

Read through the Bible



The Book of John Week Four



Monday, March Twenty - Seventh

Welcome to Week Four of our six-week journey through the book of John! We are now half way through this account of the life and ministry of Jesus, and have come upon His final miraculous sign before His journey to the cross. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus demonstrates to the people that He is indeed 'the resurrection and the life.' As you begin to journey with Him to Jerusalem, I pray that your time spent in the Bible this week would be both insightful and transformative. - Vicar Chris

Read: John 11:38-57

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

- How does Martha demonstrate that she still does not understand what Jesus is about to do? (compare verses 38-40 with verses 21-27)
- Why did Jesus say what He said in front of the people? (see verses 41-42)?
- Why were the chief priests and Pharisees concerned about Jesus and His miraculous signs? (see verses 47-48)

The Pharisees and chief priests were worried that Jesus' miraculous signs and claims to be God could draw attention to them. As people under Roman rule, they feared that any sort of revolt by Jesus and His followers would cause the Romans to "come and take away both our place and our nation" (v. 48). They didn't just want to kill Jesus because they didn't like Him and His claims to be God. He was also a liability they could not afford to have preaching and teaching in the public eye.

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

Since the time of Jesus, people have worked to suppress His message and teachings. In what areas of your life might you or others be suppressing Him? Take some time to consider what voices are 'louder' in your life than the voice of Jesus.

Tuesday, March Twenty - Eighth

In the movie *The Last Samurai* - a story of an ancient group of skilled fighters who find their demise with the industrialization of Japan - there's a scene during which one of the main characters gets shot. He falls to the ground in agony, and time seems to stop for him. In slow motion, he sees bullets flying and men fighting, but he then turns his head and peers to the right of the battlefield. As he does so, he sees the beautiful pink leaves of the Japanese cherry blossom swaying in the wind. Seeing the beauty of the world in a daunting moment, the character smiles and breathes his last breath. In our passage today, Mary is able to see the beauty of Jesus' presence before His final march to His death.

Read: John 12:1-19

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

- Why was Judas upset with how Mary had used the perfume? (see verses 4-6) What does this tell you about his moral character?
- What did Jesus say was the practical purpose for Mary pouring perfume on Him? (see verses 7-8)
- Based on what the people were saying during Jesus' triumphal entry, who do you think they thought He might be? (see verse 13)

The Jewish people were expecting a Messiah. But they were also expecting that Messiah to become the King of Israel. They were looking for an earthly king who would rule over them. While their hopes may have been high, Jesus was about to show them that He had not come to be an ordinary earthly king, but a heavenly one. The people were expecting Him to assume the throne, but instead, He was about to be crucified on a cross.

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

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and thank Him for sending a King who dwells in your heart through His Spirit (Ephesians 3:17).

Wednesday, March Twenty - Ninth

Remember Y2K? The first day of the year 2000 was a much-anticipated moment in recent history. Some dubbed it the end of the world. Others feared a computer "superbug" would malfunction and wreak havoc over the world economies and technological systems. There was even a full-length video produced and sold – *The Y2K Family Survival Guide*. But when the moment finally came, Y2K did not turn out how people thought it would. In fact, nothing really happened at all. In our passage today, Jesus proclaims that His moment had finally come. However, unlike Y2K, something significant was about to happen to Jesus, and thus, to the entire world.

Read: John 12:20-36

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

- What happens to a person who loves his life? What about a person who hates his life? (see verse 25)
- What is required of those who wish to serve Jesus? (see verse 26)

When people say, "I hate Mondays," they're not necessarily saying they hate the day or what is associated with it. Instead, what they're often communicating is that they would much rather it be Saturday or Sunday. When Jesus says that a person should hate his life, He's suggesting that his desire to follow Him should be greater than his desire to follow his own plans and idols. To serve Jesus wholeheartedly means to follow Him.

- What is the benefit of walking in the 'light' instead of the 'darkness'? (see verse 35) What happens to those who put their trust in the 'light'? (see verse 36)

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

Take some time to consider a few ways you 'serve' Jesus on a daily basis. How are these ways evident to others?

Thursday, March Thirtieth

If you flip on the news one afternoon or evening, you may catch Jackie Callaway with ABC Action News reporting on an I-Team investigation. Typically, a person or family feels they have been cheated by a business, and they've been unsuccessful in their communication with them so far. Jackie comes in and attempts to advocate on behalf of the person or family. When she interviews the business, oftentimes it is not the owner or CEO who speaks. Instead, a spokesperson relays a statement that speaks on behalf of the owner of the business. In the final part of John chapter 12, Jesus communicates to doubters that He speaks on behalf of the Father, as He and the Father are One.

Read: John 12:37-50

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

- Why did the believers fear being open about their faith around the Pharisees? (see verses 42-43, especially v. 43)

John reveals an important insight into our sinful human nature – we often seek praise from others over praise from God. In other words, we make decisions and do things that please people without often thinking about whether those decisions or things are honorable and pleasing to God. Our desire to be liked by others often impedes the Gospel from speaking into our own lives and in the lives of those we interact with. In the quest of being liked by others, we sometimes forget that we are already loved by God.

- How does Jesus' response in verse 47 match His response to Nicodemus in John 3:17 and to the adulteress in John 8:11?
- How does Jesus explain His authority to those who still had doubts? (see verses 49-50)

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

Do verses 42-43 describe you in the way you live your life around others? If so, what steps can you take to change that?

Friday, March Thirty-First

If you've raised children or have been around kids, you've likely observed that their brains are like sponges. If they see you make a funny face, they'll try and imitate your funny face. If they see you drink from a cup, they'll try and drink from a cup too. And if they hear you use a choice word, that choice word may just come out of their mouth in a rather unfortunate way ("Lindsay, you said *what* to your teacher?!). In today's passage, Jesus models for His disciples a symbolic practice that they are to imitate once He is gone. His followers are to practice being servants to others.

Read: John 13:1-17

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

- In this passage, how does Jesus show His disciples "the full extent of His love" (v. 1)?
- After Jesus washes their feet, what does He say they should do? (see verses 14-15)
- What will happen to those who do what Jesus did in this situation? (see verse 17)

Jesus, knowing that He was about to leave His disciples and die a painful death, gives them a simple, yet powerful, example of how they are to tell His story as servants to others. He reminds them that He did not come into the world to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). You see, being a servant is about an attitude that calls us to act. Jesus' foot washing was about a lifestyle of serving and living love to others. His disciples learned that night that they would continue to tell God's story of the world by serving others.

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

Is Our Savior a body of 'feet washers'? What are some ways we currently 'wash feet' and live love with others? If you're not currently 'feet washing,' consider a ministry or opportunity you can participate in to start doing so. Ask God for His guidance!

Saturday, April First

Today is the last day of our readings in John. April Fools'! For centuries, people have been playing practical jokes on each other, particularly on the first of April. While many are often harmless and hilarious, someone inevitably turns out to be the 'fool' by falling for the prank. While it may be fine to be a fool for the sake of a practical joke, nobody likes to be generally known as a fool on a daily basis. In our passage today, Jesus makes a heartbreaking prediction regarding Peter's allegiance to Him. Peter was about to learn that he would show himself to be a fool by denying Jesus.

Read: John 13:18-38

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

- Why does Jesus tell His disciples who is going to betray Him? (see verses 18-19)

Jesus makes an important observation in verse 20 – those who accept followers of Jesus also accept Jesus Himself, and thus accept the One who sent Him (God the Father).

- How will people be able to tell who the followers of Jesus are? (see verses 34-35)
- How does Jesus respond to Peter's assertion that he will lay down his life for Him? (see verses 37-38)

Would you really lay down your life for Jesus? Like Peter, many of us would like to think we would, but it is hard to determine what the future holds and how we would react to certain situations.

Peter never intended to deny Jesus, but as Jesus predicts in this passage, he would end up doing so three times. As His followers, we must be cognizant of the realities and pressures of the world that may corner us to deny Jesus before others.

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, April Second

When someone receives troubling news, you can oftentimes sense their concern. Their head hangs down, their lips are pursed, their eyes are squinting, and they seem disengaged from their interaction with you. When someone is troubled by something, it is often our nature to ask what is wrong and to comfort them. In doing so, we slow down with them. Today, we're going to slow down a bit and simply read four verses of comfort that Jesus relays to His disciples. Knowing what these final chapters would hold for His disciples and for us reading along, it is good for us to slow down a bit and reflect on what Jesus is communicating to His followers.

Read: John 14:1-4

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

Jesus had just made some stunning revelations at dinner after washing their feet – Judas would betray Him, Peter would deny Him, and He was going to a place where they could not follow Him. All of these things He shared with them troubled His disciples. Sensing this, He took a moment to comfort them. While He was going to a place they could not go, He assured them He had prepared rooms for them, and they would eventually join Him.

- What does Jesus promise His disciples regarding this place He has prepared for them? (see verses 1-4)
- Take a few minutes to meditate on v. 1. What is currently troubling your heart? How can you trust God with it?

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

Take some time to go to God in prayer and ask Him to prepare your heart for the coming week. Thank Him for comforting you in both joyous and troubling times.

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