JOHN

John
Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John's Gospel was written by "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn 21:7,20,24). He was an eye-witness to Jesus' life, death and resurrection (19:26; Acts 1:21,22). His purpose in writing this gospel is stated in John 20:31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name."

John's Gospel is deductive. John announces in the prologue that Jesus is the eternal Word--God who was in the beginning, the Word through whom all things were made. He is God who became flesh and made his dwelling among us. There are 7 miracles or signs, and 7 "I Am's" that point to his divine Messiahship (Ch 2,4,5,6 (2),9,11; 6:35; 8:12; 10:7,11; 11:25; 14:6;15:5).

Belief/unbelief is a major theme. In chapters 1-4 he shows what belief is; in chapters 5-12, he shows why people don't believe. Other themes are: darkness/light, life/death, witness or testimony, love, glory.

John's Gospel may be divided as follows:

1:1-18 - Prologue, The Eternal Word

1:19-4:54 - The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

5:1-12:50 - The Word of Life accepted/rejected

13:1-17:26 - He loved his own to the end

18:1-20:31 - Jesus' death and resurrection

21:1-25 - Epilogue--Feed my sheep; follow me

IN HIM WAS LIFE

John 1:1-13

Key Verse: 1:4

1. In the beginning was the Word (1-5)

The eternal Word is Jesus Christ. He is God. He is the One through whom all things were made. Life belongs to him (4). His life is the light that gives us direction and meaning. Man, cut off from God by sin, must live in darkness, a prisoner of fate, without hope in the world. God shined

his light into the world by sending his one and only Son Jesus; the darkness of sin and death cannot overcome the light of Jesus.

2. The witness and the true light (6-9)

John the Baptist was sent to testify to Jesus so that people might believe and have life. John was the first witness; God still works through witnesses.

3. To those who receive him (10-13)

The world he created, and even his own people, did not receive Jesus. But God works in all who receive Jesus. He gives them new birth into his family; he makes them children of God. This is God's miracle.

Prayer: Lord, my life belongs to you. You made me, and you redeemed me. Use me according to your will.

One Word: In him was life

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

John 1:14-18

Key Verse: 1:14

1. He made his dwelling among us (14)

The eternal Word of God laid aside the glory of heaven, put on human flesh and came to dwell in this sin-sick and troubled world. He came to share the pain and joy of human life. He came to be our friend; he showed us his love, even to the point of death. He didn't have to come. The Almighty, Holy God could have simply wiped us off the earth like rotten scum--but he didn't. He came and bore our sins and burdens and opened for us the way to God and heaven.

2. Full of grace and truth (15-18)

When we welcome Jesus, he opens our spiritual eyes. We can see the glory of God in his face (2Co 4:6). We see people differently. He is the eternal God, the embodiment of truth; his coming to us is grace. The law he gave through Moses is a blessing to this chaotic world. But the grace of forgiveness which came through Jesus is the best blessing.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for sending Jesus and blessing me with your grace and truth.

One Word: He made his dwelling among us

ONE YOU DO NOT KNOW

John 1:19-28

Key Verse: 1:26

1. Who are you? (19-23)

John's popularity was growing. Many people came to hear him and repent of their sins and be baptized. But the priests and Levites who came were not seeking to make personal commitments to truth. They came as an investigating committee just to get information to take back to the Jewish establishment. John's answers to them became increasingly short. He had not come to talk about himself. He gave them one verse of scripture (Isa 40:3). He was a man with a mission from God. His mission was his life.

2. Among you stands one you do not know (24-28)

They asked him why he was baptizing. (He answered the next day.) He talked about the one whom they did not know, the one who was his Lord and King--Jesus. He is the one whom they must seek to know. He is the one whom all men must seek to know, for he alone is worthy of our worship.

Prayer: Lord, help me to find my mission from you in your word. Please use me in some small way to make Jesus known to a world that does not know him.

One Word: Know Jesus and make him known

THE LAMB OF GOD

John 1:29-34

Key Verse: 1:29

1. John's proclamation of the Lamb of God (29-31)

John testified that Jesus is the Lamb whom God provided (Ge 22) to take away the sins of the world. The Passover lamb (Ex 12:3,7,13) and the lambs of sacrifice in Exodus 29:38-46 look forward to his coming. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, blood was offered to atone for sin (Lev 17:11). This sacrificial system finds its fulfillment and meaning in Jesus. God takes sin seriously. He made a costly plan to save people oppressed by the power of sin and death, and bring them to himself. Anyone who repents of sin and accepts Jesus as his Savior is forgiven his sins, and becomes a child of God.

2. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (32-34)

John baptized repentant sinners with water so that Jesus might be revealed. Jesus is the eternal Word (30). He is the Son of God (34). Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit to make

forgiven sinners fruitful children of God. When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit identified him as the Christ, the Son of God. John became the first witness to Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, I lay my sins on you. Cleanse me and fill me with your Spirit.

One Word: Look, the Lamb of God

THE FIRST BELIEVERS

John 1:35-42

Key Verse: 1:39a

1. Come and see (35-39a)

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? The first believers received John the Baptist's testimony, then went to see for themselves. Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They wanted to know Jesus, so they asked his address. Knowing Jesus is different from knowing about him. Jesus wanted to know them too, so he said, "Come and you will see." Believing in Jesus means to know him and to have a personal relationship with him.

2. We have found the Messiah (39b-42)

Andrew was looking for the Messiah--the one whom God had promised to send as Savior. His interest in Jesus was not academic; he wanted to commit his life to the true Messiah. The first thing he did after discovering that Jesus is the Christ was to bring his brother to Jesus. Jesus saw what Simon could become and gave him a new name, "Cephas." He would become a rock of faith.

Prayer: Lord, help me to have a growing personal relationship with you. Give me Andrew's bring-someone-to-Jesus faith.

One Word: A personal relationship with Jesus

FOLLOW ME

John 1:43-51

Key Verse: 1:43

1. Philip's testimony (43-45)

Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He invited Philip to follow him. As Philip travelled with Jesus back to Galilee, he realized that Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised to send, the one for whom he had been searching and waiting. We can know who Jesus is only by following him, by spending time with him.

2. Nathanael's faith (46-51)

Philip found his friend Nathanael and told him about Jesus. Nathanael was a man without guile. He had Bible knowledge--and some provincial prejudice, so he knew that Nazareth could not be the birthplace of the Messiah. Philip said, "Come and see." Jesus knew Nathanael's heart. He knew about one private event in his life. (Perhaps he had been reading about Jacob in Genesis under the fig tree.) Nathanael felt Jesus' love and power, and made a great confession of faith; his confession was correct, but still he needed to grow. His life of faith was just beginning.

Prayer: Lord, I want to know you better. Help me to give first priority to following you.

One Word: Follow Jesus

JESUS CHANGES WATER TO WINE

John 2:1-11

Key Verse: 2:7

1. They have no more wine (1-5)

Jesus and his disciples returned to Galilee and went to a wedding in Cana. Jesus' mother was serving in the kitchen when the wine failed. This small tragedy would ruin the banquet. Mary made the problem her own, and took it to Jesus. Jesus had begun his public ministry. He could no longer serve his mother as a human son. He must now live and work at the direction of his Father God. She was not discouraged by his seeming refusal (4). She trusted him and made an environment of obedient faith (5). We can learn from her how to pray.

2. Fill the jars with water (6-11)

The servants' obedience was wholehearted: They had to haul more than 100 gallons of water to fill the jars to the brim. Jesus turned the wash-water into delicious wine, and blessed the wedding feast. Jesus came to change useless people into useful people. He blesses and uses obedient faith. This event was a sign that revealed Jesus as God's Son and confirmed the disciples' faith.

Prayer: Lord, teach me the faith of Mary and the obedience of the servants.

One Word: Fill the jars to the brim

JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

John 2:12-25

Key Verse: 2:16

1. Get these out of here! (12-16)

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, to the temple. He was angry. The religious leaders had turned his Father's house into a market. They didn't pray; they only thought about how to make money. They made the worship of God convenient--and superficial. Jesus cleansed his Father's house, the temple, by his authority as the Son, and by the authority of truth.

2. The temple was his body (17-21)

When the Jews demanded his credentials, he gave them a riddle (19). They would destroy his body on the cross, but God would raise him from death. He was the perfect sacrifice for sin.

3. His disciples believed his word (22-25)

His disciples didn't understand, either--but they accepted Jesus as the Christ. They based their belief on scripture and his word. Faith that rests on feelings or miracles will evaporate.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse my heart as you cleansed the temple. Teach me faith that rests on your word.

One Word: Don't make Jesus angry

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

John 3:1-15

Key Verse: 3:3

1. To see the kingdom of God (1-3)

Nicodemus seemed to have everything men strive for: education, wealth, a position of honor and power. He was a man of high moral character. But something was missing. Jesus knew what it was. Nicodemus was a two-dimensional man. He had no inner life with God; God's kingdom was not in his heart. He came to Jesus because he believed that Jesus was a teacher sent from God who could do miracles. He hoped to learn something. But he was not prepared to accept Jesus as the Christ and commit his life to him.

2. You must be born again (4-15)

Jesus taught Nicodemus a spiritual secret: One must be born of the Spirit in order to have spiritual life. Nicodemus kept asking "How?" He didn't accept Jesus' words. But the way to be born again is to accept Jesus' words, look to him in faith, and trust his saving work. Then God's Spirit will give new birth.

Prayer: Lord, I believe your words of promise. Help me to hold them in my heart. Let your Spirit work in me and your kingdom come in my heart.

One Word: You must be born again

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

John 3:16-21

Key Verse: 3:16

1. Not to condemn, but to save (16-18)

God loves all the people in the world. He loved Nicodemus too. He showed his love by sending his beloved Son to die for the sins of the world. We are all swimming in a sea of death because of our sins. Jesus came to save all people who put their trust in him. When we receive Jesus, we are accepting God's loving, saving hand extended to us. He gives us eternal life. When we reject Jesus, we are condemned, not because he condemns us, but because we are already condemned because of our sin.

2. Come to the light (19-21)

To come to the light means to repent and come to Jesus. Men reject Jesus because they love darkness; they want to cling to sin. Proud people don't want to have their sins exposed by God's light. They don't want to repent. Those who love truth come to the light, no matter what the cost.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your love and grace which saved me from sin. Help me to live in your light with a repentant heart.

One Word: God loves even me

HE MUST INCREASE; I MUST DECREASE

John 3:22-36

Key Verse: 3:30

1. The joy of the friend (22-30)

John's disciples were sorry to see people leaving John and going to Jesus. They were humanly loyal to John, but they were not listening to his teaching, for John's whole ministry pointed to Jesus. John accepted God's sovereignty in his personal life and ministry (27). He rejoiced to see people going to Jesus, for Jesus alone is the true bridegroom.

2. Whoever believes in the Son has life (31-36)

John wanted his disciples to go to Jesus. To go to Jesus or stay with John was not a matter of personal preference; it was a matter of life and death. John was only an earthbound witness; Jesus came from heaven. The Father God loved Jesus his Son and put all authority in his hands. Jesus is the truth; he sought to plant God's word in men. One's response to Jesus determines his

eternal destiny. One who rejects (does not obey--RSV) the Son will not see life--God's wrath rests on him.

Prayer: Lord, you are my true bridegroom, the Giver of life and joy. I come to you. Help me to listen to your word and obey you today.

One Word: Jesus must increase; I, decrease

WILL YOU GIVE ME A DRINK?

John 4:1-15

Key Verse: 4:14

1. Will you give me a drink? (1-9)

Jesus did not avoid Samaria, as most Jews did. At high noon, he sat down by a well outside the city of Sychar. He was tired, hungry and thirsty. The disciples went to buy food. When a despised and lonely Samaritan woman came to draw water, he asked her for a drink. He revealed his weakness. She had a bucket; he didn't. Her rebellious retort revealed the barriers between them. He was a Jew; she, a Samaritan. He was a man; she, a woman. He was the holy Son of God, Prince of heaven; she, a sinner cut off from God, alienated from people.

2. The water Jesus gives (10-15)

Jesus stepped over the human barriers and offered her the gift of God, the water of eternal life--if she would ask for it. When we ask for the water Jesus gives, he puts in our hearts the source of life. When we welcome Jesus, and he dwells within us, we are no longer thirsty.

Prayer: Lord, give me a drink so that I may never thirst again.

One Word: Jesus gives the water of life

I AM HE

John 4:16-26

Key Verse: 4:26

1. Go, call your husband (16-20)

Jesus' command revealed her sinful life and her thirst for love. She said, "I have no husband." Jesus accepted her answer without rebuking, and pointed out her problem. She had sought to quench her thirst with men's love, but after 5 husbands and one boyfriend, she was still unsatisfied. Her problem was not physical, but spiritual. She saw that Jesus was a man of God, and that he cared about her, so she asked him how to meet God.

2. Salvation is from the Jews (21-26)

Jesus taught her about God. God is Spirit; he is seeking those who seek him. Then he reminded her of a hard fact: God was sending the Savior through the Jews. She didn't like Jews; but she was also waiting for the Messiah. She overcame her human thinking and accepted Jesus. He revealed to her that he was indeed the Messiah.

Prayer: Lord, forgive me for seeking to quench my thirst in other things; thank you for the water of eternal life.

One Word: Jesus is my Christ and Savior

LOOK AT THE HARVEST FIELDS

John 4:27-38

Key Verse: 4:35b

1. My food is to do God's will (27-34)

Jesus' disciples were surprised to find Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman. They wanted to ask her what she wanted, and to ask him why he was talking with her, but they didn't ask either question. The woman's thirst was gone--she even forgot her water jar. Jesus' hunger was gone, too. He was satisfied to see God's work in one woman's heart. Jesus came to save sinners and give the water of life to thirsty people. This was God's will. One day he would finish this work on the cross.

2. Look at the fields! (35-38)

The townspeople heard this woman's testimony. They realized that she was different. One person's changed life opened the whole village to the word of God. As the people came out to him, Jesus challenged his disciples to look at the ripe harvest field. Jesus' disciples must be sowers or reapers in the field of the world.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see one person as you do--and to see the harvest field of the world.

One Word: See the harvest fields!

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

John 4:39-42

Key Verse: 4:42

1. Many Samaritans believed (39)

Belief is not static; it must grow. The Samaritans heard the woman's testimony and believed in Jesus. This kind of belief is second-hand. It is a good starting point, but belief can't stop there. They came out to see for themselves.

2. We know that he is Savior of the world (40-42)

They came and met Jesus, and asked him to stay with them. He stayed and taught them the Bible for two days. They received his words for themselves, and many more believed in him. They made it a point to tell the woman that their faith rested on Jesus' word--not just on her testimony. They weren't even Jews, but they accepted Jesus as their Savior and the Savior of the world. Each one must study the Bible and meet Jesus for himself. When I know Jesus, I realize that he is not only my Savior, but the Savior of the world.

Prayer: Lord, help me to listen to your word until I know you personally, and know your great world mission purpose as well.

One Word: Know Jesus, Savior of the world

JESUS' SECOND SIGN

John 4:43-54

Key Verse: 4:50b

1. Unless you see signs, you won't believe (43-48)

The Galileans did not really know Jesus. They had seen his miracles (2:23-25), but they had not received his word nor had they made any personal commitment to him. When the official from Capernaum came to him in Cana and begged him to come and heal his dying son, Jesus pointed out that his faith was too superficial, for it was based on signs and miracles.

2. He took Jesus at his word (49-54)

The man did not give up. He continued to ask Jesus to come with him. Jesus did not go with him, but he sent him home with a promise, "Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and left. He must have struggled as he walked home alone. When servants met him with the news of his son's recovery, he didn't rush home. He thought of Jesus and asked, "When?" He realized that Jesus had healed his son, and he and his whole family believed.

Prayer: Lord, help me take you at your word so that you may work in and through me.

One Word: Believe and obey Jesus' word

GET UP, PICK UP YOUR MAT AND WALK

John 5:1-9a

Key Verse: 5:8

1. Do you want to get well? (1-7)

The pool of Bethesda was a microcosm of society. The people lying around the pool had superficial relationships with one another, but when the water moved, it was every man for himself. Jesus came into this competitive and selfish society and spoke to a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. He asked him a strange question: "Do you want to get well?" He was declaring his intention to change this man's life. The man answered Jesus' question with excuses; he blamed others for his condition. Jesus wanted to plant in him hope, and a desire to be changed. Jesus can't help a person who doesn't want to be changed.

2. Get up! Pick up your mat and walk (8-9a)

Jesus did not sympathize with him. He cut through the man's self pity and dependence on others. The man received Jesus' words and was healed. He picked up his burden and carried it into a new life.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hear your life-giving word and depend on you alone.

One Word: Pick up your mat and walk!

STOP SINNING!

John 5:9b-15

Key Verse: 5:14

1. The Jews' criticism (9b-13)

When the Jewish leaders saw the former invalid carrying his mat, they did not rejoice that a man had been given new life. They only criticized him for carrying his mat on the Sabbath. Their pride and legalism kept them from seeing the work of God. The man became fearful. He was so self-centered that he didn't know who had healed him.

2. Stop sinning! (14-15)

Jesus found the man at the temple and warned him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." This man had been healed in his body by Jesus' grace; but his dependent, critical spirit was unchanged. He didn't know how to be thankful. When he was rebuked by the Jewish leaders, he was quick to make excuses and put the blame on Jesus. Jesus challenged him to repent and build a new life on the grace which God had poured out on him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your gracious work in my life. Help me to stand firmly on your grace with a thankful heart.

One Word: Be thankful and stop sinning

MY FATHER IS ALWAYS AT HIS WORK

John 5:16-23 (Tue.) August 19

Key Verse: 5:17

1. He called God his Father (16-18)

Jesus did God's work; he gave new life to a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. When the Jews criticized him for working on the Sabbath, he pointed out that his Father God was working, so he worked too. Then they tried to kill him for making himself equal with God. Jesus the Son of God lived among men; he did whatever he saw his Father doing; he did nothing that was pointless. He shows us how to please God. Pleasing God sometimes displeases people.

2. God gives life (19-23)

The Father gives life, for he is the Creator. He sent Jesus to be the life-giver. Those who destroy life and tear down faith are not from God. God who raised Jesus from the dead is still at work giving life to people dead in sin. God is the judge; he entrusted judgment to his Son. Those who judge Jesus are judging themselves; they dishonor the Father and the Son.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for working in my heart to give me life. Help me to share in your life-giving work by being a Bible teacher.

One Word: The Father and the Son give life

HE HAS CROSSED OVER FROM DEATH TO LIFE

John 5:24-29

Key Verse: 5:24

1. Good news for those dead in sin (24-26)

People who live without God are dead. They are cut off from the source of life; they are like cut flowers, for they look alive, but they are dead. Sin cuts us off from God. We were dead in sin (Eph 2:1). But if we hear Jesus' voice and believe, we cross over from death to life. We have eternal life as a present reality.

2. The judgment to come (27-29)

Jesus' word is life-giving. If dead people hear the voice of the Son of God, they will live. He is the life-giver. But he is also the Judge. When he comes again, it will be as a judge. Those who hear his voice will come out of their graves and stand before his throne, and he will judge the

living and the dead. This is the final judgment. How we respond to him and his word now determines how we will fare in the final judgment. He assures us that if we believe God who sent Jesus we will not be condemned.

Prayer: Lord, your word has life-giving power. Help me to hear your voice in the Bible every day, and obey you.

One Word: Hear his word, believe, and live

SEEK TO KNOW AND PLEASE GOD

John 5:30-47

Key Verse: 5:44

1. Valid testimonies (30-39)

Jesus did not seek to please himself; he sought to please God who sent him. Faith in Jesus is not blind, nor does it rest on changeable feelings; it rests on the testimony of reliable witnesses. John the Baptist testified about Jesus so that men might believe (1:7). The most authoritative witness is God himself. Although we cannot see him or hear him, he testifies to Jesus in two ways: First, he establishes the mighty work he sent Jesus to do; second, he testifies to Jesus through the Scriptures (39,46). The Bible points to Jesus. If we hold God's word in our hearts, it will lead us to Jesus. When we come to him, he gives us life.

2. Why, then, don't men believe? (40-47)

People don't believe because: 1) they do not accept God's word in their hearts; 2) they do not come to Jesus to have life; 3) they do not love God or truth; 4) they seek to please men instead of God (44).

Prayer: Lord, teach me to come to you each time I study the Bible. Help me to seek and follow truth. Help me to seek to please you, not people.

One Word: Please God, not men

FIVE SMALL LOAVES AND TWO SMALL FISH

John 6:1-13

Key Verse: 6:9

1. "Where shall we buy bread?" (1-7)

Jesus wanted to feed the crowd; he also wanted to train his disciples in faith, so he asked this question to Philip. Philip calculated quickly and answered, "Impossible!" He was not including

Jesus' power or Jesus' shepherd heart in his calculations. He only thought about what he didn't have.

2. "Here is a boy..." (8-9)

Jesus had asked, "Where?" Andrew was looking around to see what they had. He found a small boy with a lunch box, and he brought him to Jesus. He knew that 5 loaves and 2 fish were not enough, but he brought what he had. He knew Jesus' heart and believed his power.

3. "Have the people sit down" (10-13)

This required faith and hard work, for there were more than 5,000 people. Jesus then took Andrew's loaves and fish, gave thanks, and fed the crowd.

Prayer: Lord, give me the faith of Andrew to see your shepherd heart and bring what I have to you.

One Word: Offer your loaves and fish

IT IS I! DON'T BE AFRAID

John 6:14-21

Key Verse: 6:20

1. Jesus withdrew (14-19)

The crowd ate the bread and believed. But they had their own agenda for a Messiah. Jesus withdrew to pray. Perhaps Jesus' disciples were disappointed when he refused the crowd's demand that he become a worldly king. They waited with the crowd for his return, but when he didn't come back by evening, they decided to leave. They got into a boat and started across the sea. Then a wind storm struck. When they saw Jesus walking toward them on the water, they were terrified because they didn't recognize him. They had left the shore, not with faith and a clear direction, but with a vague, let-down feeling. Fear and human thinking kept them from recognizing Jesus.

2. It is I; don't be afraid (20-21)

Even when Jesus doesn't do what we want him to do, his almighty power and his shepherd heart are the same. When he is there, there is no need to fear--or to be disappointed. Jesus got into the boat and the problems disappeared. Immediately the boat reached shore.

Prayer: Lord, come and get into the boat of my life; forgive my faithless fear.

One Word: "It is I; don't be afraid."

DON'T WORK FOR FOOD THAT SPOILS

John 6:22-29

Key Verse: 6:27

1. Food that endures to eternal life (22-27)

The crowd had had lunch with Jesus, but they were hungry again. They wanted him to give them more bread. He had done a gracious act and demonstrated his Messiahship, but they only thought about bread. Men work hard for bread, but bread does not solve men's life problem. Material things can never satisfy the deepest needs of a man's heart, nor can they solve the problem of death. But the bread that Jesus gives endures to eternal life.

2. The work of God is to believe (28-29)

What must we do to do the work of God? This is what the crowd asked. The only work we can do for God is to believe in the one whom he has sent--Jesus. No matter what, we must believe in Jesus who loves us. When we believe in him, we have eternal life. This is the food that truly satisfies and lasts forever.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for teaching me how to do your work. Help me to believe in you no matter what. Help me to see people and events with the eyes of faith.

One Word: Do the work of God

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:30-40

Key Verse: 6:35

1. The bread of God (30-35)

The crowd quoted the Bible. Moses gave the people bread--so Jesus should too. Jesus taught them the real meaning of the scripture they quoted: God is the one who gives the true bread of heaven. The bread he was now giving to the world was Jesus, the Bread of life. Jesus was sent by God to give life to the world. Man's real hunger is not physical--it is spiritual, and God alone can satisfy that hunger.

2. My Father's will (36-40)

Jesus could have been instantly popular if he had done what the crowd wanted. But he did not come to do his own will--or even the will of the crowd. He came to do the Father's will. And what is God's will? It is to give eternal life to everyone who looks to Jesus and believes in him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for not casting out anyone who comes to you. Thank you for your sure promise of life and of deep satisfaction of soul. I believe your promise, and I come to you to be filled.

One Word: Jesus is the Bread of life

EAT HIS FLESH AND DRINK HIS BLOOD

John 6:41-59

Key Verse: 6:57

1. Taught by God (41-51)

Neither manna in the desert nor three meals a day can keep people from dying. But whoever listens to the Father, learns from him, and comes to Jesus will live and not die. God teaches us through his word and draws us to himself by his Spirit. If one allows worldly desires to fill his heart, and hangs on to his old sinful ways of thinking and doing, he cannot be taught by God.

2. Eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood (52-59)

Jesus' body was broken and his blood shed on the cross for the sins of the world. To drink his blood means to repent of sin and accept cleansing by Jesus' blood; to eat his flesh means to receive him by faith as Lord and Savior, and be united with him in his death and in his resurrection. Eating once is not enough; I must continue to feed on him every day to remain in him.

Prayer: Lord, I come as I am; cleanse me by your blood, and bind me to yourself.

One Word: Feed on Jesus daily

YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE

John 6:60-71

Key Verse: 6:68,69

1. This is a hard teaching (60-66)

Most of the people to whom Jesus had given bread in the wilderness left him. He offered them the word of eternal life, but they only wanted bread. Jesus had known all along that some would betray him, but still it was painful to see them reject God's love and life, and go away.

2. Do you want to leave too? (67-69)

When Jesus asked the Twelve this question, Peter answered in verses 68-69. He saw the alternative to following Jesus--a meaningless, useless life, a dead-end street. He had received Jesus' words in his heart, and he knew that they were the words of life.

3. Yet one of you is a devil (70-71)

Judas Iscariot looked like a disciple, but he was a materialist, like the crowd who had left. Perhaps in his heart he took the first step toward betrayal. Jesus stilled loved him and sought to warn him.

Prayer: Lord, you have the words of eternal life; to whom else can I go? Help me to be your disciple throughout my lifetime.

One Word: The majority is not always right!

JESUS' TIME AND HIS BROTHER'S TIME

John 7:1-13

Key Verse: 7:6

1. Jesus' brothers' unbelief (1-5)

The Jews tried to kill Jesus because he had healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath and had claimed equality with God (Ch. 5). Jesus retreated to Galilee because it was not God's right time for him to die. He demonstrated his shepherd's love and his almighty power when he fed 5000 people. Jesus' brothers wanted to get some human benefit. "His own brothers didn't believe in him" means that they were unspiritual men.

2. The world hates me; it cannot hate you (6-13)

Jesus lived and died on God's time schedule. He did not compromise with the world, but rather exposed its evil, so the world hated him. He could not compromise with his unbelieving brothers--they were friends of the world--so he did not travel with them. The crowds did not know who he was, but they would know.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live in your history and see people and events with spiritual eyes.

One Word: Live in God's history

HOW TO KNOW THE TRUTH

John 7:14-24

Key Verse: 7:17,24

1. Choose to do God's will (14-18)

The Jews in Jerusalem could not agree about whether Jesus was a good man or a deceiver of the people. Jesus told them how one could know the truth. First, he must choose to do God's will. This must be an unconditional decision, a commitment to God to live by the truth. Second, he must put God's honor and glory--not his own--first. God created man for his own glory.

2. Judge by right judgment (19-24)

The Jews judged Jesus by appearances. He was a young man from the country; his teaching was clearly God's truth, but he had no degree from Jerusalem U.; his attitude toward the Sabbath was unconventional. Those who judged by appearances did not believe; those who judged with right judgment could not but believe in him. Jesus showed them that the Jews who criticized Jesus, yet claimed to obey the law were hypocrites. It is surely pleasing to God to heal a man on the Sabbath.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to make superficial judgments, but right ones. Give me courage to live by the truth.

One Word: Make a right judgement

HE WHO SENT ME IS TRUE

John 7:25-36

Key Verse: 7:28

1. I know him (25-29)

Jesus was a man with a mission. He was sent by his Father on a rescue mission into a sinful world to bring dying men back to God. He came as the culmination of God's redemptive history. He was the promised Christ. But many people saw him with human eyes and could not recognize him. He plainly announced, "I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true...I know him because I am from him and he sent me." Those who loved truth put their faith in him.

2. Where I am you cannot come (30-36)

When many people put their faith in Jesus, the Pharisees tried to arrest him; they failed, because his time to die as the Lamb of God had not yet come. They thought he was planning a trip overseas. Jesus told them plainly that unspiritual men who refused to believe in the one sent by God could not go to the heavenly kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for coming to rescue me from sin and death. I believe and know that you are the only way to God.

One Word: Jesus came to give life

STREAMS OF LIVING WATER

John 7:37-52

Key Verse: 7:38

1. If anyone is thirsty (37-39)

On the last day of the feast Jesus stood and gave an invitation to all thirsty people to come to him (See Isaiah 55:1.). He promised to give streams of living water that would flow from within. John explained that this was a promise of the Holy Spirit who would be poured out on all believers after sin had been defeated by Jesus' death and resurrection. The Spirit is given not only to bless the believer; he comes to make the believer a blessing to others.

2. No one ever spoke like this man (40-52)

There was a division of opinion about Jesus. Some received his words and knew that he was the promised Messiah. Others, basing their opinion on inadequate information, rejected him. (They did not know that Jesus was indeed born in Bethlehem.) The temple guards angered the Pharisees by their testimony (46, 47). Nicodemus asked for a fair hearing, and was squelched.

Prayer: Lord, give me the streams of living water flowing out to bless others.

One Word: Jesus, streams of living water

GO, LEAVE YOUR LIFE OF SIN

John 7:53-8:11

Key Verse: 8:11

1. Jesus teaches in the temple (7:53-8:6)

Jesus prayed all night and came to the temple at dawn to teach the thirsty, waiting people. His teaching was interrupted by the Pharisees. They dragged in a woman caught in adultery and asked Jesus to judge her. They wanted to prove that Jesus didn't respect Moses' law, which stated that people guilty of adultery must be stoned. They didn't care about the woman or the law--they only wanted to trap Jesus.

2. Jesus saves a condemned woman (8:7-11)

Jesus first exposed the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders with a challenge: "Let the one without sin cast the first stone." They left, one by one. Then Jesus told the woman two things: "I do not condemn you" and "Go, leave your life of sin." He forgave her and set her free from the guilt and condemnation of sin. He gave her direction to live a new life.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for forgiving sinners instead of condemning them. Help me to leave my life of sin and follow you.

One Word: Go, leave your life of sin

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12-30

Key Verse: 8:12

1. The light of life (12-20)

Jesus is the eternal Word; in him is the life which is the light of men. He is the true light that enlightens every man (Jn 1:4,5,9). He is the light of the world. He promised that whoever follows him would never walk in darkness. This promise is for the sin-enslaved woman and for the Pharisees who hide in the darkness of unrepentance. It is for anyone who lives a godless and meaningless life and wants to find true direction. It is an invitation to follow Jesus and live a life of mission.

2. Jesus solves our sin problem (21-30)

Jesus did not come to judge sinners; he came from God to bring us back to God and to his eternal heavenly kingdom. Without Jesus we must die in the darkness of our sins (21,24). He died on the cross as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world (28,29).

Prayer: Lord, lead me throughout my earthly pilgrimage to the heavenly kingdom.

One Word: Jesus is the light of the world

CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

John 8:31-41

Key Verse: 8:31,32

1. If you hold to my teaching (31-36)

To hold to Jesus' teaching means to obey God's word as Abraham did (Ge 12:4; 22:18). If we receive God's absolute word in our hearts and obey it in our practical lives, we are really Jesus' disciples. Then we can know the truth that sets us free from the power of sin and death. When we sin we are slaves of sin. Slaves enjoy small pleasures; they think they have security if their material problem is solved. But slaves have no security. Children, however, are free and secure in the Father's love. The Son of God sets us free and makes us children of God.

2. Do what your father did (37-41)

The Jews were the physical descendants of Abraham. They were offended when Jesus said they were slaves. They had overcome physical slavery, first in Egypt and later in Babylon. But they still were slaves of sin, for they did not have God's word in their hearts, and they acted, not like Abraham, but like children of the devil.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold your word in my heart and obey it in my life.

One Word: Hold to God's word and be free

IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER...

John 8:42-47

Key Verse: 8:47a

1. You would love me (42,43)

True children of God love Jesus, for God sent Jesus as the best expression of his love. We can know Jesus when we receive his words in our hearts. He speaks the truth. If our hearts are full of lies, we cannot hear the truth.

2. Children of the devil (44-47)

Jesus used very strong language about the Pharisees. He called them children of the devil. The devil is a liar and murderer from the beginning, so he hates the truth. Lies are his native language. He plants doubt and fear; his aim is to separate God's children from God, and to keep them from loving and trusting one another. Separation from God is spiritual death. Those who plant doubt of God or God's people are children of the devil. Jesus plants faith. He heals broken relationships. His word is truth. He gives life. Those who belong to God hear God's word.

Prayer: Lord, help me live like a child of God, not like a child of the devil.

One Word: Speak the truth; plant God's word

JESUS CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF

John 8:48-59

Key Verse: 8:51

1. Anyone who keeps my word... (48-55)

Jesus promised that anyone who keeps his word would never see death. Whoever puts his trust in Jesus and holds God's word of promise in his heart has eternal life. Jesus came from the Father to give life. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16).

2. Before Abraham was, I Am (56-59)

The Jews rejected Jesus' words. They asked if Jesus were greater than Abraham, who died. God promised Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. Abraham held on to God's word of promise. Jesus came to fulfill that promise. He could fulfill it because he is the eternal Word of God who was in the beginning. He became flesh and dwelt among us to bring us to God. Abraham looked down the corridors of history and, by faith, saw Jesus. By that faith he was saved. Jesus taught clearly that he is the eternal God, the "I Am", YHWH, the LORD (58; Ex 3:14)

Prayer: Lord, thank you for sending Jesus at your right time to be the Savior of the world--and my Savior. I believe your promises.

One Word: Jesus is the eternal God

THAT THE WORK OF GOD MIGHT BE DISPLAYED

John 9:1-5

Key Verse: 9:3b

1. Who sinned? (1-2)

If God is good, why does he allow suffering? The disciples accepted the general idea that suffering is punishment for sin. So when they saw a blind beggar they asked, "Who sinned that this man was born blind?" Jesus did not analyze the cause of the man's blindness. Instead, he saw work to be done. This man did not need to surrender to a cruel fate. His seemingly hopeless situation was an opportunity to glorify God. "This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." Every situation and problem is an opportunity for a man of faith to glorify God.

2. I am the light of the world (3-5)

There is no fatalism in Jesus. He is the light of the world. When a person meets Jesus his life is changed. Jesus challenges us to regard no person or situation as hopeless, but to do the work of God whenever and wherever God gives the opportunity.

Prayer: Lord, help me to glorify you in every circumstance of life.

One Word: To display the work of God

GO, WASH IN THE POOL OF SILOAM

John 9:6-12

Key Verse: 9:7

1. Jesus makes mud with saliva (6-7)

Jesus could have healed this man with a word or a touch, but he chose to do it in a way that taught the disciples a lesson and tested the blind man's faith. He spit on the ground, made mud, put it on the man's eyes, and told him to go and wash. He showed the disciples how to do God's work with what was at hand. The blind man could have resented Jesus' smearing mud on his face. But he believed Jesus' love and obeyed his words. He went and washed and came back seeing.

2. I am the man (8-12)

This man was so transformed that his neighbors didn't recognize him. He might have just forgotten about his miserable past--and the grace of Jesus. But he did not forget who he was. He settled the argument about himself with, "I am the man." Remembering God's grace begins with remembering who I was before I met Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to trust your love, obey your words--and remember what kind of hopeless sinner I was before you touched my life.

One Word: Faith=obedience=healing

ONE MAN'S TESTIMONY

John 9:13-23

Key Verse: 9:15

1. He put mud on my eyes; now I see (13-15)

The Pharisees were upset because Jesus had healed a man's eyes on the Sabbath. They questioned the man about this, and he testified simply, telling the facts. When they heard that Jesus had made mud and put it on the man's eyes, they were even more upset--Jesus had worked on the Sabbath! There were a few people who realized that God was working in this event, but it was not politically expedient to say this.

2. He is a prophet (16-23)

The former blind man had told them the objective facts. Now they asked him for a subjective opinion. He could have avoided making a commitment, as his parents did later, but he was a man of truth. He didn't calculate about his personal advantage or disadvantage. He believed that the man who had healed him was a man of God, and he said so. This small decision set a direction that changed his life.

Prayer: Lord, help me to testify to your grace in my life without fear or shame.

One Word: Be a truthful witness

ONE THING I KNOW

John 9:24-34

Key Verse: 9:25

1. I was blind, but now I see (24-25)

The Pharisees suggested to the man born blind that keeping quiet about the facts of his healing would give glory to God. This man knew that telling the truth was the real way to give glory to God. He stood firmly on the grace of Jesus and said, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see." Remembering God's grace and God's servants through whom that grace comes opens the door for greater blessing.

2. Do you want to be his disciples, too? (26-34)

His clarity confused them. They began to ask the same questions again, but he stopped them with a question: "Do you want to become his disciples, too?" He declared that he was a disciple of Jesus. They were infuriated. When he pointed out the obvious, that Jesus came from God, they attacked his weak point--he was born under a curse. Then they threw him out.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold on to the grace you have given me. Thank you for your servants through whom you have blessed me.

One Word: Hold on to God's grace

SPIRITUAL SIGHT AND SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

John 9:35-41

Key Verse: 9:35

1. Do you believe in the Son of Man? (35-38)

To be thrown out of the synagogue was a social and religious tragedy. Because this man held to his convictions, he was cast out. He was cut off from his people, even cut off from his own parents. Jesus went to see him. Jesus did not offer him a job or an apartment. He planted faith in his heart. He opened his spiritual eyes to see the Christ, and thus find the one worthy of his worship. It was worth it all.

2. Are we blind too? (39-41)

Jesus did not come to judge or condemn, but men judge themselves by their response when they confront him. So he said, "I came into this world for judgment." When men deliberately suppress the truth, they become spiritually blind. The Pharisees were guilty because their rejection of truth was deliberate. A man who deliberately closes his eyes is blind--and he is responsible.

Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God. Help me to walk daily in the light of your truth.

One Word: Lord, I believe

THE SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP

John 10:1-6

Key Verse: 10:3b

1. The shepherd enters by the gate (1-2)

The true shepherd is sent by God. He does not become a leader by political maneuvering. Jesus came from God to be the promised Shepherd of God's people (Eze 34:15-16,23-24; Ps 23; 80; 95; 100).

2. He calls his sheep by name (3)

The Good Shepherd calls his sheep by name. He knows and loves each one; he knows our weaknesses and strengths. The Good Shepherd knows us better than we know ourselves (Ps 139:2,3).

3. He goes before them (4-6)

The Good Shepherd goes on ahead of his sheep. He leads them by his example, not by threats or coercion or special favor. They follow him because they trust him. They do not trust a stranger. We must know the voice of our Shepherd, Jesus. This means that we must know his heart and accept his word as absolute authority in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to hear your voice and follow you all the way.

One Word: Jesus is our true Shepherd

JESUS IS THE GATE

John 10:7-10

Key Verse: 10:10

1. I am the gate for the sheep (7-9)

Jesus came through the gate (1) and he became the gate. No one can go to God to find life except through Jesus (Jn 14:6). Jesus promised that whoever enters through him would be saved (9). It is said that shepherds in the near east slept in the doorway of the sheepfold. No one could enter

or leave except by crossing over the body of the shepherd. So he protected his flock and kept them safe in the fold.

2. That they might have life to the full (10)

The false shepherds who rule God's flock for selfish motives are thieves and robbers. They come to kill and steal and destroy. Jesus' motives are unselfish. He came to lay down his life so that his flock might have abundant life. He does not want us to be miserable; he wants us to be happy. He knows best what we need to be fully satisfied. We must trust and follow our shepherd, and not seek some other way.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for coming to give me life to the full.

One Word: Jesus is the gate

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:11-21

Key Verse: 10:11

1. The hired hand (11-13)

The hired hand is different from the good shepherd. His motives are selfish--he is in it to make money. The shepherd who owns the sheep will lay down his life for his sheep, but the hired hand runs away when he sees the wolf coming. He runs because he doesn't want to lose anything.

2. The good shepherd (14-21)

Jesus the Good Shepherd is first of all a good sheep to God. His love relationship with God and his sheep's love relationship with him is the same. He hears and obeys God's voice absolutely (8:28; Heb 5:8). The Father loves the Son; the Father loves the people of the world and longs for them to return to him. Jesus died to bring the world--including the other sheep, the Gentile world--back to God. I am Jesus' sheep because I know he died for me. I must listen to his voice--obey his word. Then I am a part of his one flock.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be a good sheep to Jesus and grow to be a shepherd like him.

One Word: Jesus has one flock

ETERNAL LIFE; ETERNAL SECURITY

John 10:22-42

Key Verse: 10:28

1. Are you the Christ? (22-31)

The Jews asked him to state his identity clearly; he did. The Christ is the true Shepherd. He is God, for only God can give eternal life. No one can snatch Jesus' sheep from his and the Father's hand. He gave ample evidence to prove that he is the Christ. Those who refuse to believe only prove that they belong to the devil, not to God (8:42-44). They understood his claim to deity and picked up stones to stone him.

2. Jesus is God's Son (32-42)

The Jews rejected him because he claimed to be God. Jesus reminded them that in the Bible, those judges to whom the word of God came were called "gods" (Ps 82:6; Ex 22:8, 9,28). He reiterated his claim to be God's Son and asked them to look at his life and know that Jesus is in the Father and the Father in him. Many people believed in him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for dying to give me life; thank you for real security in an uncertain world. Help me to listen to your word and obey you from first to last.

One Word: Only Jesus gives life

THIS SICKNESS WILL NOT END IN DEATH

John 11:1-6

Key Verse: 11:4

1. The one you love is sick (1-3)

Mary, Martha and Lazarus were close personal friends of Jesus. He had visited in their home frequently (Lk 10:38-42). In chapter 12, Mary dramati- cally expressed her love for Jesus. The sisters were confident that when Jesus heard of Lazarus' illness, he would drop everything and come--even though it was dangerous. So they sent the message, "The one you love is sick."

2. This sickness will not end in death (4-6)

Jesus deliberately waited two more days before going to his friends. Jesus loved this family, and he wanted to give them spiritual life--something better than just physical healing. He saw Lazarus' sickness as an opportunity to glorify God, and to bless his friends and disciples by planting resurrection faith in their hearts. God's love is different from human love. God's love is painful, but life-giving.

Prayer: Lord, help me come to you in times of suffering and grief. Help me to trust your love and see in every problem an opportunity to glorify you.

One Word: It is for the glory of God

WALK IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 11:7-16

Key Verse: 11:9

1. A man who walks by day will not stumble (7-10)

Jesus is the light of the world (8:12; 9:5). His disciples, however, had not learned to walk in his light. When he told them he was going back to Judea, they objected, for they were under the power of death, and were full of fear. They knew that the Jews were waiting there to stone Jesus--and maybe themselves as well. But they needed to listen to Jesus and follow him without fear. This is walking in the day.

2. So that you may believe (11-16)

Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead. He spoke of death as sleep, for in Jesus there is no death. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. He wanted to set his disciples free from fear of death and teach them faith in the Creator God, the Giver of life. Thomas voiced their fears and their decision to go with him, even to death. They followed Jesus and learned resurrection faith.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for defeating the power of sin and death. Help me to walk by your light, so that I may not stumble.

One Word: Walk by Jesus' light

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

John 11:17-28

Key Verse: 11:25,26

1. Your brother will rise again (17-24)

Jesus found his friends suffering under the power of death, for Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. The house was full of sorrowful mourners. Martha left them and came to Jesus. Her greeting (21) reveals her disappointment at his coming too late. She was so full of sorrow and self-pity that even Jesus' arrival didn't move her heart. She couldn't accept the good news he brought; she interpreted it theologically. Her theology was right, but theology in her head had no power to change her life.

2. I am the resurrection and the life (25-28)

Jesus' presence makes a difference. When he comes, the dark clouds of despair and fatalism are dispelled. He had come to give life to dead Lazarus and living faith to the spiritually dead sisters. In Jesus there is no death, for he is the resurrection and the life.

Prayer: Lord, come in your risen power and make your dwelling in my heart.

One Word: Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life

JESUS WEPT

John 11:29-37

Key Verse: 11:35

1. "Lord, if you had been here..." (29-32)

Mary loved Jesus. She wanted his human sympathy. She got up quickly and went to him, weeping. Human friends had come to comfort her, and she was feeding her sorrow on their human sympathy. They expressed the doubt she felt when they questioned Jesus' love. He could have come and helped them, but he didn't come until it was too late (36,37). To doubt the love of Jesus opens the door to Satan's work.

2. Jesus wept (33-37)

Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. There is a suggestion of anger in the word for "troubled." Jesus wept because he understood their hearts and shared their sorrow. But that was not all. Jesus was troubled because of their unbelief; he was sorry to see them clinging to human sympathy and closing their hearts to the resurrection power of God in Christ.

Prayer: Lord, help me to put out all self-pity from my heart. Teach me how to give spiritual help to those who are suffering grief.

One Word: Jesus weeps because of unbelief

IF YOU BELIEVED

John 11:38-44

Key Verse: 11:40

1. See the glory of God (38-40)

Martha had made a confession of her faith (27). But when she stood with Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, her mind and heart were in the tomb with her dead brother. She thought about his decaying body, not about the almighty power of Jesus. Jesus taught her and us an important truth: We can see the glory of God if we only believe.

2. They took away the stone (41-44)

Jesus thanked his Father for giving life to Lazarus. He wanted all people to know that God, the giver of life, had sent him. The stone of unbelief was removed from the tomb and from their hearts; when Jesus called, "Lazarus, come out," he came out of the tomb with the grave clothes still wrapped around him. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. One who believes in Jesus will live, even though he dies; whoever lives and believes in him will never die. Jesus came to give life, and to give it abundantly.

Prayer: Lord, take the stone of unbelief from my heart so that I may see your glory even in tragic and painful events.

One Word: Take away the stone!

ONE MAN MUST DIE FOR THE NATION

John 11:45-57

Key Verse: 11:50

1. Everyone will believe in him (45-53)

When Lazarus came out of the tomb, many of the Jews who had come to see Mary put their faith in Jesus. The Pharisees, however, called an emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin. They were not concerned about truth but about politics. They decided that Jesus must die. Caiaphas the high priest tried to justify their decision, but one can't justify murder on the grounds of expediency. God was in control, however. He used this high priest to speak a deeper truth than he knew (50). Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. Jesus died for the Jewish nation and for the world, for he died to destroy our enemy Satan and save us from sin. God's love always wins.

2. Jesus withdrew to wait for the Passover (54-57)

Jesus the Lamb of God must die for the sins of the world at Passover time, so he withdrew to a quiet village to wait.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to see your sovereign hand in every circumstance; help me to trust you and wait on your time.

One Word: Jesus died to save the world

MARY OF BETHANY ANOINTS JESUS

John 12:1-11

Key Verse: 12:3

1. Mary's act of love (1-3)

Jesus' raising of Lazarus stirred his friends to deeper love and real faith. Martha, Mary and Lazarus gave a dinner party honoring Jesus. His disciples were invited, as well as many neighbors. They joyfully celebrated Lazarus' new life--and their new faith, faith in God who raises the dead. Mary poured out her treasure--a pint of expensive perfume--on Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The fragrance filled the house. She poured out her love and thanksgiving, holding back nothing. Jesus would soon pour out his lifeblood in an even more extravagant act of love.

2. Judas' cold heart (4-11)

Judas loved money, not Jesus--even though he was called a disciple. His words sounded pious and altruistic, but he had the heart of a thief. Jesus did not expose his true motives. Jesus loved him and taught him the meaning of Mary's act of love. In the meantime, hatred ruled the hearts of the chief priests.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me from the mind of Judas and help me to love you as Mary did.

One Word: Pour your treasures at his feet

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

John 12:12-19

Key Verse: 12:13

1. Your king is coming (12-15)

Jesus raised Lazarus to life and planted resurrection faith in Mary, Martha, and in his disciples. Many people were putting their faith in him (11). So when Jesus rode on a donkey from Bethany to Jerusalem, crowds came to meet him shouting, "Hosanna!... Blessed is the King of Israel." His triumphal entry was both humble and majestic. His disciples did not realize its meaning until later. Jesus is King. His kingdom is spiritual. It is a kingdom of peace and righteousness, just as Zechariah 9:9 had predicted.

2. The whole world has gone after him (16-19)

Jesus' popularity spread. After he raised Lazarus from the dead, many people, even visitors from abroad, sought him out. The Pharisees were upset because of his popularity. They did not care about God's work, or about truth. They only cared about themselves.

Prayer: Lord, I welcome you as my King and Messiah. Come into my heart and rule.

One Word: Jesus, my Savior and King

A KERNEL OF WHEAT

John 12:20-36

Key Verse: 12:24

1. Jesus, a kernel of wheat (20-28)

Jesus taught Philip, Andrew and the Greeks who were looking for him true wisdom: to become a kernel of wheat that dies and produces many seeds. Jesus knew that the time of his death was at hand. He did not try to save himself. If he had avoided the cross and saved himself, he would have remained a fruitless single seed; but he died and rose again so that he might bear fruit in the lives of countless people. We who would be his disciples must live as kernels of wheat that die. This means that we do not love our own lives or try to save ourselves, but we love Jesus and others, and we seek to glorify God.

2. Jesus must be lifted up (29-36)

When Jesus said that he would be lifted up on the cross, they only saw the human tragedy of his death and rejected him as Christ. But Jesus died on the cross to save all who come to him. Those who reject Jesus can only walk in darkness; those who follow him are children of light.

Prayer: Lord, I want to receive you and live as a kernel of wheat. Please help me.

One Word: Be a kernel of wheat that dies

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS

John 12:37-50

Key Verse: 12:46

1. Why men don't believe (37-43)

From the point of view of God's sovereignty, the rejection of Jesus by the Jews was a fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah spoke about people who hear God's word but do not repent; they do not let God's light into their hearts, so they become harder and harder. Men don't come to Jesus' glorious light because they don't want to leave their dark hiding places and their sins (Jn 3:19). One real reason for unbelief is in verse 43: Men are proud. They want men's praise rather than God's approval (Jn 5:44).

2. The very word I spoke will condemn him (44-50)

Jesus is the light of the world. He was sent by God. No one who believes in him will stay in darkness. He did not come to judge the world but to save it. Those who receive his word and believe in him are saved and live in God's light. Those who reject him judge themselves and remain in darkness to be destroyed.

Prayer: Lord, let me live in your light and obey your word.

One Word: Come to Jesus the light

THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS LOVE

John 13:1-17

Key Verse: 13:1

1. Jesus washed their feet (1-5)

Jesus knew that he was soon to be crucified. He knew his disciples' weaknesses. He loved them to the end. He wanted them to accept his saving love and to love one another. As they ate this last meal together, he was troubled. He was Almighty God, but he got up from the table, laid aside his clothes, wrapped a towel around him like a slave, and began to wash their feet.

2. Not my feet! (6-17)

Simon Peter loved Jesus in his own way. He refused to let Jesus wash his feet. His apparent humbleness covered his stubborn pride. We must accept Jesus' serving and cleansing or we have no part in him. Peter immediately repented. He had already been washed clean by Jesus' word, which he had received in his heart (Jn 6:68,69; 15:3). He needed only to have his feet washed. We need repentance and Jesus' cleansing every day.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me and rule my heart. Help me to wash the feet of my brothers and sisters, as you commanded.

One Word: Love others as Jesus loved me

AND IT WAS NIGHT

John 13:18-30

Key Verse: 13:30

1. So that you will believe (18-24)

Jesus' heart was troubled, for he loved Judas. Judas did not accept Jesus' words. So the devil easily entered his empty heart and planted greed there (2; 6:68-71). Jesus mentioned Judas' betrayal to keep the disease of unbelief from spreading to the others. After the crucifixion, Judas' betrayal became one evidence of Jesus' truthfulness.

2. Judas took the bread and went out (25-30)

The disciples didn't know each other well. They had no idea who the betrayer would be. Jesus indicated the betrayer when he gave the bread to Judas, but still they did not understand. Judas took the bread as he had accepted Jesus' love--without any thanks. He went out and it was night. He left the Light of the World to go to the blackness of hell. Judas tried to be a disciple without accepting Jesus' words of life.

Prayer: Lord, dwell in my heart. Let your word be in me so that I won't be a Judas.

One Word: Stay in the light with Jesus

A NEW COMMANDMENT

John 13:31-38

Key Verse: 13:34

1. Now is the Son of Man glorified (31-33)

Judas went out to betray Jesus; Jesus' death was at hand. Jesus glorified God by obeying him even to death on the cross. He thus revealed God's love for sinners and God's hatred of sin. Through his obedience, Jesus fulfilled all that God had promised. He revealed God's faithfulness. In this climatic moment, Jesus had one word for us.

2. As I have loved you, love one another (34-35)

Jesus' command is new because Jesus set a new example of love. Love is a greatly misused word. So we must learn love from Jesus. He does not teach us abstract love. He does not teach selfish love. We can prove that we are his disciples only by loving one another as he loved us.

3. You will disown me three times (36-38)

Peter loved Jesus, but he loved himself a little more. Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial became for Peter a way back to Jesus and a way to life.

Prayer: Lord, teach me your love and help me to practice it.

One Word: Love one another

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

John 14:1-4

Key Verse: 14:2

1. Trust in God; trust in Jesus also (1)

Jesus' disciples were troubled because Jesus had said that he was going away. The only solution to anxiety is trust--faith. Even in the darkest time, when it is impossible to understand what God is doing, we must believe in him. The hour of Jesus' death seemed to be the darkest hour of history. But Jesus' death was not a tragedy; it was salvation for the world. God is sovereign; he is in control. Anxiety is a faith problem.

2. To prepare a place for you (2-4)

Jesus was returning to the Father by the way of the cross. His death was for our sins. His death opens the gates of heaven to all who put their trust in him. Jesus promised us a place in the heavenly kingdom; he promised that we could be with him. His promise plants hope in the hearts of all disciples for all times. His promise to come back was fulfilled in the coming of the Spirit, and will be finally fulfilled when he returns in glory.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my anxiety. Help me to put my trust fully in you and set my hope fully on your kingdom.

One Word: Believe in God; believe in Jesus

JESUS IS THE WAY

John 14:5-14

Key Verse: 14:6

1. I am the way (5-7)

Jesus is the only way to God. He is God's Way. We must go to heaven through the door of his death and resurrection. Following him is the only way to live a free and joyful and meaningful life in this world. Jesus is the truth. He is the truth because he is the Creator. He reveals God to us. He also tells us the truth about ourselves. He is the life because in him was life and that life is the light of men (1:4). His life in us makes us truly human.

2. Show us the Father (8-14)

Philip wanted to see God--then he would believe. But God is Spirit; we must see him with the eyes of faith. Anyone who has seen Jesus has seen God, for Jesus is God. He came and lived and died among men so that we might know God. We know that God is living and working because he changes useless sinners into useful children of God. He answers prayer. Because Jesus died and rose, we can do great works. We can take the gospel to the ends of the earth, and pass it down from generation to generation.

Prayer: Lord, help the wandering young people of our times to know Jesus the way.

One Word: Jesus is the way

THE COUNSELOR

John 14:15-21

Key Verse: 14:17

1. The Spirit of Truth (15-20)

Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who love and obey him. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor, the Spirit of truth. People who love personal security or worldly pleasure more than the truth have no room in their hearts for the Spirit of truth. He does not compromise with the world. He dwells in hearts that love God and love truth. When he dwells within, he reminds us of God's great love for us, so we cannot be lonely or desolate or feel empty, like orphans.

2. He who loves me (21)

If we love Jesus, we will study his word and learn what pleases him and do it. If we love Jesus and obey him, the Father will pour out his special love on us. Jesus will also love us and reveal himself to us. We can take his yoke and learn of him, for he is humble and gentle in heart. We can know him, and know that he is with us.

Prayer: Lord, I love you and your truth. Come and dwell with me forever.

One Word: Jesus gives the Spirit of Truth

THE PEACE THAT JESUS GIVES

John 14:22-31

Key Verse: 14:27

1. Show yourself to the world! (22-24)

Judas (Thaddaeus) wanted Jesus to do some dramatic miracle that would force all the world to believe. But this is not how God works. He works through his Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who welcome him. He comes to dwell with those who love him and obey him. One who loves Jesus knows that the Bible is the word of God; he tries to obey God's word (21,23). God reveals himself to us when we put his word in our hearts.

2. The work of the Counselor (25-31)

The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of truth (17). He gives us wisdom; he teaches us God's word and helps us walk in God's ways (26). He gives us his peace (27). We look for the world's peace in a comfortable, problem-free environment; Jesus' peace is within. It is ours even in the midst of a storm. When we have Jesus' peace, anxiety leaves. Read verses 28-31. Jesus died to defeat the devil and give us forgiveness and peace.

Prayer: Lord, come and make your home in my heart forever.

One Word: Jesus gives real peace

JESUS THE TRUE VINE

John 15:1-8

Key Verse: 15:5

1. The Gardener prunes (1-4)

Jesus wants his disciples to be fruitful. There are several kinds of fruit: the inner fruit of Christian character; the fruit of good influence; the fruit of disciple-making. God prunes us to make us fruitful. He prunes us by his word. He leads us to repent of sinful habits, deeds and thoughts. Good branches must also be pruned by God's training. God disciplines us because he loves us (Heb 12:6,11).

2. Remain in Jesus (5-8)

In order for a branch to bear fruit, it must remain connected to the vine. In the same way, we must remain in union with Jesus. Branches severed from the main Vine are dead, and fit only for firewood. Verse 7 is God's promise. If we remain in Jesus and have his word in our hearts, he will give us whatever we ask in prayer. So we must walk with Jesus through prayer and Bible study. Then we will bear much fruit and prove to be his disciples. This is the life that glorifies God

.

Prayer: Lord, help me to glorify you and enjoy you forever, for this is the chief purpose of mankind.

One Word: Remain in Jesus and bear fruit

JESUS' FRIENDS

John 15:9-17

Key Verse: 15:16

1. So that your joy may be complete (9-11)

Jesus does not call us in order to make life hard for us. He calls us because he loves us and wants us to be full of joy. Jesus himself was not gloomy or grumpy. He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows. He suffered and died on the cross, but his heart was joyful because he knew that God loved him, and he wholeheartedly accepted the mission God gave him.

2. As I have loved you (12-17)

Jesus gave us one command: "Love each other as I have loved you." How did Jesus love us? He laid down his life for us. He calls us his friends. We are Jesus' friends when we accept his death for our sins. We are his friends if we do what he commands. Jesus shares with his friends the spiritual knowledge and insight which comes from God. He shares the secrets of God. He shares God's great redemptive plan and invites us to participate in it. He calls us to a life of mission. We did not choose him; he chose us and appointed us to go and bear fruit. A fruitful life is a joyful life.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for being my Friend. Help me to love others.

One Word: Jesus is my best Friend

WHEN THE WORLD HATES YOU

John 15:18-27

Key Verse: 15:19

1. If you belonged to the world...(18-25)

The world hated Jesus so much that it crucified him. Jesus' disciples belong to Jesus, not to the world. The world hated Jesus because he exposed sin and called men to repent (22). The world hated Jesus because his mighty works proclaimed God's sovereignty and his almighty power (21,24). People didn't, and still don't, want to obey God. A world in rebellion rejects its Creator. So those who belong to Jesus and not to the world can expect to be hated.

2. Testify about Jesus (26-27)

It hurts to be hated. What can we do? First, we must come to Jesus and remember his words (18,20). Jesus promised to send the Counselor, the Spirit of truth, to help us (26). Second, we should have identity as Jesus' people (18,19). Third, we should boldly testify about Jesus (27). Jesus' disciples should not compromise with the world--Jesus didn't!

Prayer: Lord, I am weak, but you are strong. Help me to live as your disciple in a hostile world.

One Word: Remember Jesus; be his witness

IT IS FOR YOUR GOOD

John 16:1-7

Key Verse: 16:7

1. So that you will not go astray (1-4)

Jesus told his disciples the surprising news that though they lived sacrificial lives for the sake of truth, they would be misunderstood and persecuted--not by atheists, but by religious people who do not know Jesus--and do not know God.

2. I am going to him who sent me (5-7)

When Jesus speaks of his going away, it is another way of speaking of his death on the cross for our sins, his resurrection and his ascension. Jesus' disciples were sorrowful, for they did not know that it was necessary for Jesus to die. Because he died, our sins are washed away. The Holy Spirit can come and dwell with men. So Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to them. Jesus' disciples must become independent of their human shepherd and dependent on God. They must become spiritual men.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be discouraged when so-called Christians persecute God's flock. Help me to depend on Jesus who died for my sins and sent his Holy Spirit.

One Word: Jesus died for me

THE COUNSELOR'S WORK

John 16:8-15

Key Verse: 16:13

1. He convicts of sin (8-11)

The Holy Spirit makes us realize that we are sinners. Unbelief is sin. The Holy Spirit makes us realize that we can be righteous by accepting the gospel. He assures us that our sins are forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Holy Spirit teaches us the reality of the final judgment, so that we may fear God and escape the snares of the prince of this world.

2. He will guide you into all truth (12-15)

A good teacher knows that he cannot teach his students everything at once. Jesus was a good teacher. He would leave, knowing that though his disciples were weak, they were growing. The Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth: his textbook is the Bible; his major subject is Jesus. He would bring glory to Jesus by revealing more and more of his grace and his love to Jesus' disciples--this includes us. The Holy Spirit does not speak on his own; he only speaks what he hears.

Prayer: Lord, send me your Spirit to lead me into truth. Especially, help me to meet Jesus in the pages of Holy Scripture.

One Word: Learn from the Spirit of truth

GRIEF THAT TURNS TO JOY

John 16:16-24

Key Verse: 16:24b

1. In a little while...(16-22)

In a little while Jesus would die on the cross and they would see him no more, but after three days, he would rise from death and they would meet him again. His disciples were sorrowful at the thought of his leaving. But Jesus told them that their sorrow would turn to joy. Some sorrow leads to despair; but when a woman in travail suffers, her suffering brings new life and great joy. When I repent, I feel very sorry. But when I receive forgiveness through Jesus' blood, my sorrow turns to joy. Jesus' suffering brings new life. No one can take away the joy of one who has been born again into God's family.

2. Ask and you will receive (23-24)

Jesus' disciples had depended on Jesus to do the praying. Now, they must learn to go to God in prayer themselves. This was a blessing. They can go to God through Jesus, and have the joy of fellowship with the Father--and the joy of answered prayer.

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to share in your suffering for the salvation of the world. Teach me to pray.

One Word: In Jesus, sorrow turns to joy

TAKE HEART! I HAVE OVERCOME

John 16:25-33

Key Verse: 16:33

1. You believe at last! (25-31)

Jesus wanted his disciples to know who he was and why he had come. He came from God, with God's mission to die for the sins of the world. Soon he would complete that mission and return to God. He wanted them to know that, no matter what, God loves those who love Jesus. Those who love Jesus can pray, and God will hear. The disciples finally accepted Jesus' words and confessed their faith. Jesus was now ready to leave.

2. I am not alone (32-33)

Jesus knew that their faith was weak, even though they had accepted his words and believed in him. Head-knowledge is a start, but it is not enough. In the moment of crisis, his disciples would all run away. But Jesus would not run away. He trusted God, not his sheep. The Father was with him. Jesus overcame the world and he gives victory and peace to those who believe in him.

Prayer: Lord, I believe that you love me and that you died for me. Help me to overcome the world.

One Word: Faith is the victory

JESUS PRAYS FOR THE FATHER'S GLORY

John 17:1-5

Key Verse: 17:1

1. Jesus gives eternal life (1-3)

Jesus prayed that he might glorify the Father. He lived and died for the glory of God, as every person should. He was obedient to death, and, by his death, he fulfilled God's promises. God glorified the Son by raising him from the dead, and by granting him authority to give eternal life. He gives eternal life to all who put their trust in him. Eternal life is having a right relationship with the eternal God, and with his Son Jesus.

2. I completed the work you gave me (4-5)

Jesus glorified God not only in his death, but in his life as well. He raised disciples and planted God's word in their hearts until they could confess their faith. Now Jesus was ready to return to the Father. His hope was in the heavenly kingdom, and he prayed that God might restore to him the glory which he shared with the Father before the world began.

Prayer: Lord, help me to glorify your name by being obedient to your mission.

One Word: Pray to live for God's glory

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

John 17:6-19

Key Verse: 17:18

1. I have revealed you to them (6-8)

Jesus talked with God about the men whom God had given him. He had revealed God to them by giving them God's word and training them in obedience. The purpose of his training was to teach them faith by planting God's word in their hearts (6,8,14). Jesus had prayed for them, and he had been their shepherd. Now it was time for them to become disciple-makers and shepherds (18). He could only commit them to God in prayer.

2. Prayer topics for the disciples (9-18)

Jesus did not pray for them to have easy lives. He gave them back to God. The devil would attack them by trying to destroy their love for one another. Jesus prayed that God would protect them from the evil one by the power of his name, and help them to be one. They must live in the world, but they must not be worldly. They must live according to the truth--not according to the shallow pragmatism of the world (17). Jesus died to make them holy.

Prayer: Lord, sanctify me by your truth and help me be a disciple-maker and shepherd.

One Word: Sent by Jesus into the world

JESUS PRAYS FOR US

John 17:20-26

Key Verse: 17:21

1. So that the world may believe (20-23)

Jesus prayed for all those who would become Jesus' disciples through the witness of the Twelve. The New Testament is the Apostles' testimony. When we see the Church of Jesus so split and divided, we wonder what Jesus meant when he prayed for the unity of believers. But all who believe the Bible, repent of their sins, confess Jesus as the Christ, and allow his Spirit to rule their lives are one--whether they know it or not. The Church does not need to seek unity for the sake of unity. Jesus wants his people to be one for the sake of mission. When Christians love one another, the people of the world can believe in God who sent his Son.

2. The great hope of all believers (24-26)

Our great hope is to be with Jesus and to behold his glory--the glory he shared with the Father before the world began. Until that day, Jesus continues to make himself known to those who love him. When he dwells in us, we can love others.

Prayer: Lord, dwell in me, and help me to love my fellow believers with your love.

One Word: Let us be one--that the world may believe

SHALL I NOT DRINK THE CUP?

John 18:1-11

Key Verse: 18:11

1. "I am He" (1-6)

Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane. Judas, who knew the secret place where Jesus met with his disciples, led an armed mob there to arrest him. Jesus knew that

he would suffer a painful and shameful death on the cross, but he did not try to escape. Instead, he stepped forward and asked them, "Who is it you want?" When they told him,"Jesus," he said, "I am he" (Ex 3:14). Even this murderous mob drew back and fell to the ground in awe before him. There was no fear in Jesus' heart. He knew who he was and what he must do.

2. To fulfill Scripture (7-11)

Jesus identified himself and voluntarily became their prisoner so that his disciples might not be arrested, and so that scripture might be fulfilled. Peter, who had slept while Jesus prayed, reacted. He drew a sword and cut off Malchus' ear. Jesus stopped him and said, "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" Jesus had accepted his mission from God to die for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29; Isa 53:10).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for my shepherd Jesus who drank the cup of suffering and death for my sake.

One Word: Jesus--Son of God; Lamb of God

JESUS AND PETER

John 18:12-27

Key Verse: 18:23

1. Jesus' first trial (12-14; 19-24)

Jesus was taken to Annas, a former high priest and the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Jesus was not afraid. When the high priest questioned him, he pointed out that the questions were illegal and unnecessary. He ignored questions about his disciples. His hands were bound, but they struck him in the face. When they could not intimidate him, they sent him to the official high priest, Caiaphas. Caiaphas had already decided to put Jesus to death (14). John does not record the trial before the Sanhedrin (Mt 26:57-67).

2. Peter on trial (15-18; 25-27)

Peter followed with his feet, but he had no decision in his heart. He got into the courtyard with John's help, but he was full of fear. When a servant girl questioned him, he denied being a disciple. His "I am not" is a sharp contrast to Jesus' "I am." Peter didn't know what to do, so he mingled with the enemy, warmed himself by the fire and tried to be inconspicuous. He denied Jesus two more times, then the rooster crowed. Peter had not intended to deny Jesus, but he did.

Prayer: Lord, help me to follow you with a committed heart.

One Word: Have a clear identity

MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

John 18:28-40

Key Verse: 18:36,37

1. Pilate and the Jews (28-32)

These men who did not want to be ceremonially unclean did not hesitate to condemn an innocent man to death. Since they had no legal power to pronounce a death sentence, they asked Pilate, the Roman governor, to execute Jesus as a criminal. Pilate's actions toward the Jews revealed his compromising attitude. It looked as though Satan were in control of the world, but God was quietly working to fulfill his purpose and his promises.

2. The true kingdom (33-40)

Pilate, looking for a basis for a criminal charge, asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He knew that Jesus was not leading a rebellion against Rome. Jesus admitted being a king. Then he taught Pilate about his spiritual kingdom which is based on truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Jesus; everyone who obeys Jesus belongs to his kingdom. Perhaps Pilate had once longed to live by truth, but found the cost too high.

Prayer: Lord, help me to renew my hope in your eternal kingdom every day, and live according to your truth.

One Word: Stand on Jesus' side

JESUS IS KING

John 19:1-16a

Key Verse: 19:5

1. Here is the man! (1-6)

Pilate thought that by publicly shaming Jesus--and the Jews--he could avoid executing him. So he allowed the soldiers to flog Jesus and mock his kingship with a crown of thorns and a purple robe. He admitted that he could find no basis for a charge against Jesus. Then he brought him out and proclaimed, "Here is the man!" The Jewish leaders shouted, "Crucify!" Pilate's attempt to compromise failed.

2. He claimed to be the Son of God (7-16a)

The Jews demanded Jesus' death because he claimed to be the Son of God. This frightened Pilate; he threatened Jesus, telling him that he, Pilate, held over him the power of life and death. But Pilate was only a puppet of Rome, and the Sovereign God ultimately controls men and history. Those who used Pilate as a tool were more guilty than he. When Pilate tried again to

release Jesus, the Jews shouted the ultimate blasphemy, "We have no king but Caesar." Pilate feared Caesar more than he feared God, so he handed Jesus over to be crucified.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to compromise, but to acknowledge your kingship in every area of my life.

One Word: Jesus is King

JESUS ON THE CROSS

John 19:16b-27

Key Verse: 19:17,18

1. Pilate has a final word (16b-22)

Jesus carried his own cross to the place of the Skull, Golgotha. There he was crucified between two criminals. Pilate had a notice fastened to the cross: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. It was an expression of his contempt for the Jews (their king, a crucified criminal), but it was also a statement of his own conviction about Jesus. The Jews objected, but Pilate did not change what he had written. Jesus was King (18:36-38).

2. What the soldiers did (23-24)

The soldiers at the foot of the cross gambled for Jesus' clothes. They did not know that God was using them to fulfill scripture (Ps 22:18).

3. Jesus' unchanging love (25-27)

In the midst of his own suffering, Jesus was mindful of others. He gave his mother a son and his beloved disciple a mother. His mother became a part of his spiritual family. She, with his brothers, would participate in the continuing work of God (Ac 1:14).

Prayer: Lord, let your love flow into my heart. Rule my heart and life today.

One Word: Jesus, King and Shepherd

JESUS' DEATH

John 19:28-37

Key Verse: 19:30

1. It is finished (28-30)

Jesus knew that his suffering and death were a part of God's plan to redeem sinful mankind. The details of his death fulfilled scripture. He didn't think about himself until his mission was completed; then he said, "I'm thirsty." They gave him a bitter drink. This, too, fulfilled scripture (Ps 22:15; 69:21). He said, "It is finished." He died without any regrets, knowing that in his life and death he had finished the work he had come to do.

2. An eyewitness' true testimony (31-37)

The writer of this account was John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved." He was there. He loved Jesus, but his account is not an emotional one. He wrote with deep meaning. He saw how the events fulfilled scripture in amazing detail. John recorded the details so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life (35).

Prayer: Lord, I believe that Jesus' death was for my sins and for those of the world.

One Word: Jesus died for us

JESUS' BURIAL

John 19:38-42

Key Verse: 19:40

1. Joseph (38)

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Jewish council. He had carefully kept his belief in Jesus a secret because he feared peer pressure. But now he came forward. In asking for the body of Jesus, he was identifying himself as a follower of Jesus. He was no longer a secret believer. He had taken his stand.

2. Nicodemus (39-42)

This is the third time Nicodemus appears in this gospel (3:1-10; 7:50) He also was a member of the ruling council. He had come to Jesus by night and heard Jesus' words, "You must be born again." Jesus had told him that the Son of Man would be lifted up, and those who believed in him would have eternal life (3:14,15). He had tried to remain in the middle, but his fellow council members only got angry. He saw the Son of Man on the cross, and finally came forward to serve Jesus with his hands and money. Jesus' burial is important, because it prepares the way for the empty tomb and the resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, help me to serve you without fear and to be clear as your disciple.

One Word: Jesus was buried

THE EMPTY TOMB

John 20:1-9

Key Verse: 20:2

1. The stone removed (1-2)

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early Sunday morning. She wanted to put spices on Jesus' dead body. She wondered how she would move the heavy stone that sealed the tomb's entrance. When she saw that the stone had been removed, she immediately concluded that the body had been stolen. She ran to tell Peter and John. She did not know it, but the empty tomb was the good news that would change the world. Her surprised reaction is a testimony.

2. He saw and believed (3-9)

Peter and John raced to the tomb. John won, but Peter was the one who boldly entered the tomb. The body was gone. The strips of linen with which it had been wrapped lay there, just as if the body had evaporated. The burial cloth looked as if the wearer had removed it from his head and folded it. John saw the empty tomb and believed that Jesus had risen. He didn't understand, but he believed.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the testimony of the empty tomb. Jesus rose bodily from the dead with a new resurrection body, and so, someday, shall I.

One Word: The empty tomb--the Risen Jesus

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

John 20:10-18

Key Verse: 20:17

1. Woman, why are you crying? (10-13)

Mary had witnessed the crucifixion. She was too shocked and sad to cry. But when she saw that Jesus' body was gone from the tomb, the floodgates of sorrow broke. To her, the empty tomb was not good news--it represented a cruel prank. This was more than she could bear. She had sought comfort by coming to be near the dead body of Jesus. Now, it was gone. Human sorrow so blinded her spiritual eyes that she could recognize neither the angels nor Jesus.

2. I have seen the Lord (14-18)

When Jesus called her name she recognized him. She was overjoyed and wanted to touch him. But this was not the time to enjoy a reunion. It was the time for mission. Jesus sent her to his disciples with the good news of his resurrection from the dead. Soon he would return to the Father, but first he must meet his disciples.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to cling to the dead past, but to share the good news of the risen Jesus with others.

One Word: I have seen the Lord

JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES

John 20:19-23

Key Verse: 20:21

1. Jesus' hands and side (19-20)

After hearing that Jesus' body had been stolen, the disciples were full of fear. They sat together behind locked doors in a small room. They thought that the Jews who had killed Jesus were surely after them. Then, the Risen Jesus came through the locked doors and stood among them. He brought his peace. They could not believe that he was really Jesus. So, he showed them the evidence--his pierced hands and wounded side. "He was pierced for our transgressions...by his wounds we are healed" (Isa 53:5).

2. As the Father has sent me (21-23)

Jesus had come to plant resurrection faith and real joy in their hearts. He had also come to give them a mission. He said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." He was sending them to preach the kingdom of God. He was sending them with the good news of forgiveness of sins. He was sending them to live like little Jesuses in the world. But they would not be alone; his Spirit would be in them and with them.

Prayer: Lord, I believe you died and rose for my sins. Help me to live in the world as your missionary.

One Word: Jesus sends us to love and serve

JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

John 20:24-31

Key Verse: 20:28

1. Stop doubting and believe (24-28)

Thomas had not been with the others when Jesus appeared to them, so he doubted. His doubt influenced them all, for instead of accepting Jesus' command and his gift of peace and the Holy Spirit, they still sat trembling behind locked doors. One man's faith or lack of faith is very important. So Jesus visited them again. Thomas touched the nail-scarred hands and worshiped Jesus. He confessed, "My Lord and my God!"

2. Those who believe without seeing (29-31)

John wrote this Gospel with a clear purpose. He wanted those of us who have not seen Jesus' nail-scarred hands with our physical eyes to believe the testimony of the Gospel writers, the testimony of the Bible, and to know that God raised Jesus from the dead. By believing that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, accepting him as our Lord and Savior, we have life in his name.

Prayer: Lord, you are the Christ, the Son of God. Thank you for giving me life.

One Word: My Lord and my God!

BREAKFAST WITH JESUS

John 21:1-14

Key Verse: 21:12

1. I'm going fishing (1-3)

Jesus' disciples went back to Galilee. Jesus had promised to meet them there, but when they arrived, they didn't see him. They remembered Jesus' love and his tragic death--and their own failures as his disciples. Sorrow and despair filled their hearts. Peter lost direction and decided to give his old life as a fisherman a try. The others followed him. But even though they fished all night, they caught nothing. Life seemed to be one failure after another.

2. Come and have breakfast (4-14)

When Jesus, standing on the shore, called to them, they didn't recognize him. But when he helped them recover their failure and make a great catch of fish, the disciple whom Jesus loved (John) recognized him and told Peter. Peter, who was stripped for work, threw his coat on, jumped into the water and waded ashore. Everything had changed, but Jesus' love had not changed. He was there cooking breakfast for them. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your love that restores failure and gives new strength.

One Word: Jesus' love doesn't change

FEED MY SHEEP

John 21:15-25

Key Verse: 21:15

1. Do you love me? (15-17)

This was Peter's first personal conversation with Jesus since his miserable failure on the night of Jesus' arrest. Jesus asked Peter only one question: "Do you love me?" For a Christian, loving Jesus is everything. We love Jesus because he first loved us. St. Augustine said, "Love God and do as you please." If we truly love Jesus, we can't be selfish. Jesus responded to Peter's love confession with, "Feed my sheep." If we truly love Jesus we must love and care for his sheep.

2. Follow me (18-25)

Peter was full of human zeal when he followed Jesus the first time. Now it was time for a new decision. This time, Peter knew the cost of following Jesus. He was still comparing himself with John. But Jesus' invitation to discipleship is personal, and it requires a personal decision. No one can decide for someone else to be a disciple of Jesus. What is your decision?

Prayer: Lord, help me to follow you and feed your sheep.

One Word: Love Jesus