

Read through the Bible



The Book of John Week Two



Monday, March Thirteenth

Welcome to Week Two of our six-week journey through the book of John! After a week of reading through the first few chapters, you are starting to see why Jesus was unlike anyone the world had ever witnessed. May your time spent in God's Word this week be fruitful as you learn more of the miraculous and amazing works of Jesus contained in John's account. - Vicar Chris

Read: John 4:27-54

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- What is the 'food' that fuels Jesus? (see verses 31-35)
- While the Samaritans believed the woman's testimony, what ultimately caused them to believe? (see verse 42)

If a trustworthy friend told you there was a school of Great White sharks just off the coast of Indian Rocks Beach, you would probably believe it. But if you traveled to that part of the beach and saw them for yourself, you would have absolutely no doubt of their existence. Similarly, the Samaritans believed their fellow woman's testimony, but it was ultimately the face-to-face encounter with Jesus that convinced them "this man really is the Savior of the world" (v. 42). Today, you and I also experience a living encounter with a living Savior who emboldens us to love God and love others.

- How did the royal official demonstrate faith that his son would live? (see the second part of verse 50)

The royal official displays an important aspect of faith – he took Jesus at His word. As faith-filled Christians, we take God at His word. Throughout his account, John will continue to show us how God is consistently a God who keeps His word and fulfills His promises to His people through His Son.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to consider whether you have been taking God at His word in your own life. Spend some time in prayer with this.

Tuesday, March Fourteenth

You're driving southbound on I-275 one afternoon, and you unsurprisingly hit a bit of traffic. You're slightly annoyed at the holdup, but you realize it's for a good reason when you see a minor collision up ahead. As you drive by the crash, you heed the officer's direction to move over to the left lane. You do so without thinking because the officer is directing you with authority. In our passage this morning, Jesus demonstrates His authority from above by directing an invalid to do something he hadn't done in 38 years.

Read: John 5:1-15

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Why might Jesus have asked the invalid if he wanted to get well? (see verses 6 and 7)
- What specific action causes the man to be cured and able to walk? (see verses 8 and 9)

Jesus' words carry authority. Because He is the Word and is God (John 1:1), we can trust what He says. In a world of competing narratives and opposing opinions, we have great peace in knowing that His words are true yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

- What might Jesus be alluding to when He says, "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you"? (see verse 14)

Jesus communicates an important aspect of His message to the man - He calls us to repentance. While we tend to focus on Jesus as the life-giver, we must remember that He is also the forgiver who calls us out of the darkness of our sin and into the light of His grace.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Martin Luther said, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." In what way or ways is your life currently one of repentance? Consider how Jesus' authority to forgive your sins communicates to you the need for a life of repentance.

Wednesday, March Fifteenth

If you've ever watched an episode of Law and Order before, you're familiar with the court segment when the defendant gives testimony as to why she or he is not guilty. While the defendant is innocent until proven guilty, it is very helpful if the defendant's counsel can provide a pool of witnesses who can testify on behalf of that defendant. In our passage today, Jesus' authority is questioned by the Jews. In response, Jesus lays out His relationship to the Father, as well as the many witnesses who testify to Him.

Read: John 5:16-47

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Why were the Jews upset with Jesus? (see verses 16-18)

Imagine attending your first day of class and waiting for your teacher to arrive. Suddenly, a student in the front row stands up and announces that he is your teacher. After hearing this announcement, you'd probably have a hard time believing the student. In our passage, the Jews had a hard time believing that the man who stood before them was equal with God (v. 18).

- In what ways does Jesus show His relationship to the Father as His Son? (see verses 17, 19, 20, 21, 22-23, 24, and 26)
- Jesus lists a variety of witnesses who testify about Him. Who/what are they? (see verses 33, 36, 37, 39, and 46)

Jesus was asking the Jews to connect the dots. John the Baptist, Jesus' own work, God Himself, the Scriptures, and even Moses all testified to Jesus as the Son of God. He was the Messiah they had been waiting for, but they rejected Him instead (v. 43; also 1:11). Jesus leaves them with a stinging question – how are they to believe in Him when they don't believe those testifying about Him?

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time in prayer to thank God for the people in your life who faithfully testified (and continue to testify) to you about Jesus.

Thursday, March Sixteenth

Kids' birthday parties often culminate with cake (hungry yet?). If you've ever been put in charge of cutting the cake, you've probably looked around to see how many kids there are to determine how big to cut the slices. If there are 60 kids at the party, you'll be cutting pretty small slices. But what would you do if the host came up to you, told you to cut big slices, and assured you there would be enough? You might not believe how that could be possible considering the size of the cake. In today's passage, the disciples faced a similar dilemma – how in the world was Jesus going to feed thousands of people with just five loaves of bread and two fish?

Read: John 6:1-24

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Jesus enlists His disciples to help in this miracle – a first. Why do you think He invites them to do so? (see verses 9-13)
- What do you think Jesus was communicating through this miracle? (see verses 5-6 and 14)

Jesus reminds His disciples that nothing is impossible for Him. By also enlisting their help, He shows them that they are to be active participants in sharing His message. In the same way, Jesus doesn't call you and I to sit on the sidelines. He empowers us through His Holy Spirit to participate in sharing His good news to people. Living Love isn't just a catchy tagline. It's a call to action and an invitation to "feed" and "nourish" others with the truth of Jesus.

- As if the miraculous feeding wasn't enough, Jesus comes to His disciples walking on water later that night. The waters were rough, and the disciples still had some distance to get to the shore. What happened when the disciples brought Jesus out of the water and into the boat? (see verse 21)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

What is one easy way you can get involved with "feeding" others?

Friday, March Seventeenth

We live in such a beautiful area, don't we? If you've been to the beach once or many times over, chances are you've noticed the varying sand and shell patterns left by the waves of the gulf. Walking towards the gulf, the first surface you experience is a dry, soft sand. Next, you come up to a smaller line of shells and seaweed that have washed up onto the shore. Eventually, you get to the sand closest to the gulf that feels mushy and wet. If you watch where people spend their time on the beach, they mostly spend it either on the dry, soft sand or the mushy, wet sand. Chances are you've probably never seen somebody park themselves right on top of the broken shells and seaweed! As self-preserving people, we often divert ourselves away from the tough areas of our lives. In today's passage, Jesus confronts the people with some tough words. How would they respond to His claims?

Read: John 6:25-71

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- What is the work God requires of His people? (see verse 29)
- Who is the 'true bread from heaven'? (see verses 32-35)
What does this 'bread' offer? (see verses 35 and 50-51)
- In light of what Jesus says in verses 53-58, what perspective does this give you on how you approach the Lord's Supper?

Jesus' words in this passage were tough for the people to take in then as they are for us now. As a result, some 'unfollowed' Jesus (v. 66) because they could not come to terms with the thought of putting their faith in Him. Following Jesus isn't always easy, but His words remain true. As we go throughout our daily lives, we must remember that He has "the words of eternal life" (v. 68).

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

From today's passage, consider which words of Jesus you find concerning, and which words you find comforting. Take some time in prayer to discern how all of these words are life-giving words.

Saturday, March Eighteenth

In the 1900s, if you wanted to make a name for yourself with your talents and inventions, you often had to journey to a 'world's fair' to show them off. While these fairs still go on today in various forms, it is now much easier to make yourself known to the world. It seems like every week, an ordinary person goes viral overnight and captures the attention of the world (remember Chewbacca Mom?). In today's passage, Jesus' brothers wanted Him to travel to Judea to make Himself known. They wanted people to experience His miracles firsthand. But Jesus had other plans.

Read: John 7:1-24

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- What were the varying views of Jesus? (see verses 1 and 12)

We have a consensus of who Jesus is today, but back then when He roamed the earth, people were trying to determine exactly who He was. Was He a prophet? A sorcerer? The Messiah? Or was He just 'a good man' (v. 12)? Whoever they thought He was, a good portion seemed to neglect who Jesus said He was.

- To whom does Jesus attribute His teaching? (see verse 16)
- How does Jesus challenge their outrage with His healing? Were they being hypocritical? (see verses 21-24)

Jesus points out an all too common trait of the human condition – we judge others by appearances. Instead of making a "right judgment" (v. 24), we allow our biases and predispositions to dictate how we view those around us. Jesus challenges the Jews to consider how their biases affect the way they view Him.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Consider chatting with someone tomorrow at church about something God has been revealing to you in this journey through John from this past week. Pray that God would guide you in your efforts to engage with someone in this way!

Sunday, March Nineteenth

In 1966, a new musical appeared on Broadway entitled "It's a Bird...It's a Plane...It's Superman!" The title put forth the question on peoples' minds as they looked up into the sky. Did they see a bird? Did they see a plane? Or could they have witnessed a flying man with a cape named Superman? The musical set out to answer that question, and thus gave life to one of our nation's most well-known superheroes. In our passage today, many Jews set out to determine just who this Jesus was and what He was all about.

Read: John 7:25-52

Reflect: Use the passage in John to work through these questions

- Notice that Jesus shifts the conversation from where He is from (vv. 27-29) to where He is going (vv. 33-34). Why do you think He does this?
- What did Jesus mean when He says that "streams of living water will flow from within" a believer? (see verse 39)

You can imagine the way in which Jesus spoke must have been pretty confusing for the people. Where exactly would He go that they couldn't find Him (vv. 33-36)? What kind of drink does He offer (vv. 37-39)? While they were considering worldly explanations (Greece and water), Jesus was giving other-worldly descriptions (heaven and the Holy Spirit). Because His time had not yet come, they would be left to wonder what all of these things meant.

- Why do the chief priests and Pharisees claim to know better than the 'mob' of people? (see verses 47-49)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and ask Him to prepare your heart for the coming week. Thank Him for sending you His Spirit.

Questions? Comments? Contact Vicar Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 531-2761.