:35, 7:37**). What are you hungry or thirsty for right now? How might Jesus be inviting you to bring that need to Him? What does it practically look like to “come to Jesus” in your daily life?

11 Andrew, Philip, and the Samaritan woman all became inviters after encountering Jesus—they immediately went to bring others to Him. Who first invited you to “come and see” Jesus? How did that invitation change your life?

The satisfaction we find in Jesus isn't meant to end with us—it's meant to flow through us to others. Who in your life needs to hear the invitation "Come and see"? What's holding you back from extending that invitation?



THE PRACTICE

(Spiritual Disciplines)

Each week there will be a handful of different ways to engage with this section. The goal is not to engage with every practice, but to read them over and prayerfully decide which one to practice this week. Please choose one and be ready to share with your group how it went for you.

Option 1: Breath Prayer

Breath prayers are simple, short prayers that can be prayed throughout the day, often matching our breathing pattern. This ancient practice helps us "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**) and keeps our hearts oriented toward God.

How to Practice:

- Find a quiet place and take a few deep breaths to settle yourself.
- As you inhale slowly, pray silently: "Bread of Heaven" (or choose a different short phrase).
- As you exhale slowly, pray: "Feed my soul" (or a short ask).
- Continue for 5-10 minutes, allowing the prayer to become natural.
- Throughout your day, return to this prayer whenever you feel hungry—physically, emotionally, or spiritually.
- Let it become your response to stress, anxiety, temptation, or need.

Option 2: Fasting and Feasting

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry" (**John 6:35**). Fasting helps us experience physical hunger so we can recognize our deeper spiritual hunger and turn to Jesus as our true satisfaction.

How to Practice:

- Choose a meal or a day this week to fast from food (check with a doctor if you have health concerns).
- When you feel hunger, use it as a prompt to pray: "Jesus, You are the Bread of Life. Feed my soul."
- Spend the time you would have used eating in prayer, Scripture reading, or worship.
- Break your fast with a simple meal, praying a prayer of thanksgiving for both physical and spiritual provision.
- Reflect: What did you learn about your hunger? What did you learn about Jesus as your satisfaction?

Alternative: If fasting from food isn't appropriate for you, consider fasting from social media, entertainment, or another regular activity, using the time to "feast" on God's Word and presence.

Option 3: Nature Walk

Jesus invited the first disciples to "come and see" by walking with Him. Take a contemplative walk this week, inviting Jesus to show you something about Himself.

How to Practice:

- Choose a place to walk (neighborhood, park, trail, beach, etc.)
- Before you begin, pray: "Jesus, I'm coming to see You. Open my eyes."
- Walk slowly and attentively. Notice what captures your attention.
- Look for signs of provision: food growing, water flowing, life sustained.
- Look for signs of beauty: colors, patterns, light.
- Ask: "Jesus, what are You showing me about who You are?"
- End your walk with a prayer of thanksgiving for what you've seen.

Option 4: Serve

Jesus is the Bread of Life, and He calls us to feed others in His name. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink" (**Matthew 25:35**).

Ideas:

- Volunteer at a local food bank or soup kitchen.
- Prepare a meal for someone who is sick, grieving, or overwhelmed.
- Organize a group meal where you invite someone who might be lonely.
- Donate to an organization that provides food or clean water.
- Bake bread and share it with neighbors, telling them you're studying Jesus as the Bread of Life.

As you serve, pray: "Jesus, You fed me. Now let me feed others in Your name." Reflect on how being fed by Jesus compels us to feed others.

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES

JESUS HEALS

Lesson 2



THE STORY

(Key Passages)

As you read the passages, circle or underline what stands out to you.

John 4:46-5:9

⁴⁶ 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. ⁴⁷ 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.

⁴⁸ Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?"

⁴⁹ The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies."

⁵⁰ Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

⁵¹ While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. ⁵² He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!" ⁵³ 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. ⁵⁴ This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.

^{5:1} Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ² Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. ³ Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵ One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"

⁷ "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.”

⁸ Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

⁹ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

John 11:1-44

¹ A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ² 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. ³ So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, “Lord, your dear friend is very sick.”

⁴ 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.” ⁵ So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, ⁶ he stayed where he was for the next two days. ⁷ Finally, he said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

⁸ 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?”

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.” ¹¹ Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.”

¹² The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” ¹³ They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

¹⁴ So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And for your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there, for now you will really believe. Come, let’s go see him.”

¹⁶ Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go, too—and die with Jesus.”

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. ²⁰ When Martha got word that Jesus was

coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

²³ Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

²⁵ Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. ²⁶ Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

²⁷ "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." ²⁸ Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." ²⁹ So Mary immediately went to him.

³⁰ Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. ³¹ 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. ³² 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."

³³ 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.

³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Then Jesus wept. ³⁶ The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" ³⁷ But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

³⁸ Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. ³⁹ "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."

⁴⁰ Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" ⁴¹ So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² 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." ⁴³ Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus,

come out!”⁴⁴ 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!”

What grabbed your attention as you were reading?



THE ROOTS

(Old Testament Connections)

The miraculous healings recorded in John’s Gospel are deeply rooted in Israel’s story and are full of prophetic hope. To understand what Jesus was doing, we must understand what God has already done—and what He promised to do.

2 Kings 5: Naaman the Syrian and the Healing of the Official’s Son

The healing of the royal official’s son echoes the story of Naaman, the Syrian commander who came to the prophet Elisha seeking healing from leprosy (**2 Kings 5**). Both stories involved Gentile officials (Naaman served the king of Aram; the royal official served Herod), both came to a Jewish prophet on behalf of someone else, and both were told to believe without seeing immediate evidence (Naaman must wash in the Jordan; the official must go home, believing his son is healed). Initially, both resisted (Naaman was angry at Elisha’s instructions; the official seemed to want Jesus to come with him) but ultimately both believed and were rewarded with healing. Finally, both healings resulted in expanded faith (**2 Kings 5:15; John 4:53**). These parallels signal that Jesus is the new and greater Elisha—the prophet who brings God’s healing power. But more than that, the inclusion of Gentiles in both stories reveals that God’s Kingdom is breaking beyond ethnic boundaries. The healing isn’t just for Israel; it’s for the whole world. Jesus was and is expanding His

Kingdom to include all who believe, regardless of background. This is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (**Genesis 12:3**).

Ezekiel 37: The Valley of Dry Bones and the Raising of Lazarus

The raising of Lazarus is the most dramatic sign in John's Gospel, and it directly echoes one of the most powerful visions in the Old Testament: Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones.

In **Ezekiel 37**, God showed the prophet Ezekiel a valley filled with dry bones—representing Israel in exile, spiritually dead and without hope. God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones become living people again?" (**37:3**). Then God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD." (**Ezekiel 37:5-6**)

Ezekiel spoke the word, and the bones came together. Flesh and skin covered them. Then God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the breath, and breath entered them. They stood up "a great army" (**37:10**).

God explained the vision: ¹¹ Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, 'We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone. Our nation is finished.'¹² Therefore, prophesy to them and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel.'¹³ When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the LORD.¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the LORD has spoken!" (**37:11-14**)

Ezekiel's vision was symbolic, pointing to Israel's future restoration. But Jesus' miracle was literal. He actually raised a dead man. What Ezekiel saw in vision, Jesus did in reality, and continues to do. He has the power of the Creator. He is not just a prophet speaking God's word, He is the Son of God—the Word made flesh, the One through whom all things were and are being made new (**John 1:3**).



THE MEANING

(Theological Reflection)

In John's Gospel, miracles weren't just displays of power, they were signs (σημείον, *semeion*)—signs that pointed beyond themselves to reveal who Jesus is and what His Kingdom looks like. Previews of the Kingdom, where every barrier that separates us from God and from wholeness will be removed forever. When Jesus healed the official's son, the paralyzed man, and raised Lazarus, He was exercising the prerogative that belongs to Yahweh alone. He was claiming divine authority. (**Deuteronomy 32:39**)

The Jewish leaders understood this. That's why, after Jesus healed the paralyzed man on the Sabbath, they sought to kill Him—not just for breaking the Sabbath, but because *"he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God."* (**John 5:18**)

Jesus didn't deny the charge. Instead, He doubled down (**John 5:19-21**). Jesus was claiming that His healing power comes from His unique relationship with the Father. He does what the Father does. And what does the Father do? He raises the dead and gives life. Therefore, Jesus raises the dead and gives life. This is not the claim of a prophet or a miracle worker. This is the claim of deity.

The healings Jesus performed were a reversal of the Fall. In **Genesis 3**, when humanity rebelled against God, the consequences were devastating: broken relationships, painful labor, sickness, suffering, and death. The world God created as "very good" became a world marked by brokenness. But, Jesus was pushing back the darkness. He was reclaiming territory from the enemy. He was demonstrating what the Kingdom of God looks like—a Kingdom where:

- Sickness is healed
- The paralyzed walk
- The dead are raised
- Distance doesn't separate us from God's presence
- Death doesn't have the final word

These signs were previews of the new creation, when God will *"wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever"* (**Revelation 21:4**). Jesus wasn't just fixing individual problems. He was inaugurating a Kingdom that will ultimately undo all the damage sin has done.



THE CONVERSATION

(Discussion Questions)

1 From the healing story in **John 4:46-54**, what do you notice about the government official who came to Jesus? What did he ask Jesus and how did Jesus respond?

2 Why do you think Jesus didn't go back to the official's house with him?

3 The official believed Jesus' word without seeing any evidence that his son was healed. He simply went home trusting Jesus. The official teaches us that faith isn't certainty about outcomes; it's about trusting in Jesus, even when circumstances seem impossible. When have you had to trust Jesus' word without seeing immediate results? What made that difficult? What helped you trust?

4 The healing of the official's son parallels the healing of Naaman the Syrian in **2 Kings 5**—both involved Gentile outsiders. What does this tell us about who Jesus came to heal? Who are the "outsiders" in your context that Jesus is inviting into His Kingdom?

5

Jesus asked the man at the pool, “would you like to get well?” which seems like a question with an obvious answer. Jesus was asking him to be an active participant. In what ways are you called to participate in the healing process (both for yourself and others)?

6

As you read over the story of Lazarus in **John 11**, what elements stood out to you and why?

7

John 11:35 tells us “Jesus wept” at Lazarus’ tomb, even though He knew He was about to raise him. What does this tell us about Jesus’ response to our suffering? How does it change your view of God to know that He enters into our grief, even when He knows the end of the story?

8 Jesus deliberately waited two days before going to Lazarus, allowing him to die. Mary and Martha both said, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." Have you ever felt like Jesus has delayed responding to your prayers? How did/do you handle that? Looking back, can you see any purpose in the delay? (Please note, sometimes we aren't able to see a purpose in the delay, and whatever way you need to process that with Jesus is okay.)

9 Jesus healed some people during His earthly ministry, but not everyone. So if Jesus can heal, why doesn't He heal everyone? God answers our prayers for healing in multiple ways, "through the body's immune system (a powerful, divine gift embedded in our being). Sometimes God heals through the expertise of doctors and the power of modern medicine. Sometimes God heals through prayer. Yet even when all these fail, you can be confident in the fourth way God heals: resurrection. ... God says 'yes' or 'not yet,' but God always heals."¹ How do you hold the tension between believing Jesus can heal now and knowing that complete healing awaits us when we are raised with Christ? How does this affect how you pray?

10

These healings can be seen as reversals of the Fall—Jesus pushing back sickness, suffering, and death. Where do you see evidence of the Fall (brokenness, pain, death) in your life or in the world? Where do you see evidence of Jesus' Kingdom breaking in and reversing that brokenness?

11

Have you ever experienced or witnessed something you would call a sign or miracle—an event that pointed you to who Jesus is? What did it reveal to you about Him? How could sharing that experience help others grow in their faith or begin to ask questions about who Jesus is?



THE PRACTICE

(Spiritual Disciplines)

Each week there will be a handful of different ways to engage with this section. The goal is not to engage with every practice, but to read them over and prayerfully decide which one to practice this week. Please choose one and be ready to share with your group how it went for you.

Option 1: Praying Scripture

The royal official believed Jesus' word without seeing evidence. Jesus spoke, and healing happened across 20 miles. This week, practice praying Scripture—speaking God's Word over your circumstances.

How to Practice:

- Identify a situation in your life that needs healing: physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual.
- Find a Scripture promise that speaks to that need (examples below).
- Each day this week, speak that Scripture aloud over your situation.
- Don't just read it—these are not clichés—this is the living Word of God. Speak it with faith, trusting that God's Word has power.
- Journal about what happens in your heart as you practice this.

Scripture Promises to Speak:

- For physical healing: **Isaiah 53:5**
- For emotional healing: **Psalms 147:3**
- For fear: **2 Timothy 1:7**
- For provision: **Philippians 4:19**
- For hopeless situations: **Luke 1:37**

Option 2: Waiting Prayer

Jesus waited two days before going to Lazarus. Sometimes God's delays are purposeful. This week, practice waiting prayer—bringing a long-standing need to God and choosing to trust Him in the waiting.

How to Practice:

- Identify something you've been praying about for a long time—something that feels “dead” or hopeless.
- Each day, spend 10 minutes in prayer about this situation:
 - **Lament:** Tell God honestly how you feel about the delay. Don't spiritualize your frustration. Be real.
 - **Remember:** Recall times when God has been faithful in the past, even when you had to wait.
 - **Trust:** Declare your trust in God's character, even when you don't understand His timing.
 - **Hope:** Ask God to give you hope that He can bring life even from death.
- At the end of the week, write a prayer releasing this situation to God's timing, trusting that He is working even when you can't see it.

Option 3: Serve

Jesus' healings were signs of the Kingdom. We're called to be signs too—demonstrating God's healing love in practical ways.

Ideas:

- Visit someone who is sick or homebound. Bring a meal, read Scripture with them, or simply sit and listen.
- Volunteer at a hospital, hospice, or care facility.
- Organize a prayer team to pray for healing for specific people in your community.
- Support an organization that provides medical care to those who can't afford it (For example: Salem Free Clinics).
- Write encouraging notes to people who are going through long-term struggles.
- Offer practical help to someone caring for a sick family member (childcare, meals, cleaning).

As you serve, pray: “Jesus, use me as a sign of Your healing Kingdom. Let others see You through my actions.”

Option 4: Share Your Story

After Lazarus was raised, many believed because of what they saw (**John 11:45**). Share your own story of Jesus' healing work.

How to Practice:

- Reflect on a time when Jesus brought healing to your life (physical, emotional, relational, spiritual).
- Write out your story in 3-5 minutes:
 - What was broken?
 - How did Jesus heal you?
 - How has that healing changed your life?
- Share your story with someone this week:
 - In your small group
 - With a friend who is struggling
 - On social media (if appropriate)
 - In a conversation with someone who doesn't know Jesus yet
- Pray that your testimony becomes a "sign" pointing others to Jesus, the Healer

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES

JESUS IS JUDGE AND SAVIOR

Lesson 3



THE STORY

(Key Passages)

As you read the passages, circle or underline what stands out to you.

John 5:16-24

Context: After Jesus healed the paralyzed man on the Sabbath from lesson 2 (**John 5:1-15**), the Jewish leaders persecuted Him for “breaking” the Sabbath. Jesus’ response escalated the conflict.

¹⁶ So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. ¹⁷ But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.” ¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants. ²² In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, ²³ 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.

²⁴ “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.

John 8:1-11

¹ Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, ² but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. ³ 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.

⁴ "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

⁶ 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. ⁷ 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!"

⁸ Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

¹¹ "No, Lord," she said.

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

John 8:21-30, 54-58

Context: Later that same day, Jesus was still teaching in the temple. The conversation with the Jewish leaders became increasingly heated. Jesus made claims that sounded blasphemous to their ears:

²¹ 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."

²² The people asked, "Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, 'You cannot come where I am going'?"

²³ Jesus continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. ²⁴ 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."

²⁵ "Who are you?" they demanded.

Jesus replied, "The one I have always claimed to be. ²⁶ 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.”

²⁷ But they still didn't understand that he was talking about his Father.

²⁸ 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. ²⁹ And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.” ³⁰ Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

⁵⁴ 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,’ ⁵⁵ 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. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ The people said, “You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I am!”

John 21:1-19

Context: Jumping ahead in the story, we see Jesus restore Peter after he denied Jesus three times. After His resurrection, Jesus went to Peter to break shame and restore him.

¹ Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. ² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. ⁵ He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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 38

stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore.⁸ The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore.⁹ When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

¹⁰ “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said.¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

¹² “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.¹³ Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish.¹⁴ This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ “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.”¹⁹ Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

What grabbed your attention as you were reading?



THE ROOTS

(Old Testament Connections)

Jesus' claims to be both Judge and Savior aren't new ideas—they're rooted deeply in the biblical story. To understand what Jesus was doing, we must understand what God has already revealed about Himself.

Jeremiah 23:1-8: The Righteous Branch

The prophet Jeremiah lived during one of the darkest periods in Israel's history. The nation was corrupt, the kings were wicked, and the religious leaders—the shepherds who were supposed to care for God's people—were exploiting them instead.

God spoke through Jeremiah with fierce judgment:

"What sorrow awaits the leaders of my people—the shepherds of my sheep—for they have destroyed and scattered the very ones they were expected to care for," says the LORD. Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to these shepherds: 'Instead of caring for my flock and leading them to safety, you have deserted them and driven them to destruction. Now I will pour out judgment on you for the evil you have done to them.'" (**Jeremiah 23:1-2**)

But God didn't just pronounce judgment, He promised restoration (**Jeremiah 23:5-6**). God promised to send a Righteous King, a descendant of David, who would judge the corrupt shepherds and restore God's people.

Jesus is the King Jeremiah prophesied—the One who has authority to cleanse, to purify, and to set things right. He judges not to destroy but to restore. He cleanses not to condemn but to make way for true worship.

Hosea 3: Gomer and the Woman Caught in Adultery

The prophet Hosea received one of the strangest commands in all of Scripture: *"When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, 'Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD.'"* (**Hosea 1:2**, NIV).

Hosea married Gomer, and she bore him children. But then she was unfaithful to him, leaving him to pursue other lovers. Eventually, she ended up enslaved, destitute, and hopeless.

God commanded Hosea: *“Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”* (**Hosea 3:1**, NIV).

Hosea bought Gomer back from slavery and restored her as his wife. This was a living parable of God’s love for unfaithful Israel. The Law demanded that adulteresses be stoned (**Deuteronomy 22:22**), but God offered redemption instead.

The woman caught in adultery stood in the temple courts, surrounded by men holding stones. The Law is clear: she deserved death (**Leviticus 20:10**). Justice demands her execution.

But Jesus—the only one present who has the right to throw a stone—doesn’t condemn her. Instead, He offered her what Hosea offered Gomer: redemption, restoration, and a new beginning (**John 8:11**).

This story reveals the heart of God. He hates sin—it destroys His people and breaks His heart. But He loves us with a relentless, pursuing, redeeming love.

The Law demands stones. Grace offers a new start.

Jesus didn’t minimize the woman’s sin—He told her to leave her life of sin. But He didn’t crush her with condemnation either. He freed her from shame and gave her the power to change.

This is the Gospel: *“God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”* (**John 3:17**)

Exodus 3:14: “I AM WHO I AM” and Jesus’ Divine Claim

When God called Moses at the burning bush to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses asked, *“If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”* (**Exodus 3:13**).

God’s answer is one of the most profound statements in all of Scripture: *“I am who I am. Say this to the people of Israel: I am has sent me to you.”* (**Exodus 3:14**)

The name “I AM” (Hebrew: YHWH, often translated as “LORD”) reveals God’s eternal, self-existent nature. He doesn’t depend on anything or anyone for His existence. He simply IS. He has no beginning and no end. He is the eternal, unchanging, all-sufficient God.

This name became so sacred to the Jewish people that they wouldn't even pronounce it. To claim this name for yourself would be the ultimate blasphemy.

When Jesus says, "Before Abraham was even born, I AM!" (**8:58**), He's not just claiming to have existed before Abraham. He's claiming the divine name. He's identifying Himself as YHWH—the eternal, self-existent God.

This is why Jesus has the authority to judge. He's not just a human teacher making moral pronouncements. He's the eternal God who created humanity, who gave the Law, and who will judge all people.



THE MEANING

(Theological Reflection)

How can Jesus be both Judge and Savior? How can He have the authority to condemn yet choose to save? The answer is found at the cross. Jesus doesn't overlook sin or pretend it doesn't matter. Sin is real. It's destructive. It separates us from God. It deserves judgment. God's holiness demands that sin be dealt with.

But instead of condemning us, Jesus takes our condemnation upon Himself. The Judge steps down from the bench, takes the place of the guilty, and receives the sentence we deserve (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

This is the great exchange: our sin for His righteousness, our condemnation for His freedom, our death for His life. Jesus can be both Judge and Savior because He satisfied the demands of justice by taking our judgment Himself, and He extended mercy by offering us His righteousness.

John's Gospel begins with this statement: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (**John 1:14**, NIV).

Grace and truth. Not grace without truth (which would be permissiveness). Not truth without grace (which would be condemnation). But grace and truth together. This is how Jesus always operates. He speaks truth that exposes our sin, and He extends grace that transforms us.



THE CONVERSATION

(Discussion Questions)

- 1** From **John 5:16-30**, how would you describe the relationship between the Father and the Son?
- 2** Why is it important that Jesus is both Judge and Savior, not just one or the other? How does this change how you view Him?
- 3** In **John 8:1-11**, the religious leaders wanted to stone the woman, but Jesus said, *“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone.”* Why do you think they all walked away? What does this teach us about judging others? What does it teach us about our own sin?
- 4** Jesus told the woman, *“Neither do I condemn you”* (grace) and *“Go and leave your life of sin”* (truth). How do you tend to lean—toward emphasizing grace or emphasizing truth? How can we hold both in tension like Jesus did? What does it look like to extend truth to others without condemnation?

5

How would you describe the difference between conviction (from the Holy Spirit) and condemnation (from the enemy)? Can you think of a time when you experienced each one? In those instances, how did you tell the difference?

6

When Jesus said, "Before Abraham was born, I AM!" (**John 8:58**), He was claiming to be God. Why is this claim so important?

7

Peter denied Jesus three times. After His resurrection, Jesus asked Peter three questions, giving Peter space to affirm his love for Jesus. Then, Jesus was able to affirm Peter's calling and restore their relationship. How have you experienced or witnessed this kind of restoration?

8

Peter could have lived the rest of his life in shame over his denial. Instead, Jesus freed him and used him powerfully. What shame are you carrying that Jesus wants to free you from? Pause and ask Jesus to bring His restoration.

9 Jesus said, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (**John 8:36**). What does this freedom look like practically in your life?

10 Have you experienced Jesus as both Judge (convicting you of sin) and Savior (freeing you from condemnation)? How has that shaped your relationship with Him?



THE PRACTICE

(Spiritual Disciplines)

Each week there will be a handful of different ways to engage with this section. The goal is not to engage with every practice, but to read them over and prayerfully decide which one to practice this week. Please choose one and be ready to share with your group how it went for you.

Option 1: Conviction vs. Condemnation

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sin or areas where you need to grow.

As things come to mind, ask:

- Is this conviction? (Specific, redemptive, leading to repentance and hope)
- Or is this condemnation? (Vague, destructive, leading to shame and despair)

Response:

- To conviction: Confess specifically, receive God's forgiveness, ask for grace to change.
- To condemnation: Reject the lie, declare the truth of **Romans 8:1**, thank God for His grace.

Option 2: Confession and Freedom Prayer

Jesus told the woman, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and leave your life of sin.” This week, practice bringing your sin to Jesus for both forgiveness and freedom.

How to Practice:

Step 1: Honest Confession

- Find a quiet place with your journal.
- Ask the Holy Spirit: “What sin do I need to confess?”
- Write down what comes to mind—be specific, not vague.
- Don’t minimize it or make excuses.
- Acknowledge the impact of this sin on you, others, and your relationship with God.

Step 2: Receive Forgiveness

- Read **1 John 1:9**: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
- Pray: “Jesus, I confess [specific sin]. I receive Your forgiveness. Thank You that there is no condemnation for me because I am in Christ.”
- Physically tear up or burn the paper as a symbol of your sin being removed.

Step 3: Ask for Freedom

- Pray: “Jesus, You said ‘Go and leave your life of sin.’ I don’t just want forgiveness—I want freedom. Give me the power to stop this pattern.”
- Ask: “What is the root of this sin? What am I trying to satisfy through it?”
- Listen for God’s voice: What does He want to give you instead?

Step 4: Walk in Freedom

- Identify one practical step you can take this week to “leave your life of sin.”
- Share your struggle with a trusted friend for accountability.
- Return to this prayer whenever you’re tempted.

Option 3: Create an Art Piece

Jesus is “full of grace and truth” (**John 1:14**). Create a visual representation of how these two realities work together.

Materials: Canvas or paper, paint, markers, collage materials, fabric, etc.

Process:

- Divide your canvas in half or create two overlapping circles.
- On one side/circle, represent Truth: justice, holiness, conviction, the Law, stones, judgment.
- On the other side/circle, represent Grace: mercy, forgiveness, freedom, the cross, open hands.
- In the center where they overlap, place an image or symbol of Jesus—the One who holds both perfectly.
- Include Scripture: “Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (**John 1:17**).

Display your piece as a reminder that Jesus never sacrifices truth for grace or grace for truth.

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES

JESUS IS THE LIGHT

Lesson 4



THE STORY (Key Passages)

As you read the passages, circle or underline what stands out to you.

John 1:1-14

¹ *In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

² *He existed in the beginning with God.*

³ *God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.*

⁴ *The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.*

⁵ *The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

⁶ *God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.*

¹⁰ *He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.*

¹² *But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.*

¹⁴ *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 3:1-8, 16-21

¹ There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. ² 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."

³ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

⁴ "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

⁵ Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ 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."

¹⁶ "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. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸ "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. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

John 8:12-18

¹² 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."

¹³ The Pharisees replied, "You are making those claims about yourself! Such testimony is not valid."

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. ¹⁸ I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other."

John 9:1-41

¹ As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ² "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

³ "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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶ Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. ⁷ He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

⁸ 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?" ⁹ Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"

But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

¹⁰ They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"

¹¹ 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!"

¹² "Where is he now?" they asked.

"I don't know," he replied.

¹³ Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, ¹⁴ because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. ¹⁵ 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!"

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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."

¹⁸ The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. ¹⁹ They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

²⁰ His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." ²² 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.

²³ That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

²⁴ 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."

²⁵ "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

²⁶ "But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?"

²⁷ "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?"

²⁸ Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

³⁰ "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? ³¹ We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. ³² Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

³⁴ "You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.

³⁵ When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

³⁶ The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

³⁷ "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

³⁸ “Yes, Lord, I believe!” the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

³⁹ 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.”

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, “Are you saying we’re blind?”

⁴¹ “If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty,” Jesus replied. “But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.”

What grabbed your attention as you were reading?



THE ROOTS

(Old Testament Connections)

John’s Gospel is saturated with Old Testament imagery. To understand what Jesus meant by “Light,” we must remember where that language began. In Genesis, light shattered chaos. In Exodus, light guided and protected God’s people. In Isaiah, light marked the coming Messiah who would open blind eyes and bring salvation to the nations.

Genesis 1:3: Let There Be Light

In the story of the creation of the world, God created Light and brought illumination into the chaos. Light preceded order; Light preceded life. John echoes this deliberately. In the first chapter of John there is a “new genesis.” Jesus is the agent of creation, with God and being God in the creation of the world. Now again, where there is chaos in the human heart, Light must speak. This establishes not just Jesus’ divine authority, but also emphasizes how His light restores order and purpose in lives marred by confusion and sin.

Isaiah 42:6-7: A Light for the Nations

The prophet, Isaiah, told of the promised Messiah. He was to be a “light for the Gentiles” (all nations) to “open eyes that are blind.” In **Isaiah 42**, light is tied to justice, covenant, and liberation. The miracle found in **John 9** is the literal fulfillment of this Messianic credential; not just random compassion, but a Messianic sign. This underscores the universal reach of Jesus’ mission—extending beyond Israel to every corner of the world—inviting all to experience true sight and freedom.

Exodus 13: Pillar of Fire

In the wilderness, the Book of Exodus describes God leading Israel by a pillar of fire at night. The fire guided them, protected them, and signified God’s presence.

In Christ, God became light personified. When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world” in **John 8**, He was likely standing in the Temple courts during the Feast of the Tabernacles, where massive candelabras were lit to remember the Pillar of Fire. Jesus was claiming to be God’s guiding presence, shining a light and leading the people back into right relationship with the Father. This connection not only highlights His role as a guide, but also as the fulfillment of God’s promises to His people, reminding them that He is their constant source of illumination and safety. Jesus wasn’t merely illuminating a path, He was the path.



THE MEANING

(Theological Reflection)

In **John 9**, Jesus confronted those who are spiritually blind but claim to see. Jesus is the Light of the World, to open our eyes to the glory of God. “On a spiritual level, we’re blind to the glory of God. Yet Jesus has come to turn the lights on.”¹ His light brought clarity, revealing the truth of our condition and the depth of God’s love. It challenges us to confront our blindness and embrace the healing He offers.

“Jesus heals this blind man [**John 9**] to give you a sign of what he’s come to do for you. None of us experience the full flourishing we were made for. You were born in a dark and fallen world, bumping into things that bruised you and unable to see the radiance of God.

¹Butler, Joshua Ryan. *God Is on Your Side: How Jesus Is for You When Everything Seems against You*. Multnomah, 2025. 131

“God has entered onto your side, in Christ, to raise the shades and let in the light. Jesus has come to flood the interior of your life with his glory.”² The blind man illustrates the transformation that is possible when we accept His light into our lives—moving from darkness into a life filled with purpose and hope.

Throughout John, Jesus encountered different kinds of blindness: the man born blind had no sight but was open to the light. Nicodemus knew Scripture but could not perceive spiritual truth. The Pharisees saw evidence of the Light, yet resisted its implications. The variety of Jesus’ responses shows that spiritual blindness is not solely about lack of knowledge, but about the posture of our hearts.

Spiritual blindness cannot be overcome by more knowledge, rather, it is about humility. Light reveals who God is and reveals who we are. Light exposes what is broken and restores what can be healed. However, the exposure that light brings often feels vulnerable. Most of us prefer dim spiritual lighting—enough to feel safe, but not enough to feel seen.

Yet, the Light did not come to condemn, but to save (**John 3:17**, NIV). Seeing Jesus clearly means that we see the image of God in human form. Where darkness dehumanizes and evokes fear, light restores dignity, peace, and hope. The deeper question of this lesson is not “is there light?” Rather, the question is “am I willing to step into the light?” Embracing the light of Christ means embracing change, healing, and the wholeness that can only come from Him. It’s an invitation to a relationship that transforms not just our vision but our very lives.



THE CONVERSATION

(Discussion Questions)

1

In **John 1**, Jesus is described as the Light that shines in the darkness. What does that imagery communicate to you personally about who He is? Why do you think some people recognize the Light while others do not?

²Butler, Joshua Ryan. *God Is on Your Side: How Jesus Is for You When Everything Seems against You*. Multnomah, 2025. 132

2 What hope does it give you that the darkness is unable to extinguish the Light? How does this shape your understanding of the challenges you face?

3 Why do you think John included that Nicodemus came to Jesus at night? In what ways can someone be knowledgeable about faith yet still struggle to “see”? How have you seen this dynamic played out in your life or the lives of others?

4 Jesus told Nicodemus that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, one must be born of water and the Spirit. This was a difficult concept for Nicodemus to grasp and can remain a difficult concept for us today. What is your understanding of what Jesus meant?³ See footnote 3 as you answer.

³It is okay to continue to work to figure out what it means to be born of water and Spirit. One study Bible explains it in this way: “Being born of water and the Spirit’ could refer to (1) the contrast between physical birth (water) and spiritual birth (Spirit), or (2) being regenerated by the Spirit and signifying that rebirth by Christian baptism. The water may also represent the cleansing action of God’s Holy Spirit (**Titus 3:5**). Nicodemus undoubtedly would have been familiar with God’s promise in **Ezekiel 36:25, 26**. Jesus was explaining the importance of a spiritual rebirth, saying that people don’t enter the Kingdom by living a better life, but by being spiritually reborn.” *NLT Study Bible: New Living Translation*.

5

John 3:19 says people loved darkness rather than light. Why might some people prefer darkness? In what ways do you relate to that tension? What steps might you take to intentionally seek the Light?

6

When Jesus claims, “I am the Light of the World” in **John 8**, what is He saying about His identity?⁴

7

“The pillar of fire in the wilderness had represented God’s presence, protection, and guidance, though the holy flames were almost as dangerous to the Israelites as they were to their enemies ... Jesus brought God’s presence, protection, and guidance into the world in an approachable way. Now God could be known with an intimacy not possible with consuming fire.”⁵ In what ways have you allowed Christ, God’s holy light, to shine in your life? How do you balance the tension of a mighty, holy God, and a personal Savior and friend?

⁴“Jesus professes to be not only the inexhaustible source of spiritual nourishment, but also the genuine light by which truth and falsehood can be distinguished and by which direction can be established.” Barker, Kenneth L., et al. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: New Testament*. Zondervan, 2004. Bible Gateway Plus

⁵Osborne, Grant, and Philip W. Comfort. *Life Application Bible Commentary: John*. Tyndale, 1995. 170

8 Notice how the blind man's understanding of Jesus grows over time. What does this teach us about spiritual growth? Where have you experienced gradual clarity in your faith?

9 The Pharisees were confident they could see. What makes spiritual pride so dangerous? How can we guard against it? What role does humility play in your faith journey?

10 "Jesus explained that the man's blindness had nothing to do with his sin or his parents' sin: 'But this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. (NIV)' These words do not mean that God heartlessly inflicted blindness on this man at birth, but simply that he allowed nature to run its course so that the victim would ultimately bring glory to God through the reception of both physical and spiritual sight. ... How can God be at work in a desperate situation? There may be times when we have done everything possible to solve a problem ... We may have persisted in prayer and asked others to pray for us, and yet perceive no answer. The truth is, the solution, resolution, or answer may not ever come in this life. But it is also true that regardless of our difficulty and whether or not our burden is removed, God is still at work."⁶

See questions relating to this quote on the next page.

Does the idea of your current struggle being a platform for God's glory bring you comfort or does it feel unfair? Why?

If we accept that a resolution may not come in this lifetime, what specific evidence of God's presence can we hold onto today to keep our faith from turning into bitterness?

Jesus saw dignity and humanity where others saw blame. How can we become the kind of community where people don't feel blamed for their suffering?

11

Where in your life do you need Jesus to shine the light of His presence right now (confusion, fear, hidden sin, relational tension, calling, identity, etc.)? How can you invite Him into those areas?



THE PRACTICE

(Spiritual Disciplines)

Each week there will be a handful of different ways to engage with this section. The goal is not to engage with every practice, but to read them over and prayerfully decide which one to practice this week. Please choose one and be ready to share with your group how it went for you.

Option 1: Confession

"Hiding is the biggest enemy to your spiritual life. It causes you to run for cover from the light. The desire, often subconscious, to self-protect will cause you to miss the glory of Jesus. The solution is confession."⁷

How to Practice:

- Set aside some time for confession and self-examination. In the presence of God ask for light to pierce your defenses.
- Ask yourself, "Who have I injured recently through thoughtlessness, neglect, anger, or other actions?"
- As the Holy Spirit brings people to mind, confess your feelings about these people to God. Ask God to forgive you and if need be to give you grace to forgive them.
- IF APPROPRIATE, write an apology, make a phone call, or confess out loud in an attempt to put the relationship back on track.

Option 2: Examen

Jesus 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" (**John 6:35**). The examen gives us a way of seeing where the Light shows up in our day.

How to Practice:

- Take time to come into the presence of God at the end of the day and reflect on these questions:
 - Where did I notice Light today?
 - Where did I resist Light today?
 - Where did I see the image of God in someone?
- End by thanking Jesus for His patient illumination and ask Him to help you carry that Light into tomorrow.

⁷ Butler, Joshua Ryan. *God Is on Your Side: How Jesus Is for You When Everything Seems against You*. Multnomah, 2025. 137-138

Option 3: Seeing Others Clearly

God so loved the world, the whole world, that He sent His Son, full of unflinching love and faithfulness, to save it.

How to Practice:

- Choose one person this week: someone difficult, overlooked, suffering, etc.
- Intentionally pray: "Jesus, help me see Your image in them."
- Pay attention and ask God to reveal what you can learn and receive from them.
- Practice speaking dignity and encouragement over them.
- Ask the Spirit for one way you can tangibly reach out to them this week and follow through with that action.

Option 4: Candle Prayer

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." (**John 1:5**)

How to Practice:

- Light a candle during your prayer time as a physical reminder of Christ's presence.
- Pray **John 1:5** aloud.
- Bring one hidden or confusing area of your life into prayer.
- Ask Jesus to bring clarity, not condemnation.
- Respond to that clarity.

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Lesson 5



THE STORY (Key Passages)

As you read the passages, circle or underline what stands out to you.

John 10:1-16, 22-30

¹ "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!
² But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.
³ 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.
⁴ After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice.
⁵ They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant,
⁷ so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.
⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.
⁹ 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.
¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.
¹² 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.
¹³ The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me,
¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.
¹⁶ 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.

²² It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. ²³ He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴ The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ The Father and I are one."

John 13:1-17

¹ 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. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

⁸ "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

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

⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?" ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

John 15:1-17

¹ "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² 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. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ 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.

⁵ "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. ⁶ 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.

⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

What grabbed your attention as you were reading?



THE ROOTS

(Old Testament Connections)

The image of shepherd did not begin in **John 10**. It runs like a thread through Israel's Scriptures—through poetry, prophecy, and promise. The God who once led His people through wilderness and exile, who rebuked corrupt leaders and promised to search for His scattered sheep, now stands before them in the flesh. To understand Jesus' claims, we must understand the story and context He was stepping into.

Ezekiel 34: The Good Shepherd

In **Ezekiel 34**, God rebukes Israel's leaders for taking care of themselves but neglecting their flock (**34:1-6**). But then God Himself declares this:

"I myself will search and find my sheep. I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers and in all the places where people live. Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures of the hills. I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD. I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!" (34:11-16)

When Jesus says "I am the Good Shepherd," He is claiming to be the

fulfillment of this promise. God Himself came to shepherd His people, providing the care and protection they desperately need. While, the metaphor is ancient, the fulfillment is standing right in front of them.

Psalm 23: The Shepherd's Care

In **Psalm 23**, David writes "The LORD is my shepherd" as well as "Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid for you are close beside me." The echoes of this psalm can be seen throughout the Gospel of John, highlighted by the fact that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. And in **John 13**, Jesus sat at the table in the presence of his enemies (Judas). Finally, the Last Supper was but a foretaste of the final eternal banquet.

Isaiah 5:1-7: The Vineyard

Israel was often called the vine in the Old Testament. In **Isaiah 5**, Israel is described as a vineyard that failed to produce good fruit. Rather than justice, they practiced oppression; rather than righteousness, there were cries of violence. And as a result, the vineyard was destroyed. But Jesus declares, "I am the true vine" (**John 15**). Jesus succeeded where Israel failed, highlighting His role as the source of true life. He declared that fruitfulness will never result from effort or striving, but as a natural result of abiding in Him.



THE MEANING

(Theological Reflection)

Throughout Scripture, God described His relationship with His people with one of the most tender metaphors imaginable: a shepherd and his sheep. Sheep are not fierce, sheep are not independent, and they are not self-protecting. Rather, they survive by listening. And in John's Gospel Jesus doesn't simply act like a shepherd, He declares, "I am the Good Shepherd."

The Good Shepherd offered intimacy, protection, and friendship. In contrast to the hired hands or thieves, the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. He was and is the fulfillment of every promise God ever made to personally care for His flock. More than simple protections, Jesus offered His life for theirs. And He knows His sheep: He calls them by

name, they recognize His voice, they follow Him. Christianity is not merely moral instruction, it is a deep and personal relationship. In order to hear His voice, closeness is required; sheep don't respond to strangers.

The Good Shepherd does not merely walk with us through the darkest valley of the shadow of death, He conquers it. As we saw in lesson 2, when Lazarus became sick, Jesus delayed and by the time He arrived, Lazarus was dead. Mary and Martha were grieving, confused, and hurt. But Jesus didn't dismiss their pain, rather He entered in with them and wept. Then He declared "I am the resurrection and the life" and Lazarus walked out of the tomb. The Good Shepherd does not protect from a distance, He comes close. Nor does He promise the absence of valleys, He promises His presence in them. This story reminds us that even when death seems final, the Good Shepherd has the final word. His presence transforms our darkest moments into opportunities for hope and renewal.

In **John 15**, Jesus changed metaphors. "I am the true vine... you are the branches." Israel had often been described as God's vine, yet it failed to bear fruit. Now Jesus identified Himself as the true source of life. But He did not want mere compliance; Jesus wants communion. In order to bear fruit, we must abide in Him. We must remain, stay connected, draw life from Him. When we disconnect from the vine, we wither spiritually—we become anxious, reactive, exhausted. The Christian life is not sustained by willpower but by attachment to the True Vine, listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd.



THE CONVERSATION

(Discussion Questions)

1

When Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd," what does that imagery stir in you?

2 Jesus contrasted Himself with “hired hands” who abandoned the flock when things got hard or dangerous (**John 10:12-13**). What are some of the modern “hired hands” that people may trust instead of the Good Shepherd? How do these alternatives fall short?

3 How do we guard against becoming “hired hands” in our areas of influence? (i.e. serving for reputation, control, or comfort, etc.)

4 “It is said that shepherds in the East could name each sheep [in their flock] and that each sheep would respond to the shepherd calling its name. True believers, as sheep belonging to the true Shepherd, would never follow someone pretending to be their shepherd.”¹

What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and truly being attuned to His voice? How do we discern His voice from other voices (i.e. culture, fear, pride, distraction, etc.)?

5

Having Jesus as our Good Shepherd means that we are invited to trust Him in a personal way. What is the difference between believing a doctrine versus trusting a person? How does this distinction affect your relationship with Jesus?

6

In reviewing the Lazarus story, we are reminded that Jesus wept. Why do you think Jesus wept if He knew resurrection was coming? What does this reveal about the Good Shepherd?

7

Psalm 23 tells us that our Good Shepherd is with us even in the darkest valleys. How does knowing Jesus is with you in those valleys encourage you as you walk through them? In what specific ways have you felt His presence during difficult times?

8 In **John 13**, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, which included Judas who would betray Him. How does Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, redefine leadership in this passage? How does this challenge modern definitions of influence and success? What would change in our church/community if we took the attitude shown in foot-washing literally as a pattern of leadership?

9 Jesus calls His disciples friends (**John 15**). How does that reshape your understanding of your relationship with Him? What does friendship with God mean to you?

10 What is the difference between striving for fruit and abiding for fruit? (**John 15:4**) How does this difference affect the way you approach your spiritual practices?

Jesus says, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Do you live as though that is true? What does abiding look like in your daily rhythms? Where are you tempted to disconnect from the vine right now? What practical steps can you take to stay connected?



THE PRACTICE

(Spiritual Disciplines)

Each week there will be a handful of different ways to engage with this section. The goal is not to engage with every practice, but to read them over and prayerfully decide which one to practice this week. Please choose one and be ready to share with your group how it went for you.

Option 1: Listening Prayer

“The real ‘work’ of prayer is to become silent and listen to the voice that says good things about me... To gently push aside and silence the many voices that question my goodness and to trust that I will hear the voice of blessing [the Good Shepherd]—that demands real effort.”²

Part of abiding in Christ is listening to His voice.

How to Practice:

- Set aside 10–15 minutes of silence.
- Pray: “Good Shepherd, I am listening.”
- Remain quiet: When distractions arise, gently return to the phrase.
- Ask:
 - What might You be saying to me today?
 - Where are You leading me?
- Write down any impressions and weigh them against Scripture.

²Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. InterVarsity Press, 2015. 266

Option 2: Meditation

"Meditation is a long, ardent gaze at God, his work, and his Word...[It] allows us to develop a sight for the interior things of God in the natural and external world."³

As we meditate on **Psalm 23** we learn about the Good Shepherd and spend time abiding in Him.

How to Practice:

- Choose a comfortable and quiet place.
- Place yourself in the presence of God. Release your anxieties and to-do list to the Lord.
- Ask Him to open your heart to his Word.
- Read **Psalm 23** slowly each day this week. Emphasize a different phrase each day.
 - "The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need..."
 - "He leads me beside peaceful streams..."
 - "He renews my strength..."
 - "I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me..."
- Reflect on where you need that aspect of shepherding.

Option 3: Foot-Washing Posture

Jesus knelt and washed the feet of the disciples, even the one who would ultimately betray Him. This act took humility and love. Jesus said we should love our neighbors and everyone is our neighbor.

How to Practice:

- Perform one hidden act of service this week.
- Do something inconvenient, humble, or unseen.
- As you serve, pray both for the person and yourself:
 - "Lord, shepherd my heart into humility."
- Reflect on how this act impacts your understanding of servant leadership.

Option 4: Valley Reflection

“Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.” (**Psalm 23:4**)

How to Practice:

- Identify one “valley” you are walking through.
- Journal:
 - Where do I sense fear?
 - Where have I seen God present?
 - What would it look like to trust the Shepherd here?
- Close with the prayer: “I will not be afraid, for You are close beside me.”

Consider sharing your reflections with a trusted friend for encouragement and support.

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES

JESUS AND THE NEW CREATION

Lesson 6



THE STORY

(Key Passages)

As you read the passages, circle or underline what stands out to you.

We have arrived at the most important part of the story. The moment toward which all of history has been moving. Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus has repeatedly said, "My time has not yet come" (**2:4; 7:6, 8; 8:20**). But now, as we enter the final chapters, Jesus declared: "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory" (**12:23**). This is not just a moment in history, it's the culmination of God's eternal plan.

John 14:15-31

Context: Before the cross, Jesus gathered His disciples for one final meal. After washing their feet, Jesus prepared His disciples for what was coming. They were troubled and confused. Jesus comforted them with a vision of the new creation.

¹⁵ "If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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."

²² 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?”

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ 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.

²⁷ “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. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

³⁰ “I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, ³¹ 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.

John 19:14–30, 38–42

Context: Jesus was crucified at Golgotha. John noted specific details that connect Jesus’ death to both the Passover and the creation narratives:¹

¹⁴ *It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, “Look, here is your king!”*

¹⁵ *“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.

¹ Jesus died on the sixth day of the week—the same day humanity was created in **Genesis 1**. And He died at the exact time the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the temple. Jesus’ words: “It is finished” echo **Genesis 2:1-2**: “So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation.” Just as God completed the work of creation on the sixth day, Jesus completed the work of new creation on the sixth day. The work of redemption is finished. The way back to the garden is open. Jesus is the true Passover Lamb (**Exodus 12:46**). His blood protects us from judgment. His death sets us free from slavery to sin. After Jesus died, His body was placed in a tomb. On the Sabbath—the seventh day—Jesus rested in the grave, just as God rested on the seventh day after completing creation (**Genesis 2:2-3**). And on Sunday, the third day, Christ rose. It was the first day of a new week, the first day of a new creation.

¹⁶ Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus away. ¹⁷ Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹ And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.'"

²² Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

²³ 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. ²⁴ 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.

²⁵ Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." ²⁷ And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

²⁸ Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³⁸ 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. ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. ⁴¹ The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. ⁴² 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.

John 20:1-22

¹ 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. ² 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!"

³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—⁹ for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² 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. ¹³ "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."

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵ "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."

¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said.

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

¹⁷ "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.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! ²¹ Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." ²² Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

What grabbed your attention as you were reading?



THE ROOTS

(Old Testament Connections)

The resurrection isn't just a miracle—it's the fulfillment of God's plan that has been unfolding since **Genesis 1**. Every thread of the Old Testament story comes together in the resurrection. Every promise finds its fulfillment in the New Adam.²

The Bible begins with the story of creation in **Genesis 1-2**, which mirrors Jesus' final week on earth:

- Day 1 (Sunday): Jesus enters Jerusalem (**John 12:12-19**)—the beginning of the final week
- Days 2-5: Jesus teaches, confronts religious leaders, prepares His disciples

²Paul made the connection of the old Adam and the new Adam clear: "The Scriptures tell us, 'The first man, Adam, became a living person.' But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit" (**1 Corinthians 15:45**). The first Adam was created from dust and given the breath of life. He was placed in a garden to tend it. But he failed. He disobeyed God, and death entered the world. The Last Adam—Jesus—succeeds where the first Adam failed:

- The first Adam brought death; the Last Adam brings life
- The first Adam was driven from the garden; the Last Adam rises in a garden
- The first Adam hid from God in shame; the Last Adam restores us to fellowship with God
- The first Adam's disobedience cursed creation; the Last Adam's obedience redeems it

- Day 6 (Friday): Jesus is crucified and declares, “It is finished!” (**John 19:30**)—completing His work, just as God completed creation on the sixth day
- Day 7 (Saturday): Jesus rests in the tomb on the Sabbath—entering His Sabbath rest, just as God rested on the seventh day
- Day 8/Day 1 (Sunday): Jesus rises from the dead on “the first day of the week” (**John 20:1**)—inaugurating the new creation

Jesus’ resurrection is the first day of the new creation week. The old creation, marred by sin and death, is being renewed. The New Adam has come to restore what the first Adam lost.

So just as God breathed physical life into Adam, Jesus breathed spiritual life into His disciples. The first Adam received the breath of life and became a living being (**Genesis 2:7**). The New Adam breathed on His people, and they became a new humanity (**John 20:22**). He was enacting **Genesis 2:7** in reverse—or rather, in fulfillment. The Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation (**Genesis 1:2**) now dwells in God’s people. The breath that gave life to Adam now gives resurrection life to the new humanity.

Exodus 12: The Passover Lamb

The Passover is a defining event in Israel’s history. God’s people were enslaved in Egypt, and God sent Moses to deliver them. The final plague was the death of every firstborn in Egypt. But God provided a way of escape by putting the blood of a perfect lamb on their doorframes (**Exodus 12:5-7, 23**).

John emphasized that Jesus died as the Passover Lamb by highlighting the time of Jesus death, “the day of preparation for the Passover” (**John 19:14**), at the exact time the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the temple.³ This was in addition to having Jesus be introduced at the very beginning as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (**John 1:29**)

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb. His blood protects us from judgment. His death sets us free from slavery to sin. The Passover celebrated Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. The resurrection celebrates our deliverance from sin and death—our exodus into new creation life.

³The Gospels say that Jesus died around the ninth hour (approximately 3pm) (**Matthew 27:46-50; Mark 15:33-37; Luke 23:44-46**). This aligns with the Jewish tradition from the Mishnah that lambs were killed by the priests between roughly 3 and 5pm on the day before Passover.

Leviticus 26:11-12: Dwelling Place

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to dwell with His people: *“I will live among you, and I will not despise you. I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people”* (**Leviticus 26:11-12**). This was the purpose of the tabernacle and later the temple. Jesus promised something even greater than the tabernacle or temple: *“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.”* (**John 14:23**) After the resurrection, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on His disciples (**John 20:22**), fulfilling this promise. God doesn’t just dwell among His people—He dwells in them.

The barrier between God and humanity, erected in **Genesis 3**, has been removed. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we have access to the Father. And through the Spirit, God makes His home in us. We are the temple of God, the dwelling place of the Most High. (**1 Corinthians 6:19**)



THE MEANING

(Theological Reflection)

Before we witness the new creation beginning in **John 20**, we must return to where John began his Gospel. John opened his Gospel with the same words that open the Bible: *“In the beginning.”* This is no accident. John is telling us that what’s about to unfold in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is nothing less than a new Genesis—a new beginning for all creation.

The Word who spoke the first creation into existence (*“Let there be light”*) has now become flesh. The Creator has entered His creation. And He’s about to do what He came to do: restore what was broken, renew what was corrupted, and restart what had fallen into death.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He didn’t just come back to His old life. He rose with a resurrection body—a transformed, glorified, physical body that will never die again. This is the prototype of the new creation. N.T. Wright explains: *“The resurrection is the beginning of God’s new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven.”*⁴

Because Jesus has risen, we are not just forgiven, we are made new (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). When we believe in Jesus, we’re born again

(**John 3:3**). We receive the Spirit—the breath of new creation life (**John 20:22**). We become temples of the living God (**1 Corinthians 6:19**). We’re being transformed into Christ’s image (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

However, while the new creation has begun, it is not complete. We live in the tension between the “already” and the “not yet.” Paul described this tension in **Romans 8:23**: *“And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.”*

This means that we have hope that our present sufferings are not the end of the story. We can pray for healing knowing that it’s a taste of the ultimate healing that will come. We can work for justice knowing that our work is not in vain (**1 Corinthians 15:58**). We get to live in eager anticipation for the day when the new creation is complete.



THE CONVERSATION

(Discussion Questions)

1

John viewed the cross not as a tragedy, but as Jesus’ glory (**John 12:23; 17:1-5**). How does this definition contrast with how the world typically defines glory and power? What does this tell us about the nature of God’s kingdom?

2

John emphasized that Jesus rose “on the first day of the week” (**John 20:1, 19**). How does understanding the resurrection as the “first day” of the new creation change how you view it? What does it mean to you that history has been restarted?

3 Mary mistook Jesus for the gardener, but Jesus is the Gardener—the New Adam cultivating the new creation. Where do you see Jesus “gardening” in your life—cultivating, pruning, bringing new growth? How does this image of Jesus as Gardener, the New Adam, comfort or challenge you?

4 When Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (**John 20:22**), He was echoing **Genesis 2:7**. What does it mean that the Spirit is the breath of new creation life? How have you experienced the Spirit bringing new life into your heart throughout your journey with God?

5 Paul said, “*Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*” (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). What “old life” things are you still clinging to? What would it look like to fully embrace your new creation identity in Christ?

6

In **Leviticus 26**, God promised to walk among His people, but **John 14:23** and **20:22** reveal that now God will dwell in His people. How does this shift from “among” to “in” change the way you view your body, our gathering as a church, and your relationship with God in general?

7

Jesus’ resurrection begins to reverse every aspect of the **Genesis 3** curse—shame, pain, conflict, toil, death. Which aspect of the curse do you most long to see reversed in your life or in the world?

8

We live between the “already” (new creation has begun) and the “not yet” (new creation is not yet complete). How do you hold this tension? How does it affect how you pray, how you suffer, and/or how you hope?

“Mary is the first to encounter the risen Lord, but she won’t be the last. Over the centuries, hundreds of millions—nay, billions—have met the resurrected Christ. We have heard him call our name and experienced his presence through the power of his Spirit. We have worshipped him as Lord and gone to proclaim the good news of victory to the world. We are all represented in the ‘Woman’ who is the church. Like a new Eve with our new Adam.”⁵

9 Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (**John 20:21**). What does it mean to be sent as a new creation person into a broken world? How are you participating in God’s mission of renewal in your workplace, neighborhood, or relationships?

10 The resurrection isn’t just about our future hope—it’s about our present reality. What would change in your life this week if you truly lived as a resurrection person, empowered by the Spirit, and participating in the new creation?



THE PRACTICE

(Spiritual Disciplines)

Each week there will be a handful of different ways to engage with this section. The goal is not to engage with every practice, but to read them over and prayerfully decide which one to practice this week. Please choose one and be ready to share with your group how it went for you.

Option 1: Communion as a New Creation Feast

Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose death brings us into new creation. This week, approach communion (whether at church or at home) as a celebration of new creation life.

How to Practice:

Before Communion:

- Read **John 6:35, 51**
- Read **John 19:30**
- Read **John 20:1, 19-22**
- Reflect:
 - Jesus is the Bread of Life—the food of the new creation.
 - His death completed the work of salvation—"It is finished."
 - His resurrection inaugurated new creation.
 - His Spirit gives us new creation life.

During Communion:

- As you take the bread, pray: "Jesus, You are the Bread of Life. Your body was broken to bring me into new creation. Thank You. Feed my soul with resurrection life."
- As you take the cup, pray: "Jesus, Your blood was shed to cleanse me and make me new. Thank You. I am a new creation in You."

After Communion:

- Reflect: How does understanding communion as a new creation feast change how you experience it?
- Pray: "Jesus, every time I take communion, I'm celebrating new creation. I'm remembering that the old has gone, the new has come. I'm tasting the feast of the age to come. Thank You for making me new."

Option 2: Write a New Creation Poem

The Resurrection is the most joyful event in history—the beginning of new creation. Write a poem celebrating what Jesus has done and is doing.

Prompts:

- “In the beginning, God created... Now, in the resurrection, Jesus is creating anew...”
- “The first Adam brought death... The Last Adam brings life...”
- “The tomb is empty, the garden is alive...”
- “I was old, but now I am new...”
- “Death could not hold You, and it will not hold me...”

Structure suggestion:

- Stanza 1: Celebrate the resurrection—“He is risen!”
- Stanza 2: Contrast the first Adam and the Last Adam.
- Stanza 3: Declare what Jesus is making new in you.
- Stanza 4: Look forward to the complete new creation.

Don’t worry about making it perfect—just write from your heart. Share it with your group or keep it as a prayer of praise.

Option 3: Create a Resurrection “Garden”

Mary encountered Jesus in a garden. Create a physical reminder of the resurrection and new creation.

How to Create It:

Materials:

- A large pot, planter, or section of your yard
- Soil
- Seeds or plants (choose flowers, herbs, or vegetables that symbolize new life)
- A small stone (to represent the stone rolled away)
- A small cross or other symbol of the resurrection
- Optional: small figurines, moss, decorative stones

Process:

- Fill your container with soil.
- Plant seeds or plants—as you plant, pray: “Jesus, You are the Gardener. Plant new life in me.”

- Place the stone to one side (rolled away from the “tomb”).
- Add the cross or resurrection symbol.
- Decorate with moss, stones, or other natural materials.
- Water your garden—as you water, pray: “Jesus, You are the Living Water. Water the seeds You’ve planted in my life. Bring growth.”

Use Your Garden for Prayer:

- Spend time each day tending your garden and praying.
- As you watch things grow, thank Jesus for the new creation life He’s bringing in you.
- When you see new growth, pray: “Jesus, You are making all things new. Continue Your work in me.”
- When you need to prune or weed, pray: “Jesus, prune what needs to go. Remove what’s choking out new life.”

Option 4: Serve

Jesus sends us into the world as agents of new creation: “*As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you*” (John 20:21). This week, participate in God’s mission of renewal.

Ideas:

Bring Life to Dead Places:

- Volunteer with a ministry that brings hope to broken places (addiction recovery, prison ministry, homeless outreach, crisis pregnancy center).
- Visit someone who is isolated or lonely—bring the life of fellowship.
- Serve in a community garden or urban renewal project.
- Help someone rebuild after loss or tragedy.
- Support a ministry that brings restoration (marriage counseling, family support, trauma healing).

As you serve, pray: “Jesus, You are making all things new. Use me as an agent of new creation. Let others see Your resurrection life through me.”

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES