

Read through the Bible



The Book of John Week Three



Monday, March Twentieth

Welcome to Week Three of our six-week journey through the book of John! As you've seen so far, Jesus provided people with many signs and reasons to believe in Him – from healings to feedings to walking on the water. May your time spent in God's Word this week be rewarding as you read more of Jesus' teachings and miracles contained in John's account. - Vicar Chris

Read: John 7:53 – 8:11

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

- The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus by asking Him to pass judgment on the adulteress. "Would He be too harsh? Too lenient?" How does Jesus respond to them? (see verses 6-7)

While the Pharisees confronted Jesus with the Law, He confronted them with their own sin. When we judge others, we judge ourselves. Because the Pharisees were so willing to judge the adulteress but unwilling to judge themselves, Jesus challenges them to consider that everyone stands in judgment. We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

- How does Jesus' response in verse 11 match His response to Nicodemus in John 3:17?
- What was Jesus' charge to the woman? (see verse 11)

Jesus graciously confronts the woman in her sin – "go and sin no more." As followers of Jesus, we are not called to continue living in our sin. This doesn't mean that we don't sin or won't sin, but it does mean that we aren't willfully living in ways that dishonor God. Instead, Jesus calls us out of the darkness and into His light.

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

Take a moment to consider how you might have judged the adulteress, and how you judge others today. How might you have responded to the woman with both grace and truth (John 1:14)?

Tuesday, March Twenty-First

It was the shock heard all around the film world – “No, I am your father.” In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke Skywalker is confronted by a startling revelation from Darth Vader – he is Vader’s son. A villain he had been searching for to destroy, Luke now comes face to face with the reality that this same villain is also his father. Because this new identity had been revealed, Luke began to look at his life in a very different light. In our passage today, Jesus reveals to His early believers their new identity in Him.

Read: John 8:12-41

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

- Who does Jesus claim to be in verse 12? What are the benefits for us of following such a person?
- What proof does Jesus give that affirms He is who He says He is? (see verses 14-18 and 28-29)

Imagine trying to describe fireworks to somebody who has never seen them before. After giving the person a basic rundown of what they are and how they work, she may have a decent idea, but chances are, she will also have questions that demonstrate she doesn’t fully understand fireworks. Until she sees them firsthand, she won’t fully comprehend their power and majesty. Similarly, the people in Jesus’ time had many questions that demonstrated they didn’t fully understand – “Where is your father?” (v. 19) “Will He kill himself?” (v. 22) “Who are you?” (v. 25) Jesus assures them they will understand when He is “lifted up” (v. 28) on the cross and eventually, into heaven. What He is telling them now will be made clear at the appointed time.

- Jesus tells the Jews who believed Him that they were slaves to sin. What is their new identity in Him? (see verses 34-36)

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

Go to God in prayer and thank Him that He has freed you from the bondage of sin through the work of Jesus on the cross.

Wednesday, March Twenty-Second

If you wanted to know the approximate age of a tree, you could find out by observing its growth rings. In Safety Harbor, the Baranoff Oak is said to be the oldest living Live Oak tree in Pinellas County. By studying its growth rings, many have determined it to be somewhere between 300 and 500 years old. It’s very likely, then, that this tree is older than the founding of our country! In today’s passage, Jesus shares His “age” with the crowd. By boldly stating “I am!”, He hints once again toward His Oneness with God.

Read: John 8:42-59

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

- Why does Jesus say the people can’t understand what He is saying to them? (see verses 43-44)
- How do Jesus’ words in verse 47 show that their sins had separated them from God?

Jesus brings up an important point in God’s story – the peoples’ sinful nature is a reminder that they are separated from God. By doing so, He points to their need for a Savior. Only a Savior could free them from their sin and restore them to a relationship with God in which they ‘belong’ to Him (v. 47).

- What does Jesus mean when He says, “I am” in verse 58?

Jesus reveals a bombshell that angers the people to the point of wanting to stone Him (v. 59). He’s not just older than them; He’s older than Abraham (v. 58). In other words, He is God in the flesh! In two words, Jesus affirms that He was never created by God because He is God – “I am!” He always was, is, and always will be.

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

Take some time in prayer to thank God for the people who went before you and faithfully shared truth with others. Consider how you may share the truths of Jesus with future generations by engaging with your family and friends in the present.

Thursday, March Twenty-Third

When athletes win games, news reporters will run up alongside them and ask them, “What was the key to your success in this game?” And you know what we often hear many of them say? “I just want to thank God for this opportunity.” “I want to give glory to God for sustaining me in this game.” That’s often not what the news reporters are expecting to hear! They’re expecting to hear something like, “You know I’m just a really talented athlete. I crushed the competition out there. Nobody can compare to my athletic skills.” And yet instead of this response - the response our culture often wants to hear - some of the most skilled, able-bodied people in the world give glory not to themselves, but to God. In our passage today, a man blind from birth does just that.

Read: John 9:1-41

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

- Jesus’ disciples wanted to know who sinned – the man or his parents – that he was born blind. How does He answer their question? (see verses 3-5)

Notice how Jesus takes His disciples’ attention on the cause and shifts it to the purpose of the man’s blindness – that the work of God might be displayed in his life. God is telling His story through this man’s blindness.

- How did the man respond to the Pharisees’ questions concerning Jesus? (see verses 13-15 and 24-27)

The Pharisees wanted a logical explanation as to why this man could now see, and instead, they heard that it was Jesus who gave this man his sight. They didn’t like that, and in questioning the man, they displayed their own spiritual blindness.

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

Reflect on one way you are displaying spiritual blindness in your own life. Take a moment in prayer asking God to help you ‘see.’

Friday, March Twenty-Fourth

In the movie *Babe*, a small town is captivated by a young pig’s ability to meticulously herd sheep. The talking pig, called Babe, is able to speak to the sheep in such a kind and assuring manner that they do whatever he tells them to do. The classically trained sheepdogs, on the other hand, have a hard time herding the sheep because they are ferocious and cruel towards them. In the end, the sheep respond to Babe over the sheepdogs because he gives them reason to trust and follow him. In our passage today, Jesus separates Himself from others as the Good Shepherd, and thus gives them reason to trust and follow Him.

Read: John 10:1-21

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

- What are the two roles of Jesus, and how do these roles benefit the flock? (see verses 7-10 and 11-15)

By identifying Himself as the gate and the Good Shepherd, Jesus makes two important comments. As the gate, He makes clear that people are saved through Him (see John 14:6). As the Good Shepherd, He is willing to lay down His life so we may be saved.

- Based on what you’ve read so far in John, who might Jesus be referring to when He talks about the “other sheep that are not of this sheep pen”? (see verse 16)

When Jesus refers to the “other sheep,” He is speaking about the Gentiles. He puts forth the reality that as the Good Shepherd, He will lead those within the sheep pen (Israel) and those outside it (the Gentiles). Jesus gathers us all under one flock.

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

Can you distinguish between the voice of the Good Shepherd and the voices of imposters in your own life? Take a moment to consider whose voice you listen to most. If it is not the Good Shepherd’s, what is one practical way you can start listening?

Saturday, March Twenty-Fifth

Whenever you pull off US-19 and into a car dealership, a salesman invariably runs over hoping to sell you one of their cars. Before you seriously engage with them on buying a car, you probably consider a few things. Is he wearing a uniform that indicates he works for this dealership? Does he have knowledge of cars? Does he understand financing? Can I trust him? With so many questions swirling through your mind before moving forward with a purchase, you likely want to make sure the salesman can prove who he says he is. In today's passage, the Jews had a hard time believing Jesus was the Christ. Jesus challenges them to consider how He has already been proving who He says He is.

Read: John 10:22-42

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

- Why did the Jews want to stone Jesus? (see verse 30-34)

Verse 30 ("I and the Father are one") is an important verse for our understanding of the unique nature of God. To believe in God is to believe in one God. God is one in substance, and there are no other gods to which we profess in our Christian faith. To believe in God is also to believe in a personal God. God is three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who are each fully and equally God. While all three persons are fully and equally God, they are also distinct as revealed to us by the one God. Jesus makes these points clear in verse 30 – He is not created by God nor lesser than God. God the Son and God the Father are one. The Jews found this blasphemous.

- According to Jesus, under what circumstance(s) should the Jews believe who He says He is? (see verse 37) Why does He ask them to believe the miracles? (see verse 38)

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 your time this week.

Sunday, March Twenty-Sixth

When an act makes it through to the next round of America's Got Talent, the judges often provide the act with a charge – "In the next round, show us something bigger and better than what we just saw!" This charge is hard to fulfill, especially if your talent does not offer much range (e.g. How exactly do you make a bigger and better yo-yo act?). Successful acts not only "up their game" every round, but they are also very intentional in choosing what they do next. In our passage today, Jesus is faced with the death of one of His dear friends. Having recently seen Him heal a blind man, the Jews wondered if He could save His friend. But was it too late?

Read: John 11:1-37

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

- Why do you think John shows Jesus' love for Lazarus, Martha, and Mary? (see verses 3, 5, and 34-36)

Jesus loved Lazarus. He loved Martha and Mary. He was deeply moved by Mary crying. He wept as He went to see Lazarus in the tomb. Contrary to what some Jews may have thought, Jesus was a relational and compassionate person who cared for His flock. As children of God, we experience this love and concern from Jesus in real and tangible ways. In response, we Live Love to others.

- What did Jesus mean when He said that Lazarus was sleeping? (see verses 11-15)
- What will become of those who believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? (see verses 25-26)

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

Take a moment in prayer and ask God to prepare your heart for the coming week. Thank Him for loving you so richly and deeply.

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