



JUNE 4TH - SEPTEMBER 3RD

Week 4 - Dave McMurtry

June 26 - July 1

READING PLAN - WEEK 4

- DAY 1 • JOHN 5:16-30
- DAY 2 • JOHN 5:31-47
- DAY 3 • JOHN 6:1-15
- DAY 4 • JOHN 6:16-24
- DAY 5 • JOHN 6:25-40

Gospel of John • Week 4, Day 1

John 5:16-30

What spectacular claims Jesus makes about himself, his relationship and position with his Father, and his ultimate role for humanity. This was earth shattering to his Jewish audience (they would have said blasphemous):

- that a man would claim to be the Son of God;
- that he would say that anyone that did not honor him did not honor God;
- that anyone who heard his word and believed he was sent by the Father would have eternal life; and
- that he was appointed by God the Father to be the judge of all humanity and raise the dead to life or to condemnation!

Today, we don't see this as blasphemous, but isn't it just as amazing? Take a moment and picture a man telling you all this - how would you take it? Could you believe? What traditions or doctrine would have gotten in your way? Most of the ancient Jews described in John's gospel totally missed a wonderful gift of God.

Now, look at the humility Jesus shows even as he is proclaiming himself to be coequal with God the Father, creator of the heavens and the earth. Such a huge statement, but consider how he describes his role and his authority. He honors the Father and shows that they are in total alignment.

As you reread this passage meditate on how powerfully it describes Jesus in both his humanity and his divinity. Pick out his key words and statements. Think about how this Son of God and Son of Man wants a relationship with you, to give you eternal life with the Father. How do you respond?

Gospel of John • Week 4, Day 2

John 5:31-47

Jesus has harsh words for his unbelieving audience. He called them out for the way they studied the Scriptures, thinking that the study or the Scriptures themselves, were what mattered. He said they missed the entire point that the Law, the Writings and the Prophets (what we would call the Old Testament) pointed to him as the source of life. He said that by idolizing the Law, they would be condemned by the Law, but if they listened to John the Baptist and to Jesus himself, they would understand God's word, have the love of God in their hearts, and find life.

Their situation of missing the most important message in the Bible is not unique. Even today, many Christians can become so focused on traditions, academics, and praise from one another about their Bible knowledge that they make little effort to seek praise from the living God. Good intentions can distract from genuine good.

The Bible is, of course, vital as part of discipleship for Christ followers. We have many fine studies and classes that let us understand more about God, Jesus' life and purpose, and how we can apply these truths to have better lives. Our goal in these studies is to fully accept Christ and have his word dwell in our hearts so that we unite with him and live to please him.

Take a minute to contemplate how you can genuinely seek Jesus during this study, to find him on a personal level and accept his word. He wants your heart and soul and mind to be devoted to him, as his are to you.

Gospel of John · Week 4, Day 3

John 6:1-15

The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand, the “loaves and fishes”, is one of the most famous in the New Testament. Of all Jesus’ miracles, only this one and the resurrection were recorded in all four gospels.

As you read through this passage, consider what it tells us about trusting Jesus. How likely did Philip think that a meal would be supplied for this many? How was he thinking in the wrong direction? Couldn’t he have remembered Jesus’ turning water to wine or other ways he had seen him provide? Do you ever lack trust in God’s ability or desire to provide what you need to follow him?

Now consider how he uses the people in the story to participate in the miracle. What can you learn from the boy with his small lunch? How does his contribution contrast with Philip’s declaration in v 7? God has proven that he can provide miraculously to feed and sustain his people many times. In this case, beginning with the bit of food from the boy and the acts of the disciples in distribution and collection, he begins teaching them about caring for one another and being part of his ministry to the people.

Jesus obviously had compassion on the 5,000 followers. He has compassion for many people in need today. How often have you thought, “I don’t have enough to make a difference”? How often have you thought God wouldn’t really help in a particular situation? Instead, pray that God will give us the wisdom and confidence to trust him to do great things with what little we have to offer, if only we step out in faith.

Gospel of John · Week 4, Day 4

John 6:16-24

Between the big theological statements Jesus made about himself in John 5:16-47 and in the next section, we read an odd short story about Jesus walking on the water. It almost begs more question than it answers. Why didn’t they wait and all go together? How did they think he would get there? If they had to row miles to their destination, why did they go so late in the day that they were stuck out there at night? Why didn’t God “bless” his followers with an easy passage?

This story provides further color on the nature of Jesus’ ministry at this time. Clearly he was becoming very popular, as the crowds were seeking him for healing and a free meal. It also shows Jesus, as creator of the universe, had command over the physical elements of nature (Matthew and Mark recorded that the wind calmed down, while John just said that they made it across immediately). It also shows the continuing teaching and growing faith of the disciples.

As you think about times in your life that you may have been terrified or worried about things beyond your control, did you ever wish you would see Jesus “walking on the water toward you to calm things down”? Consider the relief knowing that he had rescued you in that circumstance.

Jesus doesn’t promise that he will physically rescue us from every storm, and clearly we may undergo hardships and fears. He apparently waited much longer to rescue the disciples than they would have liked or probably prayed for. But in this case, at least, they found and trusted him in a dark and scary moment. Their faith, and ours, becomes stronger in times when we don’t see him.

Gospel of John · Week 4, Day 5

John 6:25-40

Jesus makes some big statements about himself, the Father, and eternal life in these verses. Consider how many times he talks about coming down from heaven and thus his own divinity. Look how clearly he says that believing in him is the key to eternal life. Notice that he speaks of us as being “his”. John’s writing seems to leave little doubt about Jesus’ message to his followers and critics.

And yet, the people didn’t fully get it, or if they did, many resisted and grumbled. What is it with people? From the story of Adam and Eve to the present day, humans have been blind to clear truth from God.

Thank God for his grace! Jesus is the bread of life. He provides a kind of food for the spirit that endures to eternal life. Those of us who accept him, he sustains. Today, we have a much different perspective on Jesus’ revelation than the crowd in this scene. We have the completed work of his ministry, the hindsight of his death and resurrection, the full word of God and many generations of faithful witnesses as evidence of his love for us. Why then aren’t we all fully aligned with him?

Take a moment to review Jesus’ words and reflect on the doubts you or perhaps your friends may have.

The people in v 30, still wanted more miraculous signs so that they might see and believe. Let’s come to him in humility, faith and trust without seeking yet one more miracle. Pray for those needing to believe and receive life.