

Q that you may believe

that you may believe the signs

that you may believe the light

Oct 16 Water to Wine

Oct 23 Life to the Nobleman's Son

Oct 30 Healing on the Sabbath

Nov 6 Feeding the Multitude

Nov 13 Walking on Water

Nov 20 Wknd United

Nov 27 Healing Blind Man

Dec 4 Raising Lazarus





Pastor's Introduction

I took a class in college on public speaking. One of our assignments was to give a persuasive speech. In a persuasive speech, you begin with a thesis, which is something you want your audience to believe or do. Next, you support your thesis with arguments that undergird your thesis. I have no idea what the subject of my speech was, so it must not have been very impactful! The apostle John wrote his Gospel as a persuasive speech. His intent is to convince his reader to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. All the stories he includes are in support of his thesis. At the end of the Gospel, he writes, "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31)." Beginning Sunday, September 11 we will begin a new series through the Gospel of John entitled "That You May Believe" that will conclude in May 2023.

The Gospel of John is an incredible story of the life and mission of Jesus Christ. John is written differently than the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). They are written as a synopsis, basically in chronological order, of the events of Jesus' life. John is written thematically. As we study through the Gospel of John, we will highlight these themes and study the book according to the themes. We will begin with the theme of light and darkness. Then we will identify the seven signs given by John. After that, we will study the teaching discourses of Jesus, followed by His "I AM" statements. At the end of the series, we will examine the passion week and the forty days following Jesus' resurrection. As John states, all these themes and stories were included so that you may believe. My prayer is that this series will point people to Jesus and that they would believe in Him as Savior.

Ed. TG



Participant Guide for October 16, 2022

Water To Wine

John 2:1-11

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

This lesson transitions us into the second theme of John's Gospel. The 1st theme was "The Light." The 2nd theme is "The Signs."

There are 7 signs that Jesus performs in John's Gospel.

John specifically selects a word that conveys a specific purpose. The word is "sign." While these seven events were certainly miracles, they were more than that. They were specific miraculous acts that had a greater spiritual purpose. The purpose was to show His Glory and to produce belief within the disciples and those who followed him.

In a Baptist church, the topic of drinking wine will tempt you to want to discuss the biblical truths around this topic. I want you to resist this temptation in today's discussion. Please keep that discussion for another day. This passage is not about that at all; it would be unfortunate if that became the topic. This passage is John presenting signs performed by Jesus in order "That You May Believe"!



Apply

1. In American culture, weddings are special events. The bride's family has likely spent considerable time and money to make it a memorable day for all. Share with the group stories about weddings you have attended. It can even be your own. Share one beautiful moment, one humorous moment, and one tense moment.
2. In our passage today, we find Mary, Jesus' mother, Jesus, and his disciples at a wedding in Cana of Galilee v.1-2. Hebrew weddings were often weeklong events, and much pressure was placed on the host family to put on a huge social experience. Why do you think it was such a big deal for the host family to run out of wine?
3. What was his response when Mary brought this situation to Jesus' attention? (Notice she doesn't tell Him what to do.) (v.4) What is your first thought concerning how Jesus addressed his mom? Why was this not only a proper response but also a very revealing response?
4. Now read Mary's response. She didn't instruct Jesus as to what he should do; why? She just tells the servants, "do whatever he says." Why is this the correct response for both Mary and us?

What does this statement, taken in context and applied to our lives, teach us about trusting Jesus?

5. Each detail of this depiction by John is intentional. Why does John specify that these were water jars used for Jewish purification?
6. Jesus' priority is always eternal, but his ministry was also distinctly loving from start to finish. Why is it important to recognize Jesus' ministry as not only preparatory for the cross but also very people-centered in nature throughout?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, consider this: How will you respond to whatever he tells you to do? Why is it critical in your personal spiritual growth process? ■ ■ ■ DW



Participant Guide for October 23, 2022

Life To the Nobleman's Son

John 4:46-54

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

This passage is the second of the signs recorded in John's Gospel that exemplify Jesus' glory as the Messiah.



Apply

1. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you walk by sight? Be honest, do you have to see it to believe it?
2. John lets us know that this story also occurs in Galilee, as did last week's miracle. What are some reasons this is significant? Why do you think Jesus chose to do a lot of his ministry in Galilee?
3. Let's analyze the progression of the Nobleman's faith.¹
 - Crisis Faith v. 49 – His son was dying. He had no other option than Jesus.
 - Confident Faith v. 50 – He believed the Word and had peace in his heart.
 - Confirmed Faith vs. 51-53 – His son was completely healed at the very moment Jesus declared it.
 - Contagious Faith v.53 – He told everyone what had happened.

What part(s) of the Nobleman's faith path should be eliminated in our own lives because we know Christ as our Savior and Lord?

4. In v.48, Jesus seems to rebuke the Nobleman. Read it again. To whom is Jesus speaking? Do you think the healing of the Nobleman's son had any impact on the spiritual condition of the people of Judah and Galilee in general? Why or why not?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ What area of our life do we have trouble trusting Jesus to care for? Pray a prayer of repentance in these areas and trust in Christ for EVERYTHING!

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¹ Bible Exposition Commentary, Warren Wiersbe, p. 303



Participant Guide for October 30, 2022

Healing On The Sabbath

John 5:1-18

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Have you ever been frustrated to no end because you had been struggling with a problem, maybe on the computer or fixing something around the house, and about the moment you are ready to take a hammer to the problem, someone walks up and says, “oh yeah, I can help.” They reach over and literally, in less than five seconds, fix the problem. How does that make you feel?
2. In our story today, this man had been lying next to the Pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years. Then a guy named Jesus walks by and asks the man a simple question. What was the question Jesus asked? The man answers from the same perspective he has had for thirty-eight years. What was his response? What would your response have been if you were in the man’s situation? (Mine would have been a bit more sarcastic than his was!)
3. Jesus then changes his life with a simple command. Read v. 8-9. Why do you think the man was so quick to obey this man with such a strange request?
4. Read v. 10-13: How ridiculous does a legalistic religious culture seem in light of Christ and his grace? Do we practice anything now or in the recent past that would equate to this type of response?
5. In v. 14, What does Jesus' instruction indicate might have been the cause of his inability to walk? Is this something we should consider when we have health issues? Why/why not?
6. Read Mark 2:23-28: What does this teach us about the sabbath that undoes the religious leaders’ argument?
7. When Jesus speaks, it renders all other voices silent. Is there any area of your life in which Jesus has clearly spoken that you are allowing your own opinion/perspective to keep you paralyzed?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ How can you help others overcome unbiblical opinions? Determine to make the Word of God your authority in every area of your life. Surrender your opinions to Jesus. Take up your mat and walk!



Participant Guide for November 6, 2022

Feeding the Multitudes

John 6:1-15

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What are the characteristics of a great leader? What traits make you want to follow someone? Who are some leaders that you admire?
2. Why did the crowds follow Jesus? What were the motives of the crowds of people who followed him? Following Jesus is the right thing, but what if you're doing the right thing for the wrong reason? Does that still count as doing the right thing?
3. Jesus knows what he's going to do but still asks Philip how he thinks they will go about feeding the people. Why does Jesus ask Philip what they should do? John says that Jesus was testing Philip. Why does he test Philip?
4. Do you believe that there are times when Jesus tests Christians today? How so? Have you ever felt like Jesus was testing you to see how you might respond to a situation?
5. Every day we interact with spiritually hungry people. Where do you people turn for spiritual nourishment when it's not Jesus? What can Jesus offer them that other spiritual fads cannot? How would you describe to someone how Jesus fulfills your spiritual needs?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, look for ways to help feed the spiritual needs of others.



Participant Guide for November 13, 2022

Walking On Water

John 6:12-21

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

It is important to note that the miracle of Jesus walking on water should not be confused with Jesus calming the storm that arose as he was sleeping in the boat. (Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:36–41; Luke 8:22–25). The parallel gospel accounts of Jesus walking on water are found in Matt. 14:22–33 and in Mark 6:47–51.



Apply

1. Have you ever been caught in a bad storm while driving? What was it like? What is so frightening about being in a car during heavy wind and rain?
2. We often fear things most when we are not in control. What impact do you think the lack of control had on the disciples as they sailed across the sea in a storm? This group of men were seasoned fishermen and had likely seen storms like this before. What power did they have over nature?
3. Notice that the disciples rowed 3-4 miles after the storm began. What do you believe is John's significance for including the detail that they were fighting against the sea?
4. Verse 19 says, "He (Jesus) was coming near the boat, and they were afraid." Do you think they were more afraid of the storm or what they were witnessing Jesus do? How do verses 20-21 influence your decision regarding the disciple's reaction? (You may also read the parallel accounts in Matt. 14:22-33 and in Mark 6:47-51 for further discussion.)
5. Were the disciples right to fear the storm? Did their fear show a lack of faith? Is it okay to be afraid of uncertainty? What does Jesus say to alleviate the disciples' fear? How can the seemingly simple act of Jesus identifying himself change their situation?
6. How does Jesus' reply echo Exodus 3:13-14? How does Jesus' identity as the I AM (which means that he was, he is, and he is today) impact how we react when things are out of control?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ When Jesus shows up, how willing are you to let him in the boat?

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Participant Guide for November 20, 2022

Weekend United - A Chosen People

1 Peter 2:9-12

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Select the most animated personality in the room. Ask them to read today's passage out loud with great enthusiasm. How does this make you feel about being a follower of Christ? How should this passage encourage and empower us when the world tries to beat us down?
2. In the OT, God's people had a priesthood that served under a high priest. In the NT, God's people are a priesthood serving under the same high priest whose name is Jesus! What are some of the privileges and responsibilities this gives us as God's children?
3. In the OT, Israel was God's chosen people. In the NT, the church is God's chosen people. While you can never equate Israel and the church prophetically, you can equate them in purpose. What do you think that means? Purpose of Israel? Purpose of the church? The redemption of Israel vs. the redemption of the church?
4. Read vs. 11-12. Does this beckon a discussion of what it means to be in the world but not of it? To have contact but not contamination? Isolation vs. insulation? What does this look like in your workplace? The marketplace? The neighborhood?
5. This declaration of who we are as God's children has MANY implications. The greatest of which is possibly unity of the body of Christ. Read Philippians 1:27 and discuss why unity is important to God.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ If you have students, discuss with them what it might look like to live in the world but not of it in their school.
- ◆ Discuss transparently whether you live a Philippians 1:27 life. What adjustments do you need to make to align yourself with this passage?



Participant Guide for November 27, 2022

Healing A Blind Man

John 9

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. In general, do you think Christians believe they are deserving of special blessings because of their works for God? (That is, because I do this or that for God, I believe I deserve something special from God.) What is dangerous about this kind of works-based righteousness and expectation?
2. Do you find anything unusual about the disciples' question about whose sin caused the man to be blind? Why would they have thought that someone else's sin would be the reason he's blind? What does this statement reveal about the legalistic religious state of Israel at this time? Have you ever been guilty of this kind of thinking? For example, have you ever wondered what you did wrong to deserve something you viewed as negative happening to you?
3. We would be remiss not to talk about the strange thing about this healing. Jesus spits to make mud to heal this man's eyes. Why?! We already know that Jesus can heal by speaking, touching someone, or even someone else touching the hem of his robe. So, why did he heal this man by making mud out of his spit and directing the blind man to wash in the pool of Siloam?
4. What message is Jesus sending to the crowd by performing this sign? How does the crowd react when the formerly blind man returns to them?
5. Read Verses 13-34: When the Pharisees hear the formerly blind man's testimony, what are their reactions and objections? Why do they end up so indignant about what happened?
6. Are we ever guilty of the sin of the Pharisees? Do we see God working miracles in our lives but get caught up putting the focus on something other than Jesus?
7. Read Verses 35-41: Jesus finds the man after his interrogation. What does Jesus say to the man? How did the physical needs of the blind man mirror his spiritual needs? How does this mirror the spiritual needs of us all?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Is there something that Jesus wants to heal in your life, but you're metaphorically too stubborn to go to the pool to wash off after he's covered your eyes in mud?



Participant Guide for December 4, 2022

Raising Lazarus

John 11

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What is the most suspenseful movie or TV show you have seen multiple times? During the subsequent watches, did it lose some of the suspense? Why does knowing the ending change your viewing experience?
2. After the report of Lazarus' sickness, Jesus sticks around where he is staying for two more days. Jesus effectively spoils the outcome for his followers as he tells them that Lazarus' sickness will not end in death. However, how do you think his followers reacted to this proclamation? Do you think they were worried? Perhaps Jesus didn't really care? If you were there, what would you have said to Jesus?
3. Once again, in this passage, Jesus tells us from the outset that everything about to transpire is for the glory of God. What is God's glory? Read Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14, Isaiah 6:3, Psalm 19:1-2, Exodus 33:18-19. How do these verses paint a picture of God's glory?
4. How do you think Mary and Martha felt while they waited on Jesus? What kind of conversations do you imagine they had? How do Martha and Mary react once Jesus finally arrives?
5. How does Jesus show compassion for the loss of Lazarus? What is his reaction to Lazarus' death? Why is Jesus moved so deeply at the loss of his friend even though he knows what God is about to do?
6. In this story, even though it was short-lived, all those who loved Lazarus endured sadness, heartbreak, and suffering. Jesus tells them that the purpose for this is 1) for God's glory and 2) so that they (everyone) may believe. What are some examples where God has worked this way in your life? Did you grow in your faith? Did God use your unique situation to demonstrate his glory for others around you?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, pray for God to reveal his glory to you through the challenging situations in your life.

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