

Read through the Bible



John Week 6



A Ministry of the Live Love Nation

Monday, March Twenty-Ninth

Welcome to the final week of our six-week journey through the book of John. Can you believe we are finally at the end of John's account? In this week's passages, Jesus' disciples are going to witness a rollercoaster of events. How could the darkest moments in Jesus' life lead to the brightest in theirs and in ours? I pray that your journey to the cross and the tomb this week is filled with insight, reverence, and hope as you reflect on the defining moments of God's story of salvation and redemption. – Pastor Chris

Read: John 18:1-14

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

The time had come. The disciples were about to witness the very events Jesus had spoken to them about throughout John's account. What would they do? How would they respond? As distant observers today who know how these events played out, it's hard for us to imagine what the disciples might have been feeling and experiencing in these final moments with their Good Shepherd.

- What happened to the soldiers, officials, chief priests, and Pharisees when Jesus identified Himself? (see verses 5-6)

The NIV and other versions do their best at translating Jesus' response in verse 5 as "I am He." But the more accurate translation of the Greek phrase that John uses here is *egō eimi*, which simply means "I AM." Throughout the Old Testament, God often identifies Himself as simply, "I AM" (see Exodus 3:13-14 as an example). Therefore, when Jesus responds by saying, "I AM" – *egō eimi* – He's taking the divine name of God upon Himself. Jesus didn't speak *for* God but *as* God. You can imagine why everyone fell to the ground!

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

If you were a disciple of Jesus and you witnessed His arrest, how might you have reacted? What would Jesus' response to Peter have shown you about what was to come (see verse 11)?

Tuesday, March Thirtieth

In many crime dramas on TV, there is a scene when law enforcement interrogates a suspect to see if she or he knows another person connected to the case. For example, a detective slaps down a photo of a woman on the table and asks the suspect, “Do you know this woman?” The suspect, knowing exactly who she is, says, “I’ve never seen her before in my life.” In today’s passage, Peter finds himself pressed to affirm his connection to Jesus. What would he say, and how would it affect his witness?

Read: John 18:15-27

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

- What do you think was motivating Peter to deny Jesus not once, not twice, but three times? (see verses 17, and 25-27)

How could this have happened? As one of Jesus’ most outspoken and ardent supporters, Peter had every reason and inclination to affirm his relationship with Jesus. While we may like to think that we would not have denied Jesus had we been in Peter’s shoes, his response shows us the great lengths humans will take to preserve themselves first even at the cost of others.

- What specifically did the high priest question Jesus about? (see verse 19) How did He respond? (see verses 20-23)

Notice how beautifully John interweaves Peter’s confrontations and Jesus’ confrontations. Peter is quick to deny knowing Jesus, while Jesus is resolute in affirming who He is. By contrasting the two, John shows us how Peter denied everything while Jesus denied nothing. As a result, Jesus’ prophetic words in John 13:38 (“Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!”) come to fruition as Peter realizes his ill-fated words of denial.

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

In what situations do you find yourself most tempted to deny Jesus before others? Spend some time in prayer on this question.

Wednesday, March Thirty-First

In the movie *The Fugitive*, Harrison Ford’s character – Dr. Richard Kimble – spends his time running from law enforcement after being wrongly accused and convicted of murdering his wife. Realizing the detectives and officers are all convinced he is the killer, Dr. Kimble spends the entire movie on the run while trying to find the man who actually committed the atrocity. In today’s passage, the Jews try to convince the Roman governor that Jesus should be executed. What conclusion would Pilate come to after speaking with Jesus?

Read: John 18:28-40

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

- Pilate asks the Jews what charges they were bringing against Jesus (v. 29). How do they respond? (see verse 30)
- Why did the Jews need Pilate to find Jesus guilty? (see verses 31-32)

Notice the irony of the situation. Under Roman rule, the Jews needed Pilate to sign off on Jesus’ execution (v. 31), and yet they refused to tell Pilate why Jesus should be executed (v. 30). It’s a classic case of, “Just sign here.” This wasn’t good enough for Pilate. He had questions of his own.

- What does Pilate conclude after talking with Jesus? (see verse 38) What does Pilate offer and how do the Jews respond? (see verses 39-40)

What do you do when the court of law finds a person innocent, but the court of public opinion finds the person guilty? As Roman governor, Pilate faced a tough dilemma. Knowing he could not overcome the sea of outrage, Pilate found himself folding to the pressures of the people.

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

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and thank Him for sending Jesus as a blameless and perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Thursday, April First

Imagine driving down the interstate on your way to an event. Your mind begins to drift and before you know it, you're on the Howard Franklin bridge. Yikes! You were supposed to get off at the last exit before the bridge, but your daydreaming has now left you barreling toward the other side of the bay. Now that you're on the bridge, there's no turning back. As a result, you'll have to see your mistake play out until you can get to the other side of the bridge. In today's passage, Pilate comes to the realization that there is no turning back from the inevitable – sentencing Jesus to be crucified.

Read: John 19:1-16

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

- Why do the Jews insist Jesus must die? (see verse 7)

After neglecting to give a basis for their plea to Pilate (see 18:30), the Jews finally explain their reasoning – Jesus claimed to be the Son of God (v. 7). As you have seen throughout John's account, Jesus made many statements proclaiming He (the Son) and the Father are One. The Jews found His claim of Lordship not only blasphemous, but worthy of death. By their rejection of Jesus and their insistence on His death, the Jews confirmed John's statement in the very first chapter – “He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11).

- Where does Jesus say Pilate gets his authority from? (see verses 10-11)
- Who do the chief priests claim is their king? (see verse 15)
What does that tell you about them in relation to God?

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

In what ways might you look to earthly authority for direction and understanding as opposed to your Heavenly Authority? Take some time to consider how you can guard against rejecting God's divine direction for your life. Like Jesus experienced throughout His ministry, you and I will often face predictable resistance!

Friday, April Second

On a starry night in Bethlehem, Mary looked down at her newborn child and must have felt unimaginable love for Him. He was not only her son, but the Son of God! On that night, Mary likely contemplated the wonderful plans God had in store for her baby Jesus. But now, more than thirty years later, Mary stood at the foot of the cross looking up at her beloved Son as He was nailed to it. No parent wishes to see their child die, but this was now Mary's reality. Was this really God's plan when the angel appeared to her so long ago to tell her she would be with child? How could something so right have gone so wrong?

Read: John 19:17-37

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

- How does Pilate respond to the chief priests' request to change the sign over Jesus to say, “This man *claimed* to be the King of the Jews”? (see verses 19-22)
- What final thing does Jesus do for His mother? (see verses 26-27)
- It was common practice for the soldiers to break the bones of the crucified individuals to speed up their process of dying. What did the soldiers realize when they came to Jesus? (see verses 31-33) What did Jesus say and do when He died? (see verse 30)

John doesn't need to go into detail as to the gruesome nature of crucifixion. His early readers would have ably understood the appalling nature of this practice. Not even Roman citizens were crucified, for it was seen as such a despicable and heinous way of taking somebody's life. And yet this is how Jesus died.

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

On a day like today – Good Friday – many emotions and thoughts tend to fill our hearts and minds. At your own pace, take some time to reflect on the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

Saturday, April Third

Over the years, fairy tales and moral stories have drawn from religious themes of the Bible, particularly from the life of Jesus. For example, in *Beauty and the Beast*, the title character, Belle, has finally learned to love the Beast who once held her captive at his castle. But when the Beast breathes his last breath after being mortally wounded, Belle realizes she is too late. As she weeps over him, she faces the realization that she has lost the one she loves. Little does she know that the Beast is about to 'rise from the dead' to bring about a restored relationship between the two of them. In our passage today, Jesus' disciples face the realization they have lost the One they love. But little do they know that He is about to rise from the dead to bring about a restored relationship with them.

Read: John 19:38-42

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

- Why does John suggest Joseph of Arimathea was able to receive Jesus' body from Pilate? (see verse 38)

In this passage, we are introduced to Joseph of Arimathea and re-introduced to Nicodemus (see John 3:1-21). But where are Jesus' disciples? Where are His followers? Had they given up all hope? Or were they trying not to call attention to Joseph's retrieval of Jesus' body? While we can assume a variety of possibilities, it is evident they were mourning the loss of their Lord. We have the luxury of knowing the Good News that was to come in a couple of days, but His early followers had no idea what lay before them. Joseph and Nicodemus demonstrate this as they carefully prepared His body unaware of what would happen on the first day of the week.

- How do Joseph and Nicodemus prepare Jesus' body? (see verses 39-40) Why did they do this? (see verse 40)

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

How have you mourned the loss of people you loved? What has brought you peace during those difficult times?

Sunday, April Fourth

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Today, on our final day in John, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Everything Jesus had spoken to His disciples about throughout John's account had come to completion that Easter morning. As you read through the final two chapters, take time to reflect on what wonderful news this must have been for His followers, and what wonderful news it is for us reading along today!

Read: John 20-21

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

- What did Mary Magdalene think had happened to Jesus? (see 20:2; 20:13) What did they not understand? (see 20:9)
- What did Jesus tell Thomas about those who will not see Him? (see 20:26-29)
- How did Jesus remind His disciples that they are to be fishers of people? (see 21:1-14)
- What does John conclude about Jesus's life and ministry? (see 21:25) What does that tell you about who Jesus is?

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

Amidst the Easter celebrations you experience today, consider taking a moment to thank God for fulfilling His promises in Jesus!

Well, that's it! Over the past six weeks, we have read through the entire Gospel of John together. I pray your time in God's Word has been insightful, enriching, and life-giving. As an Our Savior family, it is our hope and our prayer that God continues to draw each of us into His Word as we Live Love with those in the communities we interact with and serve. I'll be back in a few weeks with our next book of the Bible...The Psalms: Book 2. – Pastor Chris

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