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## REROUTING | DEVOTIONALS

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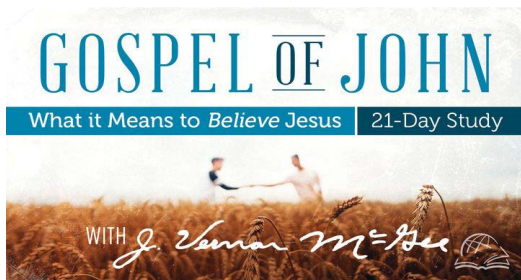
### 7 WEEKS OF DEVOTIONS

Join us for devotions during our *Rerouting: How Christians Make Sense of the World* series. First, we'll read through the book of John twice using the *Becoming: Gospel of John* and *Gospel of John: What It Means To Believe Jesus* devotionals; and then go through the *Broken Signposts* devotional.

Click on the links below to go to the online version of these devotions or use this printed guide.



**ON MARCH 6, START:**  
[\*Becoming: Having a Dedicated Time with Jesus – Gospel of John\*](#)



**ON MARCH 27, START:**  
[\*Thru The bible - Gospel of John\*](#)



**ON APRIL 17 (OPTIONAL), START:**  
[\*Broken Signposts: How Christianity Makes Sense of the World\*](#)

## **REROUTING | BECOMING: GOSPEL OF JOHN DEVOTIONAL**

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Welcome to *Becoming: Having a Dedicated Time With Jesus – Gospel of John*. This plan is for those who are new to faith or simply looking for a plan to learn how to be with Jesus. Having a dedicated time **with** Jesus helps us become more **like** Jesus. This plan is designed to help you develop the habit of daily time with Jesus where you can get to know Him through prayer, Bible reading, and memorizing Scripture.

**This time alone with Jesus should be a top priority in your schedule for four reasons:**

1. We were **created** to have fellowship with God. (Genesis 1:27, 2:7, 3:8)
2. Personal time alone with God was Jesus' **source of strength**. (Mark 1:35; Luke 22:39; Luke 5:16)
3. We get **direction** from God. (Psalms 25:4)
4. We **become** more like Jesus when we spend time with Him (2 Peter 1:3-4, Acts 4:13).

**Having a dedicated time with Jesus by reading the Bible:**

1. Select a time that can be a **regular time**.
2. Start with just a **few minutes** and allow your time to grow.
3. Find a **special place** where you can be focused.
4. **Start small**. It's better to be victorious in small amounts and continue, than to be defeated and give up.

This is why WE want to encourage you to read one chapter a day. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. (Mark 1:35)

## **ACTION PLAN**

We've actually created an action plan to help you develop the habit of spending time with Jesus. When you finish the 21 chapters you will have completed reading the book of John. One game-changer is finding a mentor or friend to do this plan with. It's fun to be encouraged and challenged by others in this process.

Research tells us it takes 3 weeks to become familiar with a new task. Then it takes another 3 weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit. This is exactly why we created this plan. Imagine what your life will look like after being with Jesus for 7 weeks!

This plan will get you started and help you develop this important habit of quality time with Jesus. Remember, we will start small so we can be victorious. In this 7-week plan, we are going to use the S.O.A.P Method: **Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.**

## REROUTING | S.O.A.P METHOD

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### THE S.O.A.P. METHOD:

#### STEP 1

Take 30 seconds and **pray**, asking God to help you focus on your relationship with Him. Prayer is just having a conversation with God, so be yourself.

#### STEP 2

**Scripture:** Read this week's scripture. As you read, highlight or write down any verses that stand out to you or speak to you. The nice thing is, you can take your time reading.

#### STEP 3

**Observation:** As you read, observe the text. Who are the people involved with this passage? What are the events which take place? Where is this passage located in the Bible? Why did God put this in the Bible for us to read? When did this passage take place? How did God work in this passage? What is God showing you in this passage?

#### STEP 4

**Application:** How will I apply this to my life? What do I need to change to become more like Jesus?

#### STEP 5

**Prayer:** Write a prayer or say a prayer to God asking Him to give you the strength to apply these truths to your life.

#### STEP 6

Each week we encourage you to **memorize** or just meditate on that week's Scripture. We will provide it for each week. Repeat this passage multiple times throughout the day and week. You could also put it in a place where you will see it consistently, like on the wallpaper on your phone.

#### STEP 7

Come back tomorrow! **Consistency is key.**

**We're praying for you!**

## **REROUTING | BECOMING DAILY READINGS**

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### **SUNDAY, MARCH 6 - JOHN 1**

- Today's reading – JOHN 1:1-51
- Scripture to memorize or meditate on – JOHN 1:1-2
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **MONDAY, MARCH 7 – JOHN 2**

- Today's Reading: John 2:1-25
- Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 1:1-2
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **TUESDAY, MARCH 8 – JOHN 3**

- Today's Reading: John 3:1-36
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 3:30
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9 – JOHN 4**

- Today's Reading: John 4:1-54
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 4:13-14
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **THURSDAY, MARCH 10 – JOHN 5**

- Today's Reading: John 5:1-47
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 5:24
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 11 – JOHN 6**

- Today's Reading: John 6:1-71
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 6:35
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

## REROUTING | BECOMING DAILY READINGS

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### SATURDAY, MARCH 12 – JOHN 7

- Today's Reading: John 7:1-53
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 7:38
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 13 – JOHN 8

- Today's Reading: John 8:1-59
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 8:36
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### MONDAY, MARCH 14 – JOHN 9

- Today's Reading: John 9:1-41
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 9:25
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### TUESDAY, MARCH 15 – JOHN 10

- Today's Reading: John 10:1-42
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 10:11
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16 – JOHN 11

- Today's Reading: John 11:1-57
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 11:25
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 17 – JOHN 12

- Today's Reading: John 12:1-50
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 12:25
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

## **REROUTING | BECOMING DAILY READINGS**

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### **FRIDAY, MARCH 18 – JOHN 13**

- Today's Reading: John 13:1-38
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 13:34-35
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **SATURDAY, MARCH 19 – JOHN 14**

- Today's Reading: John 14:1-31
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 14:6
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **SUNDAY, MARCH 20 – JOHN 15**

- Today's Reading: John 15:1-27
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 15:5
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **MONDAY, MARCH 21 – JOHN 16**

- Today's Reading: John 16:1-33
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 16:33
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **TUESDAY, MARCH 22 – JOHN 17**

- Today's Reading: John 17:1-26
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 17:3
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23 – JOHN 18**

- Today's Reading: John 18:1-40
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 18:36
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

## **REROUTING | BECOMING DAILY READINGS**

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### **THURSDAY, MARCH 24 – JOHN 19**

- Today's Reading: John 19:1-42
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 19:36
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 25 – JOHN 20**

- Today's Reading: John 20:1-31
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 20:29
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.

### **SATURDAY, MARCH 26 – JOHN 21**

- Today's Reading: John 21:1-25
- Today's Scripture to Memorize or Meditate On: John 21:15
- Follow the S.O.A.P. Method listed on page 4.



### THRU THE BIBLE: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN DEVOTIONAL

The Gospel of John, a favorite book of the Bible, gives us the story behind the stories of the Gospels. Though it is one of the easiest books to read, John is also one of the most profound books to understand. Let veteran Bible teacher and pastor, Dr. J. Vernon McGee lead you through the entire book in these 21 summaries from Thru the Bible's tried and trusted five year study.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 27

☐ **Today's Reading: John 1:1-18**

#### IN THE BEGINNING

The Gospel of John is one of the easiest books to read, yet one of the most profound Gospels to understand. We might get the surface meaning easily enough, but to understand the deep truths, we need the Lord Jesus to be our teacher.

The purpose of the Gospel of John is to explain that Jesus is fully God and fully man—and to help us “believe” that. This key word, “believe,” is used over 100 times. To believe something takes an act of the will. It looks like this: When you hear the facts of the gospel, you recognize that Jesus died for your sins, and you trust Him as your Savior who died to pay the penalty for your sins. That's believing.

Now, let's dive into this marvelous book at the beginning.

The first couple verses of the Gospel of John sound like something from Genesis 1:1.

☐ **Read John 1:1-3**

The beginning in Genesis goes back to the creation of the physical universe, but even then, the Word was already past tense. Go back a billion more years, put down your stakes, and out of eternity the Lord Jesus will walk out to meet you. Jesus never began. He was already there at the beginning.

From the beginning, Jesus was God. “And the Word was God.” He made all things—He is the Creator. He's life itself. And His life was the light of men.

Tragically, John tells us next that Jesus came to His own world, yet His own world wouldn't receive Him (v. 10)...But not everyone. There is good news: Some do receive Him by faith, and when you do, you're given a new birth. Your new life doesn't come through your own effort or by anything you do to earn it (not even by learning the Bible). Your new life in Jesus

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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comes through God's hand.

Here's more wonderful news about Jesus: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (v. 14).

Have you ever noticed that John's Gospel doesn't mention Jesus' birth? It's because the One he's talking about is too big for Bethlehem. A little child was born in Bethlehem, but the Son walks out of eternity. That's the Christmas story in John's Gospel.

Jesus "dwelt with us." Literally, He pitched His tent with us—He moved into our neighborhood.

Though it's true that no one can see God the Father (v. 18), when you see His Son, you understand who God is. But to do that He had to become one of us and bring God to where we are.

Next: We'll meet the first disciples to follow Jesus.

### MONDAY, MARCH 28

☐ **Today's Reading: John 1:19-51, John 2:1-11**

#### THE PEOPLE WHO FIRST POINT US TO JESUS

"Who are you?" That was the question the priests asked John the Baptist (1:19) who was ministering in the desert east of Jerusalem. Are you Messiah?, they hoped. But John made it clear—"I am not the Christ. You're looking to the wrong man."

"Who are you then? Elijah? Moses? Tell us..."

John said, "I am 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the LORD,' as the prophet Isaiah said" (1:23). John the Baptist was the voice; Jesus Christ is the Word.

☐ **Read John 1:29**

John identifies Jesus as the Messiah and also as Savior of the world. When John's disciples, Andrew and Phillip, heard this, they followed Jesus down the road to ask Him questions. Jesus invited them, "Come and see" (1:39). (That's the same invitation He gives to us today.) So the disciples spent the day talking with Jesus.

Right away, Andrew told his brother Peter, "We have found the Messiah" (1:41). Peter then

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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came to meet Jesus. Philip, too, found his friend Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one who Moses and prophets wrote about—it’s Jesus of Nazareth.”

When Nathanael heard that, he made a wise crack. “Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip just said, “Come and see” (1:46). And the first conversation Nathanael had with Jesus convinced him that Jesus was the Son of God.

As Jesus invited His disciples to follow Him, He showed them His glory so they would believe on Him. The first time He did this publicly, Jesus was at a wedding in Cana. Jesus’ mother had some kind of responsibility at this wedding, and she went to Jesus with an unusual problem. “They have no wine,” she told him (2:3). You have to wonder if she implied that Jesus should perform a miracle.

Mary then told the servants to do whatever Jesus asked (good advice in any situation). The Lord directed the servants to fill six stone water pots, the 30-gallon kind used in ceremonial cleansing, with water. Then, He told them to ladle some out and take it to the host. And somewhere between the filling and the ladling, the water had turned to wine.

Do you see the great spiritual lesson for us? We’re just beat up old water pots that the Lord wants to fill with water—the Word of God. Then we can ladle it out to others. Inexplicably, when that water leaves the water pot and gets to those for whom He intends, the water becomes the wine of joy. That joy is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Next: We’ll visit with an important religious leader who came to Jesus with a question.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 29

☐ **Today’s Reading: John 2:12-25, John 3:36**

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN AGAIN?**

After Jesus turned the water into wine in Cana, He traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

When Jesus saw what was happening in the temple, He was furious. People looking to make a profit from religious rituals were taking advantage of worshipers and making the sacred cheap. Jesus made a whip and scattered the marketers and animals.

☐ **Read John 2:15-17**

The religious leaders questioned Jesus’ authority to do this and Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (2:19). Jesus was referring to His own body,

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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but everyone thought He was talking about Herod's temple. Years later, after Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus' disciples remembered and understood.

In the days to come, people saw Jesus perform miracles and "many believed in his name" (2:23). But this belief wasn't saving faith; they just acknowledged the miracles. Jesus knew their hearts. Literally, it says, "He did not believe in them" (2:24).

But some people were genuinely interested in Jesus. Like Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler. When he came to Jesus at night, he wanted to talk about how Jesus could establish the kingdom of God and help overthrow Rome.

### ☐ **Read John 3:1-21**

But Jesus interrupted Nicodemus and said: "You can't even see the kingdom of God unless you've been born again" (3:3).

Nicodemus is confused. How can a man be physically born again?

But the Lord was talking about a spiritual birth. God never tries to save our old nature. He hasn't any program to improve or develop or save it. That's why we must be given a new nature.

Jesus compares the wind to how we are born of the Spirit. Like the wind, we can't fully explain it, but when God moves in people's hearts, we can see it happening.

How can we be born again? It takes Jesus' death to bear our sin's penalty, and His resurrection (Him lifted up) to regenerate us. That's the only way God can receive us.

Why would God do this? Because "God so loved the world." God's love motivated His gift of salvation.

### ☐ **Read John 3:16**

To "believe in" Christ means to trust Him as the One who bore the penalty for your sins and who died in your place.

When Jesus came the first time, He came to save, not to judge (3:17). When the world crucified Jesus, the world chose to be judged by God. Next time Jesus comes, He will judge the world.

John the Baptist's life and ministry sum it up: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Don't believe on Him, and you will be eternally lost without Christ.

Next: Meet the woman Jesus made an appointment with at a well.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

☐ **Today's Reading: John 3:17-36, John 4:1-54**

#### **THIRSTY FOR LIVING WATER**

In Jerusalem, Jesus' ministry stirred up a lot of controversy and so, rather than create a crisis before the right time, Jesus left for Galilee. On His way north, He could have taken three different routes: Up the coast, the road along the Jordan River (the common way Jews took to avoid Samaria), or the most direct route through Samaria—the one Jesus took. He had a divine appointment with a Samaritan woman by a well.

When the woman arrived at the well (at an unusual time to draw water), there sat Jesus, waiting just for her. To her surprise, He asked her for a drink.

Racism was thriving in Israel, pitting Jews and Samaritans against one another. It was culturally inappropriate for Jesus to speak to her, and she knew it. But He dealt skillfully and sympathetically with her.

☐ **Read John 4:10**

Her attitude changed immediately: "Sir . . . where do You get that living water?" (4:11).

☐ **Read John 4:13-15**

She thought Jesus was talking about physical water, but He quickly created a desire in her for spiritual water. Then He laid out the condition: Acknowledge that you're a sinner. To be truly free, we have to deal with sin in our lives.

The woman was actually shocked into reverence. So now she opens up a religious argument (what often happens when people don't want to talk about their sin). Jesus wants to give her the Water of Life, so He puts her back on the topic of how to know God.

☐ **Read John 4:23, 24**

The Samaritan woman is profoundly interested, and there's wistful longing in her heart. How majestic and wonderful that she is brought face to face now with the Savior of the world and the Messiah!

Friend, have you come face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior as this woman

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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did? She turned in faith to the Lord Jesus, left her water pot, and went back to her city to let everyone know who she found. That's the test of her faith—she witnessed to others.

Through her testimony, this woman brought a great company in Samaria to Jesus.

Many people are led to know Christ through the influence of another. In fact, it's the effect of life upon life, the impact of one personality upon another, but our faith must stand on surer ground than another person. Let that one person's influence take you to Christ, and then have your own story with Him.

Next: What healing marked the turning point in Jesus' ministry?

### THURSDAY, MARCH 31

☐ **Today's Reading: John 5**

#### HEALED

As Jesus' ministry of healing became more popular, He got the attention of the religious leaders. This miracle in John 5 marked the turning point in Jesus' ministry and set the bloodhounds of hate on His track. They never let up until they put Him to death on the cross.

Let's meet the paralyzed man whom Jesus healed. For 38 years, he sat by the pool of Bethesda, hoping to be healed. Jewish folklore said that angels stirred this pool with their wings, and when the water moved, the first who got in would be healed.

Jesus' first words to him are, "Do you want to be made well?" (v. 6). Why did Jesus ask such an odd question?

First, to stir hope in him. More importantly, Jesus wanted to get his eyes off the pool and looking to Him. What about you? Are you waiting for something to happen? Look instead to Jesus.

That's what the paralyzed man did. At Jesus' command to get up and walk, he picked up his bed (proof that he was healed) and walked.

You'd think everyone would be overcome with joy at this miracle, but the religious leaders objected because the miracle happened on the Sabbath.

Jesus had clashed with them before over the Sabbath Day (Mark 2:23-28). They never forgave Him, and that hatred for Him put murder in their hearts. They also objected to Jesus making Himself equal with God (v. 18).

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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### **JESUS SAID THESE THREE GREAT PRINCIPLES ABOUT HIMSELF:**

1. “I’m God. I do what God does. I can forgive sin.” Read John 5:19.
2. He raises the dead because He’s God—this is also the reason He can give us everlasting life today. Read John 5:20, 21.
3. He came to save the first time, but He will come to judge the next time. Read John 5:22. But if you’ll hear His Word and believe on Him, you won’t come into judgment but will pass from death to life.

You can have everlasting life if you hear and believe His Word (v. 24). The Lord Jesus is a life-giver (v. 26) who will make you a new spiritual creation.

Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day were serious students of the Old Testament, but they studied to earn eternal life through hard work. Jesus was the living Word of God, yet they had little time for Him. They looked for God in Scripture, but didn’t recognize Jesus for who He was.

If you look for Him, you’ll find Jesus on every page of the Bible. Even Moses spoke of Him, but Jesus said, “If you don’t believe him, how will you believe in Me?” (vs. 45-47). The Old Testament is the foundation of what we believe about Jesus. Look for Him throughout the entire Bible.

Next: We’ll hear from Jesus why He came.

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 1**

**☐ Today’s Reading: John 6**

### **MIRACLES BY THE SEA**

In the week leading up to Passover in Jesus’ second year of ministry, we watch Jesus in action and learn from Him the depths of who He is and why He’s come.

By then, Jesus was famous for His miracles. Crowds followed Him not because they believed He was Savior, but because they were addicted to His miracles.

One day in Galilee, Jesus sat with His disciples on a mountainside. But they weren’t alone for long. As the crowds gathered, Jesus put His disciples to the test.

“How should we feed all these people?”

“We can’t. There are more than 15,000!”

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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“Send them home,” another suggested. One disciple brought a little boy’s lunch to Jesus—and Jesus got to work. Without Him, the situation was hopeless. But five hamburger buns and two sardines plus Jesus can feed thousands.

Jesus took the lunch, thanked His Father, and created enough sandwiches for everyone to have their fill. In a day when people often went hungry, some were full for the first time in their lives. When the people saw the miracle, they conspired to take Jesus by force and make Him their king. It took another miracle for Jesus to get through that crowd.

Later that evening, Jesus wanted to get alone to pray, so He put the disciples in a boat and sent them to Capernaum (just a short distance away). But a big storm blew in and threw the disciples off course. As they battled the waves, the disciples were terrified . . . and then Jesus walked by on the waves!

Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid, it’s Me.” When they took Him into the boat, they immediately were at the shore (vs. 20, 21).

The next day, the crowds looked for but couldn’t find Jesus. Eventually, they found Him on the other side of the lake. Jesus asked them if they wanted more sandwiches—or if they would believe He was the source of the spiritual food they really needed.

### **Read John 6:35**

Jesus said He is the one who came down from heaven to give Himself as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. When you believe that, then you will have eternal life. He is the Word made flesh, the Bread that will feed us so we can grow.

Most of the people refused to believe in Jesus. But His offer stood: Anyone who comes to Him for salvation will be received. When we accept by faith what Jesus did for us, we can trust and rest in Him for eternal life.

Next: If not Jesus, where else are you hoping to find life?

## SATURDAY, APRIL 2

**Today’s Reading: John 6:55-71, John 7:1-53**

### **A BREWING STORM**

**Read John 6:53-58**



## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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As Jesus described Himself as the “Bread of Life,” He prepared His disciples for their last Passover together—which He established as the Lord’s Supper. Very soon, He tells them, He’s going to give His life for them—the basis for the Lord’s Supper that we observe today.

When Jesus taught in the synagogue in Capernaum that this remembrance of the Lord’s Supper included eating and drinking His flesh and blood, four different groups of people reacted:

1. Some stopped following Him, saying, “This is too hard to hear” (6:60).
2. Some following Him never believed. Jesus invited them, but they wouldn’t come (6:64, 65).
3. Some in the crowd were hostile religious leaders looking to trap Jesus.
4. And Jesus’ own 12 disciples, including Judas, were completely confused by His teaching. He asked them, “Do you also want to go away?”

### ☐ **Read John 6:68-69**

What an insightful response Jesus had. Many wonder today if the Lord Jesus is really the Savior. The question must be asked: Where else are you hoping to find life? Who will give it to you? The Lord Jesus is the only one who can do that.

A storm was brewing around Jesus’ ministry, drawing Him closer to the cross, now just six months away. During this last year of ministry, Jesus stayed mostly in Galilee because the religious leaders in Judea wanted to kill Him. Jesus guarded His time on earth, according to His Father’s schedule. Everything He did honored His Father’s plan, His Father’s timetable—His Father’s will.

Next, Jesus showed up in Jerusalem at the temple to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Everyone marveled at how He taught. Such authority! Such insight!

Jesus invites anyone and everyone to Himself who wants to investigate if God is really good. The wonder of God’s Word is that if you’re willing, God will make His truth real to you.

“But do men want to hear God?” If they do, God will speak to them in His Word. Some think the Bible is foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:14). This shouldn’t bother us since that’s the way God said it would be.

Jesus made it clear that He was sent by God. Some believed in Him; others dismissed Him. The leaders were furious, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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to Me and drink” (7:37). You want real water? “Come to Me,” He said.

“If anyone”—that means you! Thirsty? Tired of drinking at mud holes? Then get to Jesus. Come to Him and receive Him as your Savior.

He was the greatest teacher who ever lived, but He doesn’t save you by His teaching. He saves you when you acknowledge that He died for your sin—when you admit in faith and humility that He took your place on the cross.

Next: Watch Jesus stand up to the proud religious rulers.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 3

☐ **Today’s Reading: John 8**

#### **JESUS FORGIVES A WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY**

Imagine the scene: The Lord is sitting in the temple, teaching. From the corner of the temple mount there’s an uproar. Everyone turns to see what is happening. Some religious rulers drag in a half-dressed, disheveled woman through the gate. They throw her in front of Jesus, shouting, “This woman was caught in adultery; in the very act” (v. 4). This is cruel to the woman and a trap to catch Jesus.

They think they’re posing an unanswerable dilemma to Jesus, asking, “The law of Moses says she should be stoned. What do you say?” (v. 5). They think they’re tempting Jesus to contradict Moses.

The Lord knew what they were doing. So He countered their question with a surprise—He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

☐ **Read John 8:6**

What did our Lord write in the dirt? We don’t know, but perhaps it was the names of those in the crowd who had also committed secret adultery. He stood up and said, “Now, if you’re without sin you go ahead and throw a stone.”

☐ **Read John 8:8-9**

The older leaders left first, because they had more sense than the younger ones. Eventually, Jesus is the only one left “qualified” as one without sin who could throw a stone at her. He asks her instead, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? ... Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (vs. 10, 11). Jesus wasn’t going soft

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on adultery; in His kindness, He's giving her a chance to repent.

In the Gospel of John, when Jesus says, "I AM," He's telling us about God. Right after this conversation, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (v. 12).

Jesus just exposed the sin of the scribes and Pharisees who brought the guilty woman to Him. They were just as guilty as her, and they had to run. Jesus just turned on the light, and sin and rats and bats and bedbugs cannot stand the light!

First John 1:5 tells us that "God is light." He's holy, righteous, and just. The Lord Jesus Christ is spiritual light. Just as we have enough sense to turn on a light in a dark room, any sinner—though he be a fool—can come into the presence of Jesus Christ.

The religious leaders scoffed at Jesus' claim, calling Him a demon one minute and illegitimate the next. They understood very little of what He was saying. Human knowledge today can be understood by anyone who has a human nature. But divine knowledge must be loved to be understood, and only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and show them to us. (See 1 Corinthians 15:47, 48.)

Jesus summarizes His argument with a sober word: "If you do not believe that I am the Messiah, you will die in your sins" (v. 24).

But some believed Jesus as He stood up against the religious leaders (v. 30). To these people, Jesus offered this encouragement: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (vs. 31, 32).

What is the truth that will make us free? That Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. He is who He said He is.

Next: What does faith look like?

### MONDAY, APRIL 4

☐ **Today's Reading: John 9**

#### **JESUS RESTORES A BLIND MAN'S SIGHT**

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (8:12). Now, logically, we have a story of when He restored a blind man's sight.

One day when Jesus and His disciples were walking in Jerusalem, they saw a man who had been blind since birth. The disciples asked Jesus the cause of this man's blindness—was it

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sin? Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned” (v. 3). The important thing, Jesus said, is not to find out who’s guilty, but instead to cure the man. It’s not a question of who sinned because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Without Him today, millions are spiritually blind. Unless the Spirit of God opens our spiritual eyes to see, we are blind. Jesus must touch our eyes so that we can see. He did this for the blind man here. He spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and covered the man’s eyes with the clay. He then sent him to wash his face in the pool of Siloam. The man did all that and came back seeing. Our Lord had him go through this ritual as a means to trust and obey Him. It comes down to that: Jesus touching us and us obeying Him.

Salvation is really a simple matter. It’s coming to the Lord Jesus and experiencing the power of God. Up to that point, the man hadn’t even seen Jesus. But he knew the important thing was not to see Him, but to believe Him.

Now, here comes the snag in this wonderful story: All of this happened on the Sabbath. You’d think everyone would have rejoiced in this changed life, but some in the crowd accused Jesus of disregarding the Sabbath (healing was work, and you shouldn’t work on the Sabbath). Others defended Him, and it divided the religious leaders. Some even questioned if a real miracle had taken place. So, they tried to dig up some dirt. But no one could deny a miracle had taken place.

The healed man fired back. He said he couldn’t speak to whether Jesus was a sinner or not, but “one thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see” (v. 25).

Jesus heard that the man was in trouble with the leaders. When He found him in the temple, He asked him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” (v. 35). The man answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” (v. 36). The Lord had been preparing this man all along. And Jesus said, “You’re talking to Him.”

### ❑ **Read John 9:38**

Here is one of the finest instances of faith that we have in the entire Word of God. Our Lord took this blind man step-by-step to saving faith.

And so are the steps of a sinner today: We’re not only lost, but we don’t even see that we’re lost. Then we come to Christ, and when we see Him, our eyes are opened and we see who He is. We know what He’s done for us, and we believe. The next step is to worship Him.

Next, Jesus explains why we can trust Him.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 5

☐ **Today's Reading: John 10**

#### **JESUS COMES THROUGH THE DOOR**

From our last lesson we know that the religious leaders were waging a conflict with Jesus, and they rejected Him as Messiah. Now He explains His credentials—why we can trust Him as our Savior.

☐ **Read John 10:1-2**

Using the picture of a sheepfold, Jesus says to the religious leaders that He came in by the door, making Him the shepherd of the sheep. Others climb in some other way, but He came in legally and in an orderly manner.

**He came in to fulfill Old Testament prophecy:**

- He was born in Bethlehem in the line of David.
- He was born of a virgin.
- He was born under the Law in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4) to fulfill the Law.

No one else could have fulfilled prophecy as He did because no one else had His credentials (v. 25). The proofs of who He is are His teaching, His life, and His miracles.

Not only that, but Jesus was welcomed by the doorkeeper, the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ did everything through His power.

Jesus also said, “and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” In John 9, the religious leaders rejected Jesus as Messiah. They didn’t hear His voice. But millions have heard Jesus and, leaving all, follow Him.

Jesus also said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (v. 11). This is one of the most wonderful metaphors used in Scripture. He is the door to the sheepfold. He is the Good Shepherd. He is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29). Jesus as a lamb emphasizes His humanity. Jesus as the Good Shepherd emphasizes His deity. He alone is worthy and able to save. No other human being could have; He had to be God.

Jesus said that His miracles and teaching prove He is the Messiah—but many people then and now won’t believe Him. It makes sense that they don’t believe, because they are not His sheep. “My sheep,” Jesus said, “hear My voice and follow Me” (v. 27).

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Obedience is what brands a sheep's ownership. If you want to know whether a person is saved or not, look at His relationship with the Savior. Are they following Him? Do they obey Him?

To His sheep, Jesus gives eternal life. They don't earn it; He gives it. And it's for forever. He gives to us eternal life, and we'll never perish. Our Shepherd said He won't lose any of us. If one of us gets lost and even gets in the pigpen, He's going out to get us and bring us in because He starts out with 100 sheep and is coming through with 100 sheep.

Next: Does Jesus have power over death?

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

☐ **Today's Reading: John 11**

#### **POWER OVER DEATH**

Does Jesus Christ have power over death? Can He raise the dead? Can He raise me after I'm dead? Those are life's big questions. Trusting Jesus as your Savior gives you a lot of great benefits, but by far the greatest gift is eternal life after death.

☐ **Read John 11:1-44**

So, does Jesus have power over our deaths? To answer that, the Gospel of John takes us to the home of siblings, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus—good friends of Jesus. The sisters got word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick.

Surprisingly, Jesus deliberately delayed going to Bethany until after Lazarus died. Lazarus' death was for a purpose, Jesus said, so He could raise him from death.

For a believer, death means "separation." The body dies, but the soul of the one who trusts Jesus goes to be with Him—"absent from the body ... present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Saved or lost, all of us enter eternity. Many hope death means extinction, but it doesn't.

When Jesus finally showed up four days after Lazarus died, broken-hearted Martha and Mary's first words to Him were, "If you had only been here..." (v. 21).

They revealed a wonderful faith in Jesus, but not one that reached beyond death. Martha believed in the resurrection and that she would one day see her brother again, but Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25).

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If you want to know how God feels about the death of your loved ones, be comforted by how Jesus grieved with Mary and the mourners. Those watching Jesus thought He cried because He loved Lazarus, but—really—He cried because He loved the living who mourned.

Jesus then asked for the stone that sealed Lazarus' grave to be rolled away. Martha, ever the practical one, reminded Jesus that the body would stink.

### □ Read John 11:40-47

After He prayed, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And there at the mouth of the cave came Lazarus, bound hand and foot in his grave clothes, with even his face wrapped up.

Because of this miracle, many believed on Jesus. But others began to stir up the Pharisees for trouble. For this reason, this miracle marked Jesus' last public appearance before His death.

The bloodhounds of hate were on Jesus' trail. John 11:53-57 marks the beginning of the end—from this day forward, the Pharisees conspire how to kill Jesus. They feared His many miracles would spark a revolution. Fear kept them from believing—the same reason many run from Jesus today.

Jesus' showing of His power over death is the breaking point.

Next: Walk with Jesus in the last weeks of His life.

## THURSDAY, APRIL 7

### □ Today's Reading: John 12

#### JESUS' FINAL WORDS

In the last weeks of His life, Jesus turns His focus to the people closest to Him. He visits again with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Yes, Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead now shares a meal with Him. Martha serves, as always. And Mary sits at Jesus' feet in worship, as we often find her.

### □ Read John 12:1-3

Mary continues her worship when she takes expensive perfume and anoints Jesus' feet and dries them with her hair. This act met with polar responses. Judas reveals his true nature and criticizes Mary's extravagance, but Jesus defends her gift. She sensed He was to die for

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the sins of the world, and she was anointing Him for death ahead of time.

Meanwhile, many curiosity-seekers came to see Lazarus—the living/walking miracle. The chief priests also began to conspire how to kill Lazarus. The next day, Palm Sunday, the people followed Jesus into Jerusalem.

### ☐ **Read John 12:12-16**

As Jesus rode down the Mount of Olives on a donkey according to Old Testament prophecy, Jesus offered Himself publicly as their King that day. But the people rejected Him as Savior. Even His disciples didn't understand His significance until later, after His resurrection.

Jesus could have gone to the crown without going to the cross that day, but then we could never be saved. He must go to the cross if He's to be our Savior.

For the Jews and the Romans, the cross was a place of disgrace and shame—a scaffold where criminals died. But for Jesus, it was the place of redemption, where He could save us from the curse of the Law (see Philippians 2:8 and Hebrews 12:2). Mercy, pardon, and forgiveness are found there, and it's a beautiful thing.

### ☐ **Read John 12:27-36**

And so with a troubled soul, Jesus cries to His Father in heaven and in loving response, His Father speaks back to Him.

“Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” (v. 28)

When God's voice came from heaven, some heard thunder (a natural, unbelieving explanation to the supernatural); others said they heard an angel.

Jesus said God's voice was for our sakes, and that He is lifted up in death so that He could draw people to Him. But even when He walked among men, they saw His light, but refused to believe He was their Savior. Most people choose instead to walk in darkness.

Next: Jesus prays the longest prayer in the Bible and you can read it in 3 minutes.



### FRIDAY, APRIL 8

☐ **Today's Reading: John 13**

#### **JESUS' PRIVATE SERMON**

John 13—17 records one of Jesus' greatest and longest sermons. It's a private talk for just His own and reveals new truth. In John 12, we watched Jesus' feet get anointed with fragrant oil. Now in John 13, the disciples get a good foot-washing.

☐ **Read John 13:1-8**

Our Lord washed His disciples' feet purposefully. He knew His time was short, so in doing this He took the place of a servant and identified Himself with us. He also wanted to communicate His love to them, right to the end. Evil was afoot, and He wanted His example to protect His own.

How does He wash us today? We're clean, Jesus says, through His Word. He cleanses us so that we can have fellowship with Him. When we come to the cross for salvation, we are washed all over. But as we walk through this world, we get dirty when sin gets into our lives. When "we walk in the light"—that is, the Word of God—the blood of Jesus Christ just keeps on cleansing us from sin. After that, all we need is our feet washed of dirt that comes when we sin.

When Jesus was done washing the disciples' feet, He said in effect, "You want joy in your life, Christian? Keep your relationship with God current and clean. Confess wrong thoughts and action." To have fellowship with Jesus you must deal daily with sin. "If we confess our sins" (1 John 1:9) means that you put your feet in His hands for Him to wash. Until you do, Jesus says you can't have fellowship with Him.

What's more, if Jesus is your Lord, wash one another's feet. Instead of beating a fallen brother, go try to restore him. When you do that, you're washing feet.

Into this beautiful scene, our attention now turns to the greatest crime of the ages—Judas' betrayal of Jesus. We do not witness a man losing his spiritual life, but rather this scene reveals Judas never had any spiritual life to begin with.

☐ **Read John 13:19-30**

Jesus kept the door open to Judas to the last moment. No one at the Passover table even suspected he was the betrayer. Even in the garden when Judas kissed Him, Jesus said in

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effect, “You’ve fulfilled prophecy, Judas, but it’s not too late for you to accept Me.” But Judas made his decision. God never sent a man to hell who did not first send himself there.

### ❑ Read John 13:34-38

When it was just Jesus and His men again, Jesus tells them this sad news, “I’m going to leave you. But I’m giving you a new commandment—love each other as I have loved you. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

Next: A message for emergencies.

## SATURDAY, APRIL 9

### ❑ Today’s Reading: John 14

### JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

Some messages are for emergencies—that is John 14. This chapter has cushioned the shock for millions of believers even to this present hour. Jesus says, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me” (v. 1).

### ❑ Read John 14:1-7

Clearly, Jesus is saying He is God, and it’s not enough to just believe in a God but you must also have a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Next, Jesus hints at what He’s doing today: He’s preparing a place for His own. Once it’s ready, He’ll gather us together with Him. The disciples needed that hope when they heard the news about Jesus’ death. He now says, “Where I go you know, and the way you know” (v. 4).

How do we know the way? Thomas asked a good question—one that Jesus answered with the whole gospel in a nutshell: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (v. 6).

- When Jesus said He was “the Way,” He answers the question, How do I get to God?
- When Jesus said, “I am the Truth,” He says more than “I tell the truth.” He says, “I am the touchstone of truth.”
- Jesus also said, “I am the Life!” Everything draws life from Him.
- “No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus made a dead-end street out of all alternative religions. The only way to get to God is through Jesus Christ.

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Now's a good time to ask you, friend, do you know Him? Are you trusting Him as your personal Savior and nothing else? He alone can save you.

When you pray in Jesus' name, you're praying for Him to be glorified. God doesn't hear just any prayer; He only listens when you come in Jesus' name and for His sake.

### ☐ **Read John 14:16-18**

Jesus says those who love Him will obey Him. You can't say you love Him unless you obey Him. Jesus promises to make Himself known to those who love the Lord. Isn't that an amazing promise?

As Jesus was going away, He promised God would send a Helper—the person of the Holy Spirit—who would live in them.

As Jesus' last conversation with the disciples draws to an end, He says, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (v. 27). This glorious, wonderful peace comes to those who fully yield themselves to His hand.

And with that, Jesus heads over to the Garden of Gethsemane where He will engage again with Satan. After winning that battle, He'll go to the cross for the sins of the world and then the Holy Spirit will come into the world. Our prayer is that even right now He's making the Lord Jesus real to everyone reading this.

Next: What does it mean to "abide" in Christ?

## SUNDAY, APRIL 10

### ☐ **Today's Reading: John 15**

#### **WHAT IT MEANS TO ABIDE IN CHRIST**

Somewhere between the upper room and Gethsemane, Jesus taught John 15-16 and prayed John 17. He began John 15 by saying: "I am the true vine," just as the group likely passed through the temple gates. It was Passover, and the gates were open all night. These were beautiful, bronze gates with a golden vine metalwork woven throughout, representing the nation of Israel (see Psalm 80:8, 9 and Isaiah 5:1, 7).

Seeing this, Jesus says, "I am the true vine, the genuine vine." Jesus' words were revolutionary. He's telling men whose roots run deep in the Old Testament that religion or nationality is not important anymore—you must be joined to Him.

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### ☐ Read John 15:1-10

In this glorious passage, notice three important words. The first is the little word “in” (used seven times). “Every branch in me.” To be saved means to be “in Christ.” Notice also the word “fruit” (used six times) and “abide” (nine times). Abiding in Christ is how we bear fruit.

Fruit, of course, is God’s life showing up in a believer. The fruit of God’s Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering (see Galatians 5:22-23). Other fruit is effective prayer (v. 7), continuous fruit (v. 11), and joy celestial—if a person has this fruit in their life, they will invite people into God’s presence by their very lives, if not also by their spoken word.

When a branch in Christ does not bear fruit, the Father trims it off either by setting it aside or by death. This doesn’t mean we lose our salvation, since we’re talking about fruit-bearing here, not eternal life. Even if a branch bears fruit, the Father may prune it so it bears even more. Sometimes it hurts when He takes out of our lives what hinders us, but in the end it means more fruit.

The Father also cleanses us through the supernatural power of His Word. The only way to abide in Him is to allow Him to cleanse us daily and to continue in His love. This means constant communion with God—at your kitchen sink, in the car, at the office, and on the street.

It’s our choice whether we abide in Christ. We can break our fellowship by allowing sin in our lives, by stepping out of God’s will, and by worldliness.

Jesus laid down His life for us and asks us to obey Him. When we do, we’ll be His friends. The world won’t be our friend, since it can’t love a real child of God. The world instead loves darkness. When the Lord turns on the light, the rats and the snakes and the bugs run for cover. They hate the light and the One who turns it on.

Jesus said all these things to comfort and strengthen the disciples on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane and the greatest test of their lives.

Next: Why it was better for Jesus to leave.

## MONDAY, APRIL 11

### ☐ Today’s Reading: John 16

## WHY IT’S BETTER FOR JESUS TO LEAVE

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### ☐ John 16:1-28

In John 16, Jesus finishes up His last private sermon while He and His men walk to Gethsemane. Back in John 14, Jesus promised them a glorious future with Him (v. 3), but He made it clear that to follow Him means to forsake all and sacrifice.

### ☐ Read John 16:1-5

He said all these things to strengthen them (and us) and to let them know what's coming. Jesus loved them to the very end and identifies with what they'll suffer. He assured them He'll be with them.

### ☐ Read John 16:6-9

This heavy talk gave the disciples a heavy heart. Jesus saw their sorrow. "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you" (v. 7). Why was that best?

Jesus' purpose in coming to this world was to die and "give His life a ransom for many" (see Mark 10:45). Once that was accomplished, He went back to the Father.

When Jesus became a man, He limited himself to being in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be in all places at once.

The Holy Spirit will be the Comforter, and He'll come alongside us to perform several unique ministries:

- He convicts us of sin. Like a prosecuting attorney, the Spirit of God presents evidence in your heart that helps you turn from sin and leads you to faith in Jesus Christ.
- He convicts us of righteousness. Jesus' resurrection not only subtracted our sins, it added our righteousness.
- He convicts us of judgment. The world is like a man waiting on death row.

The Holy Spirit, our teacher, guides us into truth. He takes the deep things of God and shows them to us—something He alone can do. (See 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.)

Jesus told His disciples that they would soon be separated, but He promised He would come to them in the person of the Holy Spirit...and that's where we live today. Jesus then invites us to pray to the Father in His name. God wants to answer prayer, but they must come from the heart of one who loves Jesus Christ, is in fellowship with Christ, and who is obeying Him.

The last thing He said to them is an axiom for the Christian life: Peace is found in Him alone.

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### ☐ **Read John 16:33**

In this world, you'll only find trouble. But be of good cheer; Jesus has overcome the world. The only one who ever lived a victorious life was Jesus Christ. His victory is our victory!

When we learn to identify ourselves with Him, come into close fellowship with Him, and make real these things that are just theories to the average Christian, then we will begin to experience the peace of God in our hearts, we'll be of good cheer, and we'll know real joy in our lives.

Next: The real "Lord's Prayer."

## TUESDAY, APRIL 12

### ☐ **Today's Reading: John 16:29-33, John 17**

### THE REAL LORD'S PRAYER

#### ☐ **John 16:29—17:26**

In John 17, Jesus turns from talking to the disciples to talking with His Father. Jesus invites us to eavesdrop on His prayer so that we might know what He prays for us today. If you forgot to pray this morning, He didn't. He remembered you.

In this beautiful chapter, Jesus prays for Himself (vs.1-5), He prays for His own (vs. 6-20), and He prays for His church (vs. 21-26).

First, Jesus prays for Himself. Far from being selfish, praying for ourselves is essential. The hour had come for Him to pay for our sins, for the world to see the love of God lavished on that cross.

#### ☐ **Read John 17:2-5**

What is eternal life? It's to know Him, "the only true God" (v. 3). Faith doesn't save you (it's just the instrument). Jesus, the object of your faith, saves you. You can believe in the wrong thing. The real gospel is that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. If we know that and respond in faith when we trust Christ as Savior—that is eternal life.

Jesus essentially hands in His final report to the Father. He says, "I finished the work You gave me to do." He's done all that is necessary for us to be saved. The gospel and salvation is never what God asks you to do to be saved, but instead it's God telling you what He's

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already done for you. Do you believe that by faith?

### **Read John 17:6-10**

Next, Jesus prays for His disciples. He rehearses with the Father the beautiful relationship He's had with this team. They now know that God sent Him. And now, with the love of the greatest teacher for His students, He intercedes for them.

### **Read John 17:11-17**

This Great High Priestly prayer of Christ is for the present hour and for you. He prays for the unity of believers, an organic unity only God can accomplish. Our joy is only fulfilled in God.

God's Word is the most revolutionary book there is in the world. Its radical message is that you can't save yourself; only Jesus Christ can. That runs counter to the world's do-it-yourself philosophy.

Jesus wants to keep us in the world so we can be His witnesses and He will get more glory.

### **Read John 17:18-21**

Finally, Jesus prays for the church. God loves us today just like He loves the Lord Jesus Christ. How wonderful is that! Because of that love, Jesus prays that we love each other.

This is the real Lord's Prayer!

Next: The last supper together and capture in a garden.

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

### **Today's Reading: John 18**

### **JESUS' FINAL DAY**

In John 18, we've come to Jesus' final days. After an evening celebrating the Passover in the upper room, Jesus leads His men to a garden near the Mount of Olives. That was His place to go with His disciples, and of course, Judas knew that.

### **Read John 18:1-4**

His enemies wouldn't dare lay hands on Him in the temple, so Jesus goes outside the city, and in the dead of night hundreds of soldiers come to arrest Him. Jesus is now resolved to

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go to the cross. He steps out of the shadows and asks, “Who are you looking for?”

“Jesus of Nazareth.” Even when Jesus identified Himself, for a moment, nobody recognized Him. Even Judas didn’t know Him initially. Have you ever noticed verse six? “Now when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground.”

For just a moment, Jesus revealed His glory and the soldiers fall backward—not forward in worship, but backwards in fear and in absolute dismay. Utter confusion broke out. Just for a moment, they see more than Jesus of Nazareth in front of them; they see the Lord of glory, God revealed in human flesh. This all happened to fulfill prophecy (see Psalm 27:1-2, 35:4, and 40:14). Even in this dark hour, for just a moment, Jesus reveals who He really is.

### □ Read John 18:8-10

Jesus commands the soldiers to let His disciples go and they did. He’s still in charge of everything. They only wanted Him, after all.

In a lame attempt to fight, Simon Peter draws a sword and cuts off the ear of the high priest’s servant, Malchus. He was going after the man’s neck, but got the ear. We’re grateful for that. Dr. Luke tells us Jesus put Malchus’ ear back on—His final miracle before the cross (see Luke 20:51). Then Jesus told Peter to put up the sword. He’s yielding Himself into the hands of His captors and getting ready, as He says, to “drink the cup which my Father has given me” (v. 11).

The Bible describes several cups: the cup of salvation (Psalm 116:13), the cup of consolation (Jeremiah 16:7), and the cup of comfort (Psalm 23:5). Jesus dreads this present cup of judgement, the cup of everyone’s sin. Only He could drink it, because in His perfect sinless life, He became sin for us.

Even in His revulsion of sin, Jesus speaks of this cup with highest willingness. “Since my Father is giving me this cup, I am going to drink it!”

Willingly, Jesus let the band of soldiers and the religious rulers bind Him, though it wasn’t necessary. He’s the Lamb who was slain even before the foundation of the world (see Isaiah 53:7 and Acts 8:32). He doesn’t resist them but goes forward in dignity and in glory.

Next: A dark night in Jerusalem.



### THURSDAY, APRIL 14

☐ **Today's Reading: John 18:14-40, John 19:1-6**

#### **A DARK NIGHT IN JERUSALEM**

It's the middle of the night, outside the palace grounds. We've just left the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was led away by hundreds of armed soldiers. They first take Him to Annas, the former high priest and a clever, satanic old politician who knew how to handle Rome. All through these dark events, Annas' hand directs from the background.

☐ **Read John 18:14-21**

The Jewish religious rulers had already decided they would kill Jesus, making these six trials a mockery. All night Jesus is led from Caiaphas, to the Sanhedrin, to Herod Agrippa, and to Pilate. He is struck, mocked, ridiculed, and scourged, yet He yields Himself to the humiliation.

☐ **Read John 18:23-28**

In the courtyard, Peter, following the Lord from a distance, warms his hands at a fire. Hearing his accent, several say, "That guy is from Galilee." A local girl also recognized him as one of the prisoner's disciples and, later, another remembers him from the garden (a relative of the man whose ear he'd cut off!). But Peter denied both. Immediately the cock crowed—the sign of his denial Jesus had told him about earlier. And Peter went out and bitterly wept.

☐ **Read John 18:29-37**

Everyone was in a hurry to get a verdict against Jesus, so they brought Him to Pilate. But Pilate senses right away that Jesus is innocent, and he wants nothing to do with the trial. He tries to turn Jesus over to the religious rulers, but they need Gentiles (Rome) to execute Him under the guise of political treason.

Pilate asks Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (18:33). His question was an honest one. Jesus confuses him even more, saying His kingdom doesn't come from the world's politics or sinful collusions strategized in people's sinful hearts.

"You say rightly that I am a king." Jesus continues, "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (18:37).

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### ☐ Read John 18:38-40

“What is truth?” Pilate scoffs, all the while standing in the presence of the One who is “the way, the truth, and the life.”

### ☐ Read John 19:1-6

Pilate, afraid of what would be reported to Rome, is a cheap politician. He decides to scourge Jesus to placate the crowd—maybe then they would agree to release Jesus. But torturing a prisoner was entirely unlawful, and entirely wrong.

After scourging Jesus within an inch of His life, He became unrecognizable as a man (see Isaiah 52:14; 53:1-12). Pilate presented Him, “Behold the Man!” but we should also say, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Pilate calls for a basin of water and washes his hands, symbolizing he was done with this mockery of a trial. Jesus is now delivered into the hands of sinful men, both religious and political, and on His way to the cross.

Next: How should we view Jesus’ death?

## FRIDAY, APRIL 15

### ☐ Today’s Reading: John 19, 20:1-18

### THE DEATH OF OUR LORD

Our Lord Jesus’ death can be viewed from several viewpoints.

From God’s standpoint, the cross was where full satisfaction was made so that a holy and righteous God could reach down and save sinners. God’s judgment throne becomes a mercy seat, because Jesus bore our guilt.

From the Lord Jesus’ standpoint, the cross is obedience, a sweet-smelling savor as He made Himself an offering.

From a believer’s standpoint, Jesus took our place. The One who was sinless suffered for the sinner. The One who was just suffered for the unjust.

From Satan’s standpoint, Jesus’ death was both a triumph from Genesis 3:15 and a defeat now, as the head of the serpent is crushed.

From the world’s standpoint, the death of Jesus was nothing but a brutal murder.

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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### ☐ Read John 19:16-18

The Gospel of John doesn't give us a picture of the crucifixion at all—only that two others were crucified with Him and it was outside the city. Little did people realize that in each detail of the horrible ordeal, they were fulfilling 28 Old Testament prophecies.

### ☐ Read John 19:19-42—slowly and thoughtfully

What is the gospel? That Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. These are the great, central facts of the gospel.

Do you believe this? Do you trust in Jesus Christ and believe He died in your place? Do not delay answering this question before God.

After Jesus was pronounced dead, two secret disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, asked permission from Pilate to take down Jesus' body. They had a lot to lose to identify themselves as Jesus' disciples, yet at this precarious time when the 11 disciples had scattered, Joseph and Nicodemus came out in the open.

Joseph had a new tomb where Jesus could be buried. Nicodemus brought linen to wrap the body like a mummy and 100 pounds of spices as a sort of glue to seal in the body. They worked quickly, to get this done before sundown.

### ☐ Read John 20:1-18

On Sunday, Mary Magdalene arrived first at Jesus' tomb to finish caring for His body. It was still dark, but she saw the stone rolled away from the tomb's entrance. She didn't imagine Jesus was raised from the dead but thought someone had moved His body. She left to tell Peter and John, and they went to investigate. They didn't go to the graveyard looking for the living, either. They expected to find a dead body.

So, John and Peter ran to Jesus' tomb. John's first look at the evidence in the empty tomb convinced Him that Jesus was back from the dead. He saw (literally, "inspected the evidence") and believed (20:8).

Peter and John went home, but Mary Magdalene stayed, weeping at the tomb. Then she looked in for the first time and saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had lain. And if that wasn't shock enough, she turned around and saw Jesus standing behind her. She didn't recognize Him—perhaps because she did not believe He was back from the dead. All that was needed to convince her that it was Jesus was Him saying her name.

Mary recognized her Lord and Master and ran to Him. Jesus asked her not to touch Him

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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because He hadn't yet ascended to the Father. At the Throne of God, the Lord Jesus presented His blood and it became the mercy seat for all time. His blood is there now to remind us throughout eternity of the price He paid for us.

Next: Meet Jesus back in Galilee.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 16

☐ **Today's Reading: John 20:19-31, John 21**

#### BACK IN GALILEE

☐ **Read John 20:19-21**

What do you do when you're afraid? The disciples hid behind locked doors. But that didn't stop Jesus from coming through them in His glorified body. He showed them His hands and His side to convince them it was Him, and they were glad. There was a strange similarity of Jesus' glorified body to the one that had been nailed to the cross. The scars were there, a reminder throughout eternity of what He bore for us so that we can be presented without spot or blemish before Him.

But not all the disciples were in the upper room that day. Thomas was missing. When the disciples told him that Jesus had come to them, Thomas didn't believe them. So, eight days later, our Lord appeared again in a locked room and addressed Thomas' doubts directly. "Touch my scars; put your hand in my side...believe" (see 20:27). Thomas simply said, "My Lord and my God" (20:28)—one of the great confessions of faith in the Bible.

Thomas had to see it to believe it. Jesus then said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (20:29). This is a special blessing on us today who believe the evidence of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Is that you?

☐ **Read John 20:30-31**

John, an eyewitness to Jesus' life, said the Lord did many other signs not recorded. But what is written is so that we might believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. But we're not done yet. John 21 is a beautiful epilogue with three more stories, all taking place around the Sea of Galilee, Jesus' home territory.

☐ **Read John 21:1-12**

## REROUTING | THRU THE BIBLE DAILY READINGS

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The angel at the empty tomb told the disciples to wait for Jesus in Galilee. So they did. It was spring in Galilee. Warm zephyrs from the south made ripples near the shore, there were whitecaps out on the Sea of Galilee, the surrounding hills were green, and there were wild flowers in profusion.

While they waited for Jesus, they fished all night...yet they caught nothing. That night a failure was in the plan and purpose of God. In the morning, Jesus stood on the shore and shouted to them in the boat, "Lads, did you catch anything? Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some" (see 21:5, 6). And they caught so many fish that they couldn't draw in the net. John then knew it was the Lord. Peter just threw himself into the water to get to Jesus.

Jesus said, "Come and eat breakfast" (21:12). He had a meal fixed for them on the shore. What a wonderful reunion it must have been, there in the place where they spent so much of their lives together. He's the Lord of their hearts now, and they are going to serve Him.

### ☐ **Read John 21:14-17**

After breakfast, the Lord Jesus turns His attention to Simon Peter. He calls this faltering, failing, fumbling disciple to service. Three times our Lord interrogates him—one time for each of Peter's denials. Three questions, three affirmations, three exhortations. Jesus was teaching him the secret of service—it's loving Him more than anything else! Unless He's Lord of all, He's not Lord at all.

### ☐ **Read John 21:18-25**

To end our glorious study in the book of John, we could only wish to know the many other things Jesus did that would fill up the books of the world. That's not an exaggeration! The One we're talking about not only died upon the cross, rose again from the dead, but, my friend, He is God the Creator. The world couldn't hold the books of all He's done.

Oh, that we might press on to know Him and the power of His resurrection!

## REROUTING | BROKEN SIGNPOSTS DAILY READINGS

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Justice, love, spirituality, beauty, freedom, truth, and power all point to what matters most in life. Unfortunately, these trampled upon signposts have become broken in our world. Explore how John's Gospel reveals these as true signs that point to the reality of God in our midst. Journey with the One who comes to take our brokenness upon himself in Jesus Christ.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 17

☐ **Today's Reading: John 12:31-33, John 16:8-11**

#### **BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: JUSTICE**

Justice is a universal human longing that runs deep. The instinct for justice cries out: That is wrong, and something needs to be done to put it right! Justice is a signpost that points to what is essential to human life. Yet, from squabbling siblings and estranged family members to ethnic injustice and political strife around the globe, we know that justice is a broken signpost that is at the core of so many of our problems.

John's gospel bears witness to a very good God who made a very good world, and who cares deeply about justice. The conviction of the Christian faith is that the One true God revealed in and through Jesus has come to sort things out in our present world, and has promised to come again to make all things right in the end. However, the point is not to wait patiently until we escape from the world and the brutalities, inequities, or corruption caused by those who oppress and dominate others. Instead, the God of justice calls his followers as 'the justice bringers' right now.

In John 12:31-33, we read that Jesus will take on the prince of this world and the powers of anti-creation behind evil and death—taking upon himself the judgment of God against evil. By his death, Jesus defeats the dark powers and the sign that he has done so comes when he inaugurates the new creation, and his body is raised from the dead. Yet, though God's putting-things-right plan for the world was launched when Jesus was lifted up, the work of justice continues with the sending of the Spirit upon Jesus' followers (16:8-11). It is the idea of participation in God's ongoing work that characterizes the Christian idea of justice: we are part of bringing it about in the world.

What we find throughout John's gospel is the 'putting right' of humans—sorting out the mess that humans are in—and the invitation to join the ongoing project. Jesus' agenda for 'resurrection justice' sets the vision for his followers to prove that the world is in the wrong. We are sent into the world as justice bringers, to confront the power brokers of injustice in

## REROUTING | BROKEN SIGNPOSTS DAILY READINGS

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our world, local communities, churches, neighborhoods and families with God's new kind of justice that triumphs over old ways through Jesus' self-giving love.

Jesus calls us to be bringers of God's justice by following him: 'As the father sent me,' he said after the resurrection, 'so I am sending you' (John 20:21). For some of us, this may require our humble recognition and confession of the role we have played through our actions, or inaction, which has roadblocked the pathway to equity for other people.

By the Spirit, those who follow Jesus are commissioned and equipped to be people who promote God's new creation, as justice people and hope-giving people in places where injustice still reigns.

### Questions to consider:

- Reflect on the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Jesus' followers to bear witness to a new sort of justice in God's world.
- How does God's way of doing justice in the world and his determination to put things right differ from the way things are normally done in the world?

### Living it out:

- Consider where and how the Spirit might be leading you to take a practical step of being a 'justice bringer' in places where you see justice as a broken signpost in your family or community.

## MONDAY, APRIL 18

☐ **Today's Reading: John 13:1-17, John 13:34-35**

### **BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: LOVE**

Human beings are made for love—love that we give and love that we receive. Though our expressions of love differ in various ways across cultures, there seems to be a universal longing to discover and experience 'true love'. The type of genuine love we seem to most yearn for is not merely romantic feelings; rather, it is something solid, unconditional, permanent, and life-giving.

'Love' gives us a sense of being part of something larger than ourselves. Love is where we find delight, meaning, security, and it is vital for human thriving. When we offer and receive genuine love it is like discovering a signpost that points the way to a safe home or to a warm and comforting embrace. Love captivates our senses and fills us with a sense of wonder and wholeness that painters, poets, and songwriters have tried to capture down the ages. It is

## REROUTING | BROKEN SIGNPOSTS DAILY READINGS

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also these same types of artists who capture most poignantly the ways in which love is a broken signpost in our world.

When the love of God for his creation goes into action it looks like the story of Jesus that John is telling: Jesus had always loved his own people in the world, and the Gospel illustrates that he would love them right through to the end (John 13:1). Jesus' example of love-in-action—to the utmost—resulted in the laying down of his life. There was nothing that love could do that Jesus' love did not do for them, and indeed, for us and the whole of God's creation.

Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet as he himself was preparing to go to his death was an advance sign of his greatest act of love. The 'foot washing' signposts his ultimate act of self-giving love: the love of God that goes to the cross.

John is clear that God's love in the arrival of the Messiah is the divine response to the human longing for true love. Jesus took upon himself the worst that evil could do—absorbing and defeating it. He released the grip of sin and the anguish of violent human obsessions and self-absorptions. And, now through the gift and work of the Holy Spirit, his love continues to overflow into God's new creation as we pour out genuine love-in-person to others. This theme of love brings into focus the reality of love, which is about humans being called to share the love and life of Jesus himself.

Love each other as I have loved you. You are my friends if you do what I tell you (John 15:12-14). God's love is always personal and on the move in human relationships as we welcome, console, encourage, repent, forgive, delight, and celebrate with others. We are who we most deeply are, and we become who we most profoundly need to be, as we receive the love of others and through our mutual and humble giving of love to others, both friends and enemies alike.

### **Questions to consider:**

- In what ways is love a broken signpost in today's world? Reflect on the ways in which the gospel of Jesus and the power of the Spirit answer the deepest questions of human life and the search for 'true love.'

### **Living it out:**

- Take notice of the ways you discover or experience God's genuine love today. Record or journal your observations. Consider how the 'foot washing' narrative might prompt you to demonstrate love for others.



### TUESDAY, APRIL 19

□ Today's Reading: John 15:1-8

#### **BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: SPIRITUALITY**

Consider for a moment what the word 'spirituality' means to you. For some, the ideas and images that come to mind differ greatly from traditional expressions of Christian faith and practice. Today, it seems that popular Western culture often proposes that what matters most about spirituality is discovering a secret inner core—the 'real me'—rather than the need to know and be known at the deepest levels by the Creator God.

Christianity speaks to this broken signpost because the Gospel does not point to an 'inner me'—whoever I am supposed to be on the inside. Rather, we see John signposting something completely different: it is all about the gift of God's presence.

Indeed, the foundation of Christian spirituality builds from Israel's uniquely ordered way of life and worship of YHWH who dwelled in their midst, first in the tabernacle and then in the Temple. John's Gospel retrieves these Jewish themes and brings them into startling reality with the proximity of Israel's God and the reality of his personal presence in Jesus. Indeed, the good news announces that God's desire for his very life and breath to reside with and within individual human beings has now arrived.

Christian spirituality, therefore, emanates from Jesus' personal presence and his coming to live physically amongst his people during his public ministry. Yet, Johannine spirituality emphasizes the continuing presence of the risen, ascended, and very much alive Lord Jesus, who is to be believed, worshipped, trusted, obeyed, and followed at this very moment. John's Gospel bears witness to the human longing for spiritual connection and God's response, which calls us to actively participate with him in a new and genuinely human way of life and as 'little temples' where the One God truly dwells presently at the intersection of heaven and earth.

One of the most vivid illustrations of the intimate relationship between Jesus and his followers is that of the vine and the branches. The Temple in Jerusalem contained a carved vine, which we now see as a foreshadow of the intimate closeness with the Father through the Son worked out by the abiding presence of the Spirit. We acknowledge Jesus himself is at the very heart of Christian spirituality, which signals Jesus is the true Temple and that his followers are to be 'Temple-people' too. The living God now makes his home not just with his people, but also in his people. We are the branches that extend out into God's good world, energized by the Holy Spirit, and have become life carriers of God's powerful, rescuing, healing and transforming love that is renewing the whole world.

## REROUTING | BROKEN SIGNPOSTS DAILY READINGS

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The foundation of Christian spirituality is grounded in the presence of Jesus by his Spirit that enables his followers to come to life in the new creation. Now, by his very breath that infuses his followers, the Jesus-shaped spirituality is a vivid expression of the reality of God's energizing power and abiding love. Through the followers of Jesus, empowered by his Spirit to believe, worship, trust, obey, and follow him, renewed humans serve as genuine God-reflecting signposts of a whole new reality and way of life that is, in fact, deeply spiritual. In John's Gospel we find the answers to the longings for spiritual experiences that point to something more and to the presence of the divine.

### Questions to consider:

- What is the meaning of spirituality according to John's Gospel? How does the image of Christian spirituality depicted by the vine and the branches differ from contemporary culture's notion of what it means to be a 'spiritual person'?

### Living it out:

- Observe examples of spirituality in your contemporary culture or context. Identify how Christian spirituality differs and how it also responds to the yearning for mystery or 'something more' that others are looking for.

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20

☐ **Today's Reading: John 11:32-34**

### **BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: BEAUTY**

Think of the last time you saw, heard, or experienced something truly beautiful. What was it that took your breath away, or made you pause to reflect in awesome wonder? Was it a sunset, sculpture, or starfish? Perhaps it was a mountaintop vista, a newborn baby, a Gospel choir, your favorite dessert, your loved one's smile, or the perfectly placed game-winning goal. While the idea of what is considered 'beautiful' varies between people groups and personality types, it seems that humans are hardwired for beauty. We are called to be procreators with God, and to make and do and say and write things which are themselves beautiful and function as genuine signposts to the genuine beauty of the Gospel.

The signpost of beauty has become battered and broken because humans have tried to do beauty without God. Yet the story that John's Gospel is telling is that of God who cares so deeply about the beauty of his creation that he entered into the creaturely brokenness through his personal presence of the Word made flesh. Indeed, Jesus tabernacled in our midst and humans gazed upon his glorious beauty (John 1:14). Johannine beauty bears witness to the reality of resurrection beauty that floods the human reality of decay and

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death with new life. This Christian vision to remake and recreate beauty is part of the human vocation.

In the story of Lazarus, we see Jesus at the tomb of his deceased friend, flanked by a crowd that doubted that anything of beauty could emerge from the scene of a gravesite. In fact, Lazarus' sister Martha was most concerned about the stench of death. She could not imagine that she was about to experience something beautiful.

In John 11:41, Jesus prays a prayer of thanksgiving: 'Thank you Father, he said, 'for hearing me! And then, 'Lazarus, come out!' (v 43). Glory in the midst of shame—the ultimate meaning of art—finds a way to suffuse the scene of decay and death with beauty. And yet, John is pointing his readers, and us, to reach for more—to the very place of Jesus' own death where the divine glory of resurrection beauty will be fully revealed.

John's description of God doing something powerful and beautiful, in and through Jesus the risen Lord involves leaving the grave clothes behind in the tomb (John 20:6-7). Here we see beauty unveiled and accomplishing what the world's best paintings and pictures and panoramas can do only in part. Jesus' resurrection evokes beauty made permanent. His rising from the dead is not simply being revived or resuscitated only to die again. Rather, it is beauty itself emerging from the thing that most challenges the beautiful—the horrible corruption of death itself.

Jesus' victory over the dark forces that oppose the human desire and drive for true beauty is a God-given signpost designed to lead us back to his very presence. In and through the Word made flesh, God makes his way through death and out the other side into new creation, new beauty, and new life. His rising is like a glorious sunset that never fades, a sumptuous meal that never ends, or a lavish party where the guests never stop celebrating. John's Gospel displays the beautiful redeeming love of Jesus, and by the work of the Spirit energizes his followers to continue creating signposts of beauty.

### **Questions to consider:**

- What is your definition of beauty? How do beautiful things in our world point to the reality of God and help us make sense of the world and of what matters most?

### **Living it out:**

- Identify something beautiful near you. As you pray today, express gratitude to God for this person, place, or thing of beauty. Consider what tangible ways you might create or add beauty in your family, church, or community.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 21

□ Today's Reading: John 8:31-36

#### **BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: FREEDOM**

What does it mean to be free? A shallow line of thinking might put it simply this way: to be able to do what I want to do, when I want to do it. Some might answer that it is the ability for a person to be able choose to act—or perhaps not to act—without constraint. We all know that freedom is vital for human thriving. However, many of the signposts that are meant to point in the direction of true freedom are, in fact, quite broken. Jesus himself is the place where the freedom giving God has come to dwell in our midst, in order to lead us out from where we are trapped.

Part of the puzzle of being 'free' is that sometimes it leads instead to being enslaved. For example, some people might freely choose a particular job or career but end up stuck in a repetitive cycle of working excessively, and unable to free themselves despite the damage to their health or family life. Others use their freedom to indulge in drugs, or to pursue sexual pleasure at any cost, and discover they become locked into a harmful pattern of addiction. 'Total freedom' in one direction often comes at the cost of non freedom in another direction. Yet, if we want the true exodus, we need to first understand who the real Pharaoh is that enslaves humans.

The time of slavery in Egypt was a signpost towards the ultimate accuser and deceiver and the entrapment of sin that catches humans in its net. It is highly significant for understanding freedom as John describes it in his Gospel to recall the freedom story of Passover. At a time when the sacrificial lambs were being sacrificed at the Temple, Jesus goes to Jerusalem and is ultimately crucified. For John, what Jesus did in going to the cross was a Passover-shaped message and an announcement of victory over the evil one and ultimate freedom from the captivity which diminishes human beings.

Being set free to worship God and reflect genuine humanness into the world is central to the story of what God desires for his creatures. Jesus' freedom agenda brings about the long-awaited liberation: a new Exodus whereby the Son makes everyone who is part of God's new family truly free (John 8:36). Jesus offers people the opportunity to be a community of freed slaves with God in the midst of his new creation.

Jesus signposts genuine human freedom and invites his followers to inhabit his kingdom on earth as in heaven as agents of freedom. Therefore, we are in the 'freedom business' at every level and in every context, responding to the call of the Father who sets forth a life of liberty in his Son:

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- Freed for creativity
- Freed for stewardship of God's creation
- Freed for love of one another

When Jesus talks about being truly free, it is not simply about freedom from individual wrong actions or moral glitches, but from the powerful forces that enslave the human heart to sin and idolatry. Through Jesus' death—the ultimate victory over the dark powers—human captives can be set free at last.

### Questions to consider:

- What does it mean to be 'truly free' according to John 8:36? How does the Passover story of freedom inform the Christian meaning of what it means to be 'set free'?

### Living it out:

- How might you live as a 'freedom-bringer' today? Consider being freed for opportunities of creativity, stewardship, and love.
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## FRIDAY, APRIL 22

☐ **Today's Reading: John 4:15-26, John 14:5-7**

### BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: TRUTH

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus frequently repeats the word, 'truly'. In some translations it appears as, 'Truly, truly, I say to you...' Yet, a common contemporary objection says, we can invent our own truth. Like the other broken signposts, we all seem to know that truth matters, but identifying the signals that point genuinely to the human longing for truth and meaning can often be quite complex.

The responsibility of Jesus' followers is to be resolute in pursuing and producing truth. Some may argue that opposing claims to 'the truth' are simply 'your truth' versus 'my truth'. Yet, if we ought to resist cynicisms of post-modernity, then we must also resist our shallow modern certainties.

Throughout John's Gospel, we see Jesus interacting with various people and affirming there is deeper approach to the human quest for truth—one that does not collude with half-truths (or half-lies). When Jesus tells the Samaritan woman to call her husband, she replies that she hasn't got one (John 4:17). Jesus challenges her to a different kind of truth:

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one that looks clear-eyed at the reality of sin and the human predicament and responds by worshipping the one true God in spirit and in truth (vv. 23-24).

Another famous conversation records Thomas' confusion, which prompts him to ask Jesus where he is going and how the disciples can know the way to follow (John 14:5). Jesus responds that he is the way, the truth, and the life (v, 6). Here we see that truth is wrapped up in human flesh: Jesus himself is carrying the reality of divine love—the love of God in person—and making an extraordinary claim about a whole new way of life. It is the living truth of the generous self-giving love of the Son in relation to the Father by the Spirit of truth (v, 17).

Yet, the truth that Jesus is telling simply does not fit with his opponents' models of how the world works. In his exchange with Pilate, Jesus asserts that his kingdom is of an entirely different kind, and that he has come to give evidence about this truth.

'Truth!' said Pilate. 'What's that?' (John 18:37-38).

As followers of Jesus, we are commissioned to be people who can respond to these sorts of objections. Distortions are powerful, which is why we need one another. We must become a prayerful community who knows how to discern what needs to be said when and to whom, from moment to moment, and decade to decade. If we are telling truth in a hostile fashion, or in a brittle and bullying manner, then we are denying by the mode of our speaking the very message that we are supposed to be talking about!

John's Gospel affirms that Jesus not only tells the truth—that he is indeed Israel's Messiah—but he also embodies the way of speaking truth to power. The broken signpost of Jesus' crucifixion that leads the way through death comes out the other side as an outward-facing and perfect sign of God's new creation. As people of the truth, the live-giving love of God flows in and through us by the Spirit, so that we might graciously and lovingly signal the resurrection truth in and to God's world.

### **Questions to consider:**

- What are some of the contemporary objections to knowing the truth? How does John's Gospel speak powerfully about what truth really is and how it comes into being?

### **Living it out:**

- Consider the story of the woman at the well. Are there any areas of 'half-truth' in your life to confess? How might you worship God in spirit and in truth today?

### SATURDAY, APRIL 23

□ Today's Reading: John 4:15-26, John 21:15-19

#### **BROKEN SIGNPOSTS: POWER**

Over a century ago, Lord Acton wrote, 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Indeed, as we witness the suffering and injustices in our world because of the abuses of power, we may be rightfully suspicious of those who hold positions of power and authority. Yet, the divine intention was that human creatures would use their power to steward creation wisely—bringing order to the world—rather than dominating or diminishing others for self-gain.

The Creator God designed his world to be governed through the agency of his human creatures. One of the reasons 'power' has become such a broken and battered signpost throughout the ages is because those in charge have insisted that power must be attained and maintained by the threat or use of violence. However, Jesus revealed a different sort of power—one that does not come from the world but has come for the world (John 18:36).

Through a position of apparent weakness and a posture of obedient humility, Jesus stood before Pilate—a different kind of king, from a different kind of kingdom. In John's Gospel, we see that Jesus redefines power through his example of self-giving love.

Power according to Jesus is not one that sweeps away the enemies of God's people by displays of brute force. Rather, as Israel's Messiah, Jesus is the Lamb of God (John 1:29), who rescues his people by means of a very different and strange kind of power—as one that is led like a sheep to the slaughter. John illustrates that even though Jesus' closest friends and followers had heard about the powerful love of God, they still did not grasp the type of love that consisted of laying down one's life for his friends (John 15:13) for the sake of the world.

In the garden of Gethsemane, a faction of Pharisees, chief priests, and soldiers, led by Judas, had come for Jesus with the full force of the empire emblazoning their torches and weapons. Peter stepped forward, perhaps thinking he would beat them to the first punch, and drew his sword slicing off the ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus (John 18:10). Yet, Jesus insisted that the transfer of power would not be accomplished by these 'normal' means to victory. Instead, he healed Malchus and commanded Peter to sheath his sword (v. 11). Ordinary power and ordinary kingdoms of the world have death as their most powerful weapon. Here we see a profound reversal of everything we thought we knew about power—one that goes to the cross and has the power to overcome death.

As the story of Jesus comes to a close in John, we discover that Jesus' power is be

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transferred to his followers and exercised by them as they go out into the world. Yet, the Gospel message insists that this power must be accomplished ‘the other way’—as a grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying (John 12:24). We see this at work as Peter is restored and recommissioned, having realized his initial ‘power’ failure in the garden. Power is not achieved by the sword as one ‘in charge’ wielding human violence. Rather, the power and authority Peter possesses is likened to a shepherd tending to his sheep. True power signposts generous care—living, giving, and serving for the sake of the flock.

### **Questions to consider:**

- How does Jesus the King reveal something quite different about power from various leaders or governments in our world today? How does the story of Jesus in John’s Gospel suggest a reversal of all that we might have thought we knew about power?

### **Living it out:**

- Prayerfully consider how you might exercise power through self-giving love today. Identify opportunities to practically live out ‘power done the other way’.





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