

Evangelistic Bible Studies

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The following is a collection of Bible passages intended to be used in the planting of the seeds of the Gospel. These are not meant to be in-depth theological Bible studies but instead they are meant to convey the truths of the Gospel in a clear and simple way in order to lead the unbeliever to salvation.

In this collection the bulk of the lessons will be drawn from the gospel of John, though passages will be used from several books of the Bible.

Many of the ESL students may know or may be familiar with some of the Bible stories from their own religious traditions. However, their traditions and Scripture do not always agree. Assume that they do not know the stories or their message.

By all means avoid quoting Scripture! Have the students look up the passage and read it for themselves. We want them to learn to trust the Bible for all truth, not the word of a teacher or leader.

Also, be aware that most religious beliefs teach that salvation is earned through good works rather than by faith. When teaching the lessons pay special attention to and place special emphasis in the fact that salvation depends on trusting in God and believing what He says; that salvation is through faith in Christ only; and that what God wants from us is for us to know Him experientially. That is, God seeks and wants not that we know *about* Him but that we have a personal *relationship* with Him.

BE PATIENT! It will take long-term Bible study and prayer for many of them to finally “get it”. Do not be discouraged if you do not see a response when you think there should be one. Trust the WORD and trust the LORD to do what He has intended for His Word to do! Be faithful in teaching the Scriptures and in praying for the students; and let the Spirit speak to their hearts and bring conviction. It is His job! (John 16:8)

The “Commentaries”

With each passage we are including a short commentary focusing on the message we want to impart through each lesson. We hope they are of help to you as you seek to share the message of the Gospel with the lost. Please remember that our goal is **not** to have an in-depth Bible story but to teach basic Biblical truths and principles that will, hopefully, address the students’ religious beliefs. Our goal and prayer is that little by little the students’ spiritual eyes may be opened and that they may be able to understand the message of God revealed in Scripture and, as a result, be able to respond positively to the message of Salvation in Jesus Christ.

Evangelistic Bible Study List

1. The Word became human – John 1:1-18 (Colossians 1:15-17)
2. Follow me – John 1:35-51 (Luke 9:23-26)
3. Do what He tells you – John 2:1-12; Luke 6:46-49
4. Don’t take God’s things lightly – John 2:13-25
5. You must be born again – John 3:1-21 (John 1:12-13) (John 3:35-36)
6. Jesus and the woman from Samaria – John 4:1-30 & 39-42
7. Jesus heals a disabled man – John 5:1-18
8. Jesus is the bread of life – John 6:1-15 & 24-40
9. Leave your life of sin and turn to God – John 8:1-11; Luke 13:1-5; Romans 3:23 & 6:23
10. The blind will see – John 9:1-41
11. I am like a gate – John 10:1-18 & 27-30
12. I am the resurrection and the life – John 11:-1-45
13. People honor Jesus – John 12:1-19
14. Jesus tells about his coming death – John 12:20-33 & 37-43
15. Do as I have done for you – John 13:1-17 (Philippians 2:5-11)
16. I am the Way – John 14:1-14

PLEASE READ!

The ‘commentaries’ here are for your benefit as Bible study instructor.

**Please do NOT make copies of these pages for your students!
Have them read the Scripture passages directly from their Bibles.**

In many religious communities people are taught to trust their leaders’ teachings without a second thought or question. For them the word of a priest, a Pope, an Imam, or other teacher or leader has more authority than the scriptures. That is how they are so easily misled and kept in ignorance.

We want them to break with that tradition. **We want them to learn to trust the Bible as God’s Word and to view it as the ultimate Authority on all spiritual matters.** We want to teach them by word and example. If we only give them a loose sheet with the passage on it, they will not be making the “connection” with the Bible that we want them to develop. We want them to learn to trust the Bible more than they trust a teacher or leader, no matter who the teacher may be (see the example of the Thessalonians in Acts 17:11). For that reason we ask that you do this:

1. Give each student a copy of the Bible in very simple English (we are using the *New International reader’s Version* (NIrV) which is written on a 3rd grade level). (I let them keep it if they want to.)
2. Teach them how to find the passages (explain the use of chapters and verse numbers)
3. Be patient! Allow time for all students to find each passage before going on with the lesson.
4. Have a volunteer read one verse. Ask them if there are any words they do not understand in that verse.
5. Have another volunteer read the next verse and ask the same question. Go on until the entire passage is read. (This may not be practical if the passage is too long. In that case, you can read the bulk of the passage and ask for volunteers to read some key verses.)
6. Do not lecture them. Discuss the passage and its message by leading them through the use of “targeted” questions – questions that lead them to the truth you want them to discover in the passage.
7. If you want to supplement the message with other Scripture verses, DO NOT quote the verses from memory. Have them find the passage and let them read it for themselves.
8. If they have questions, try by all means to respond using a Scripture passage, allowing them to read it themselves. We want them to learn that they can trust the Scriptures and that they can find answers to important issues in life in the Scriptures. (If you cannot point to the passage at that time, write down the question and make sure you bring the Scripture references for the next class meeting, and have them read the passages then.)

Do try to give each student a copy of the entire Bible in their native language so they can take it home and read it for themselves. We cannot wait for them to learn English before they can hear the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ! We want them to have access to the Word of God and to its message right away!

You can get foreign language Bibles from the International Bible Society (www.ibsdirect.com), from the American Bible Society (www.americanbible.org), and even from Amazon (www.amazon.com). If you need help, call Frances at the Bradley Association at 476-5493 and she will try to find them for you.

And trust the Word!

The Lord has said, “The words I speak... will not return to me without producing results. They will accomplish what I want them to. They will do exactly what I sent them to do.”
Isaiah 55:11 (NIrV)

1. The Word Became Human (New International reader's Version, Nlrv)

John 1

¹ In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

³ All things were made through him. Nothing that has been made was made without him.

[Colossians 1

¹⁵ Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. He is first, and he is over all of creation. ¹⁶ All things were created by him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him. ¹⁷ Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together.]

⁴ Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not understood it.

⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

¹⁰ The Word was in the world that was made through him. But the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him.

¹² Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. ¹³ To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.

¹⁴ The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son.

He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But God, the one and only Son, is at the Father's side. He has shown us what God is like.

- Break these statements apart on the board so people can get the picture of what it is being said about Jesus. (Use graphics if necessary.)
 - He already existed when the world was created (He was not created)
 - the Word was with God (2 separate persons)
 - the Word was God (not 2 Gods but 1 and the same!)
 - the Word was with God when the world was created
 - everything that was created was made through Him – He himself is the Creator
- Turn to the Colossians passage to reaffirm these truths.
- Make sure they understand that the Word is Jesus Christ.
 - He did not begin to exist at Creation
 - He didn't begin to exist when He was born from Mary
 - He has existed long before the world was made
 - He is the Creator of everything
 - He is God
 - *Just in case: He is the Son of God not because God had sexual relations with Mary, but because He came from God.*
- God is light (1 John 1:5). Darkness (the evil one and evil things and those who do them) cannot stand up to Him. Light brings life and truth.
- He who is the light (God himself) came to the world, the world that He had made, but those he created did not recognize He was God.
- He came to the people (nation) He had chosen and who had His word, but they did not receive Him; they rejected Him.
- However, to those who accept Him (who receive Him) He will give them the right to become children of God.
 - Some people think that we are all children of God. That is not true. Only those who accept Jesus are made children of God. This is a personal decision that no one can make for another person.
 - When you receive (accept) Christ you experience a spiritual birth into the family of God. This is something that only God can do. *Have you received Jesus in your heart? Have you given Him permission to rule your life?*
 - *Vs. 11 & 12 are key verses. We will come back to them in the future. If you don't have much time, skip the rest and concentrate on these verses.*
- The Word took the form of a human being; He grew up and lived like us. But even while He was in human form, it was obvious that He was the Son of God because of all the things He did.
- Though we cannot see God, through Jesus we can see what He is like: the One and only God who loves His creatures so much that He is willing to humble Himself becoming like one of them to save them.
- Would you trust this God –the All Powerful God– who loves you so much?

2. “Follow Me” (New International reader’s Version, NlrV)

John 1

³⁵ The next day John was again with two of his disciples.
³⁶ He saw Jesus walking by. John said, “Look! The Lamb of God!”
³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this. So they followed Jesus.
³⁸ Then Jesus turned around and saw them following. He asked, “What do you want?”
They said, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” *Rabbi* means Teacher.
³⁹ “Come,” he replied. “You will see.”
So they went and saw where he was staying. They spent the rest of the day with him. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.
⁴⁰ Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew was one of the two disciples who heard what John had said. He had also followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon. He told him, “We have found the Messiah.” Messiah means Christ. ⁴² And he brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas.” Cephas means Peter (or rock).
⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”
⁴⁴ Philip was from the town of Bethsaida. So were Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the One that Moses wrote about in the Law. The prophets also wrote about him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.
“Come and see,” said Philip.
⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael approaching. Here is what Jesus said about him. “He is a true Israelite. There is nothing false in him.”
⁴⁸ “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.
Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree. I saw you there before Philip called you.”
⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel.”
⁵⁰ Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.”
⁵¹ Then he said to the disciples, “What I’m about to tell you is true. You will see heaven open. You will see the angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man.”

(See also *Luke 9:23-26*)

- Explain the significance of the lamb in the sacrifices for the atoning of sin (*Leviticus 4:27-31*)
 - Sin is a very, very serious matter to God. Sin carries a sentence of death. But God, in his love, allowed those who acknowledged their sin and wanted God’s forgiveness to sacrifice a perfect lamb (baby sheep) in their place.
 - The sinner had to place his/her hand on the head of the lamb and confess his/her sin and then kill the it. The blood of the lamb was then presented to God for the forgiveness of their sin.
 - Since the blood of sacrificed lambs could not change the person or keep them from sinning again, these sacrifices had to be performed on a daily basis.
- When John pointed to Jesus and called him “the Lamb of God” he was saying that Jesus was going to take the punishment all sinners deserve and die in their place so their sins can be forgiven.
 - God’s desire is not to punish us for our sins but to forgive us. That’s why He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die for us. But His sacrifice can only take effect if we acknowledge our sin and repent from it, and receive Christ as our Savior.
- To follow Jesus means to enter in a personal relationship with Him (the new disciples went to see where Jesus lived and spent the entire day with Him); is to want to know Him more and more, to learn from Him and to live in obedience to Him.
- When you get to know Jesus personally, you cannot wait to tell everyone about Him! That’s why Andrew ran to tell his brother Simon (Peter). And then Philip did the same when he told Nathanael.
- Philip recognized that Jesus was the Messiah/Christ (the chosen One) who had been told in the prophecies given hundreds and even thousands of years before.
- Nazareth was and still is a small, insignificant town in Israel. Nathanael could not believe the long awaited Christ could come from such a place. But God likes to surprise us! Sometimes the things or people we consider insignificant are the ones God chooses for His purposes. He can chose to use (and bless) anyone who allows Him to be his/her Lord (owner, master).
- Jesus knows everything about everyone. He knows even you! He knows where you’ve been and what you’ve done every day of your life. He knows your deepest thoughts and desires. He knows your weaknesses and He knows your sin. And though He knows you so completely He still loves you and wants you to come to Him! He died on the cross in your place so your sins can be forgiven if you come to Him. He wants to have a personal relationship with you!

3. “Do What He Tells You” (New International reader’s Version, Nlrv)

John 2

¹ On the third day there was a wedding. It took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

⁴ “Dear woman, why do you bring me into this?” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.”

⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do what he tells you.”

⁶ Six stone water jars stood nearby. The Jews used water from that kind of jar for special washings to make themselves pure. Each jar could hold 20 to 30 gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the top.

⁸ Then he told them, “Now dip some out. Take it to the person in charge of the dinner.”

They did what he said. ⁹ The person in charge tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He didn’t realize where it had come from. But the servants who had brought the water knew.

Then the person in charge called the groom to one side.

¹⁰ He said to him, “Everyone brings out the best wine first. They bring out the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink. But you have saved the best until now.”

¹¹ That was the first of Jesus’ miraculous signs. He did it at Cana in Galilee. Jesus showed his glory by doing it. And his disciples put their faith in him.

¹² After this, Jesus went down to Capernaum. His mother and brothers and disciples went with him. They all stayed there for a few days.

Luke 6

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and still don’t do what I say? ⁴⁷ Some people come to me and listen to me and do what I say. I will show you what they are like.

⁴⁸ They are like someone who builds a house. He digs down deep and sets it on solid rock. When a flood comes, the river rushes against the house. But the water can’t shake it. The house is well built.

⁴⁹ “But here is what happens when people listen to my words and do not obey them. They are like someone who builds a house on soft ground instead of solid rock. The moment the river rushes against that house, it falls down. It is completely destroyed.”

- God instituted marriage from the very beginning of creation (Genesis 2:15-24). It is more than fitting that Jesus, his family and his disciples participate in a wedding celebration.
- In their culture wine was part of almost every meal, especially one celebrating such a special occasion. *The Bible does not condemn the drinking of wine, though it does condemn excessive drinking and drunkenness (see 1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:18).*
- We do not know why his mother (*Mary’s name is never used in this Gospel*) came to Jesus to tell him they had run out of wine. It is possible they were related in some way to the family celebrating the marriage and that she felt they had to help them somehow. It is humiliating for a host family to run out of food and drink in the middle of a celebration.
- Her request implies that she believes Jesus is able to do something about the lack of wine, but whether he will do something, and what it will be, her statement leaves open for him to decide. Maybe she expected him and his disciples to contribute some wine to the feast as guests were expected to do.
- Jesus seems kind of annoyed by her comment. Jesus is guided by his heavenly Father and not by the agenda of any human beings, even his family. He would not do something just because His mother asked. He is in control, He decides what and when, and He is going to act according to the Father’s will.
- His mother’s instruction to the servants is one we should heed: **Do as he tells you.**
 - Even the Father commanded us to “listen to him” = pay attention and obey what he tells you (Mark 9:7)
 - Obedience to Jesus’ words is what demonstrates our love for him (John 14:21, 23; and 1 John 5:3).
- Note that the servants did as Jesus ordered without questioning. They put *water* in the jars. Then they took some of the *water* to the person in charge. The water was turned into **wine** *while they were on the way* to present it to the person in charge.
 - We want to see miracles before we obey Jesus. But, Jesus requires that we obey so we can see miracles.
 - We need to learn to pay attention to His word and to obey it even when we do not understand. Only *then* we will start to see His wonderful works in our lives.
- Everything Jesus does is perfect!
- Jesus is not happy that we pretend to acknowledge Him as Lord if we do not obey what He says.
- In fact, to build a strong, secure foundation for our lives we need to obey His word and follow His direction.
- Otherwise we are building our lives on quicksand (soft wet sand that is dangerous to walk on because it pulls your body down into it).
- Are you paying attention to Jesus’ words and teaching? Are you building your house (life) on solid ground?

4. Don't Take God's Things Lightly *(New International reader's Version, Nlrv)*

John 2

¹³ It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. So Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courtyard he found people who were selling cattle, sheep and doves. Others were sitting at tables exchanging money.

¹⁵ So Jesus made a whip out of ropes. He chased all the sheep and cattle from the temple area. He scattered the coins of the people exchanging money. And he turned over their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who were selling doves, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

¹⁷ His disciples remembered what had been written. It says, "My great love for your house will destroy me."—*(Psalm 69:9)*

¹⁸ Then the Jews asked him, "What miraculous sign can you show us? Can you prove your authority to do all of this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple. I will raise it up again in three days."

²⁰ The Jews replied, "It has taken 46 years to build this temple. Are you going to raise it up in three days?"

²¹ But the temple Jesus had spoken about was his body.

²² His disciples later remembered what he had said. That was after he had been raised from the dead. Then they believed the Scriptures. They also believed the words that Jesus had spoken.

²³ Meanwhile, he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast. Many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing. And they believed in his name. ²⁴ But Jesus did not fully trust them. He knew what people are like. ²⁵ He didn't need others to tell him what people are like. He already knew what was in the human heart.

Temple trivia:

At the time of this incident, hundreds of workers had been building the temple for 46 years but it would take over 30 years more for it to be completely finished, in the year 64 AD. It was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. However, they only enjoyed it for six years as this is the temple that was completely destroyed in 70 AD during the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. And it happened just as Jesus had predicted (Mark 13:1-2)

All Jewish people were required to come to Jerusalem for Passover. The city was full with thousands of people from all over the world coming to worship in Jerusalem.

- The Passover required the sacrifice of a lamb (baby sheep). People brought their own animals, however, people from faraway places could bring money to buy the animals for sacrifice in the city. Some people in Jerusalem were taking advantage of the situation by selling animals, some at exorbitant prices.
- Greek and Roman money was not accepted at the temple so those who wanted to give a monetary offering had to change it for Jewish money. Money changers were also taking advantage of the people with unfair exchange rates.
- Instead of a place for prayer, worship, and praise, the temple had been turned into a noisy, smelly marketplace. Not only were their practices sinful and abusive but their presence in the temple was very irreverent (disrespectful) to God and disruptive to worshippers.
- This made Jesus angry. He could not stand the abuse nor their lack of respect for God. He could not bear that they had turned God's things into a business, and refused to honor Him in His own house. Jesus was extremely offended and used physical force to correct people.
 - In our day, some people seek to make money from religion, and many refuse to honor God even when they come to church. God is not fooled by their hypocrisy. God knows everything and he sees the depth of the heart. *What does He see in your heart?*
 - When you go to church, do you go for what you can get from it or do you go with a desire to worship God and hear His voice? He knows what's in your heart.
 - God does not like when people come to Him for the wrong reasons (Mark 7:6-7). He seeks people with an honest and repentant heart; who love Him and worship Him from the heart. Examine your heart.
- The Jews understood that Jesus calling the temple, "my Father's house" meant that he called himself the Son of God. That's why they ask him to make a miracle so he can prove he really is the Son of God.
- The only sign Jesus offered was misunderstood at that time but later on they would understand: He would prove He really is the Son of God by coming back from the dead after three days in the grave.
 - Jesus' resurrection is the proof: he really is the true Son of God. Everything He says is true. We can trust Him! Have you trusted Him with your life?
- Again, Jesus is not fooled by people. He knows everything about everybody. He knows your every action, thought, feeling, wish and desire. He knows what you are going to say even before you open your mouth. He knows what's in your heart and if you really love him or not. *Do you think He is pleased with you? Is He pleased with your worship? What does He see in your heart?*

5. You Must Be Born Again (New International reader's Version, NlRV)

John 3

¹ There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish rulers. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren't, you couldn't do the miraculous signs you are doing."

³ Jesus replied, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can see God's kingdom without being born again."

⁴ "How can I be born when I am old?" Nicodemus asked. "I can't go back inside my mother! I can't be born a second time!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can enter God's kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit. ⁶ People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised when I say, 'You must all be born again.'

⁸ "The wind blows where it wants to. You hear the sound it makes. But you can't tell where it comes from or where it is going. It is the same with everyone who is born through the Spirit."

⁹ "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus. "Don't you understand these things?"

¹⁶ "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

¹⁷ "God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Anyone who believes in him is not judged. But anyone who does not believe is judged already. He has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

¹⁹ "Here is the judgment. Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light. They loved darkness because what they did was evil.

²⁰ "Everyone who does evil things hates the light. They will not come into the light. They are afraid that what they do will be seen. ²¹ But anyone who lives by the truth comes into the light. He does this so that it will be easy to see that what he has done is with God's help."

[John 3:35-36]

NOTE:

Most of the questions suggested in the "commentaries" are meant to be questions for reflection. That means that you ask the questions but do not expect or try to force an answer. Let them "chew on it".

The Pharisees were the strictest followers of the Jewish law (the Law of Moses, the commandments); they held positions of authority in government; they were rich. They opposed Jesus in union with the High Priests.

- Nicodemus reveals what he and the other leaders knew and what they thought about Jesus:
 - Calls Him "Rabbi," a title of respect for a Jewish teacher qualified to expound and apply Jewish law
 - Reveals that the Jewish leaders knew He was "a teacher who has come from God"
 - They recognized that the evidence—the miracles—pointed to one fact: God was with Him.
- Jesus knew what Nicodemus wanted and, before he could ask, Jesus answered: To see the kingdom of God (go to heaven) you have to be born again.
- Jesus speaks with authority. If you want to see the kingdom of God (go to Heaven), you must be born again; you must be born through the Spirit.
- To be born again you have to be born spiritually; only the Spirit of God can give birth to spirit. This is something that only God can do. That's what **John 1:11-13** means. To become a child of God (to be born of God/the Spirit) you have to **believe in Jesus' name and accept (receive) Him in your heart.**
 - Some think that everyone is a child of God but that is contrary to Scripture. Only those who believe *in* Jesus and *believe Jesus*, and who receive Him (allow Him to be the owner and boss in their lives) will become children of God. You are not a child of God just because your parents were or by attending church or doing good works.
- As we cannot see the air but can see its effect on the leaves of the trees and can feel it on our faces, so it is with the work of the Spirit in a person's life. We cannot see or understand the actual working of the Spirit but we can see the evidence in the person's life.
- The new birth is possible thanks to the immense love of God. God was willing to give (sacrifice) His own only Son so He could offer us forgiveness and eternal life (a life that never ends). All He wants is that we believe in Him (and believe Him).
- God's desire is not to punish but to save. Our actions—disobeying God and not allowing Him to be the master of our lives—are sin and deserve punishment of death. God has offers us in Jesus a way to have our sins forgiven and our punishment removed if we trust His Son Jesus Christ. If we do not believe and receive Him then we are punished as we deserve. Rejecting the Son of God is rejecting out only means of salvation.
- God/Jesus is light. *Would you come to the light of His truth? Would you believe Him and receive Him in your heart? He wants to forgive you and give you eternal life in heaven. It is up to you. What are you going to do? Would you let Him give you a new birth?*

6. “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.” –John 7:37 (NirV)

John 4

¹ The Pharisees heard that Jesus was winning and baptizing more disciples than John. ² But in fact Jesus was not baptizing. His disciples were. ³ When the Lord found out about all this, he left Judea. He went back to Galilee again.

⁴ Jesus had to go through Samaria. ⁵ He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. It was near the piece of land Jacob had given his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there. Jesus was tired from the journey. So he sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A woman from Samaria came to get some water. Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew. I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” She said this because Jews don’t have anything to do with Samaritans.

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “You do not know what God’s gift is. And you do not know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would have asked him. He would have given you living water.”

¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you don’t have anything to get water with. The well is deep. Where can you get this living water?”

¹² “Our father Jacob gave us the well. He drank from it himself. So did his sons and his flocks and herds. Are you more important than he is?”

¹³ Jesus answered, “All who drink this water will be thirsty again. ¹⁴ But anyone who drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty. In fact, the water I give him will become a spring of water in him. It will flow up into eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty. And I won’t have to keep coming here to get water.”

¹⁶ He told her, “Go. Get your husband and come back.”

¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands. And the man you have now is not your husband. What you have just said is very true.”

- Samaria was a region between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north. The antagonism (hostility, dislike) between Samaritans and Jews was extreme: they avoided each other and, if they happen to meet, they would not speak to each other. Jews traveling between Galilee and Judea preferred to take a long detour through the desert rather than to go through Samaria.
- Jesus knows everything. He knew who He was going to meet and where.
- Women of good reputation would come to get water early in the morning or late in the afternoon, when it was cooler. Only women of bad reputation or questionable morals would come to draw water at noon.
- In public, Jewish men would not even talk to a Jewish woman, much less to a Samaritan of bad reputation!
- Jesus takes the initiative in the conversation. *Jesus was breaking every rule of social behavior in his time!*
- She immediately recognizes Jesus is a Jew. She was shocked that he would talk to her.
- He immediately directed the conversation to spiritual matters: I can give you God’s gift of living water. (*Jesus is breaking barriers here again: Women at that time did not even get basic education so men never talked to them about theological matters because they thought women could not understand.*)
- She did not get what Jesus said. She points to their ethnic rivalry: “Samaritans are also descendants of Jacob. This is the well he left us.” (Jews denied that.)
- Again, Jesus takes the conversation from the material to the spiritual: *I can give you water that will satisfy your (spiritual) thirst forever and you will have eternal life.*
 - Note that during the entire conversation Jesus is treating her with respect and love. He is offering her something beyond her dreams.
- She is still not getting it. Still thinking on the material things, she asks for that water that will save her from making daily trips to the well. Jesus wanted to satisfy an even deeper spiritual need she was not even aware of.
- With a lot of tact and love, Jesus turns the conversation to her personal situation. He knew everything about her life. In asking her to bring her husband he wanted her to become conscious of her spiritual condition and need.
- Her response was probably her way of letting him know that she did not want to talk about her personal life. However, Jesus told her the sad story of her own life. He proved that he knows everything about everyone. He also demonstrated love in that he confronted her with her sin but in a nice, non-condemning way. *His desire is not to condemn but to lead us to repentance.* He wanted her to feel the great need she had of the living water he was offering her.

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.

²⁰ Our people have worshiped on this mountain for a long time. But you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ Jesus said, “Believe me, woman. A time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know. Salvation comes from the Jews.

²³ “But a new time is coming. In fact, it is already here. True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. They are the kind of worshipers the Father is looking for.

²⁴ “God is spirit. His worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah is coming.” (He is called Christ.) “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus said, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”

²⁸ The woman left her water jar and went back to the town. She said to the people, ²⁹ “Come. See a man who told me everything I’ve ever done. Could this be the Christ?”

³⁰ The people came out of the town and made their way toward Jesus.

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from the town of Sychar believed in Jesus. They believed because of the woman’s witness. She said, “He told me everything I’ve ever done.”

⁴⁰ Then the Samaritans came to him and tried to get him to stay with them. So he stayed two days. ⁴¹ Because of his words, many more people became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said. We have now heard for ourselves. We know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

- The woman was shocked. She probably felt very uncomfortable and ashamed but she did not leave. She realized she was not talking to a normal man. She recognized he was a special person: a prophet.
- She tried to cover her embarrassment by changing the topic of the conversation to controversies over religion. *Many people still do the same when they feel that the Word of God is “getting too personal”.*
- Jesus confirmed that salvation comes from the Jews (Jesus was a Jew). But he also corrected her explaining that it is not a matter of a location but of the heart. God is looking for people who worship him with their whole heart and soul (“in spirit and in truth”).
- In what sounds almost like an expression of her deepest desire, she referred to the coming of the Messiah.
- Jesus did what he had not done with Nicodemus: he identified himself as the Messiah (the Christ), the chosen One promised by God through all the prophets.
- In her excitement at the revelation that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ), the woman who had come to get water ran back to town without the water or the water jar she had brought. She could not contain herself in telling everyone about Jesus, the Christ, and her excitement caused the town’s people to come to Jesus.
- Her testimony, “he told me everything I have done”, means that she recognized that only God can know everything thus Jesus had to come from God.
- Water was a symbol of what he was offering her – what he offers us: Living water! (water that gives life)
 - It is not an angelic elixir that falls from heaven or magic water or a chemical formula; it is not water blessed by the church. The phrase combines the illustration (water) with the real gift (life).
- Water is a vital element for our physical life. However, it is a substance that we must drink –it must be internalized and become part of our being to be effective. It’s not enough to know about water or to contemplate water. Thirst is only satisfied by drinking the water.
- In the same way, it is not enough to know about the life and the salvation that Jesus offers. We have to receive –internally, in the heart– the “living water” who is Jesus himself. The idea is best expressed in John 1:12 – ***you have to receive Him.***
- Jesus is eager for us to come to him and receive the blessing he wants to give us freely. His invitation is very clear in **John 7:37-38**, “*On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*
- He knows everything about everyone of us. Still he lovingly offers us life and salvation if we only receive him as Savior and Lord (owner, master).
- *Have you allowed Jesus into your heart? Have you received Him? He loves you and he wants to save you!*

7. Jesus Heals a Disabled Man *(New International reader's Version, Nlrv)*

John 5

¹ Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast. ² In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate is a pool. In the Aramaic language it is called Bethesda. It is surrounded by five rows of columns with a roof over them. ³⁻⁴ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie down. Among them were those who were blind, those who could not walk, and those who could hardly move.

⁵ One person who was there had been disabled for 38 years. ⁶ Jesus saw him lying there. He knew that the man had been in that condition for a long time. So he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷ "Sir," the disabled man replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when an angel stirs the water up. I try to get in, but someone else always goes down ahead of me."

⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

⁹ At once the man was healed. He picked up his mat and walked.

The day this happened was a Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath. The law does not allow you to carry your mat."

¹¹ But he replied, "The one who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

¹² They asked him, "Who is this fellow? Who told you to pick it up and walk?"

¹³ The one who was healed had no idea who it was. Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple. Jesus said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away. He told the Jews it was Jesus who had made him well.

¹⁶ Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath day. So the Jews began to oppose him.

¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "My Father is always doing his work. He is working right up to this very day. I am working too."

¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried even harder to kill him. Jesus was not only breaking the Sabbath. He was even calling God his own Father. He was making himself equal with God.

People believed that an angel came from time to time to move the water of the pool and whoever jumped in first would be healed. (The Bible does not speak about that story and most scholars think this was just a myth.)

- The passage does not say how old this man was but that he had been paralytic for 38 years. His situation was the most miserable and pitiful one of anyone there.
- Jesus does not wait for the man to ask him for a miracle; he takes the initiative and approaches the man. He asks what could sound like a dumb question for those there.
- Jesus wanted to get the man to turn his attention away from the water and to focus it on Him. He probably wanted to provoke a spark of hope in the man's heart.
- The man did not answer Jesus' question. He had no idea who Jesus was. Instead he tells his sad story: he has no one to help him, he has no hope.
 - Sometimes we place our hopes on things that do not work. Society, culture or traditions say that something is good or our family pressures us to do things in a certain way, but we end up left without help or hope. Only Jesus can change all that. He and only he can change our lives and give us hope.
- Jesus gave him an unexpected order but the man obeyed immediately! With a few words Jesus healed him instantly.
 - Every time we chose to obey God's Word we will see and experience His work in our lives.
- There were many sick people there but He only healed one. And he told the man to carry his mat which was forbidden by the Jewish law to do on a Sabbath. Jesus was challenging their religious traditions, demonstrating that it is more important to show compassion than to show religious fanaticism.
- Jewish leaders should have been happy to see a man healed. Instead, they purposely ignore the fact and focus on the breaking of their law. Yet, the man's response focuses on the healing, "The one who made me well...".
- That Jesus found him in the temple indicates that the man had gone there to thank God for his healing. Jesus' warning to stop sinning indicates that his condition was as a result of his sin. (Sometimes an illness or chronic condition can be a consequence of sin but that is **not** true in every case. See John 9:1-3.)
 - *If you have received God's forgiveness, stop sinning!*
- Jesus' challenge of Jewish *traditions* brought him opposition from the leaders. Identifying his work with the work of God the Father meant that Jesus was making himself equal to God and the Jewish leaders knew it. However, they refused to see the evidence of his words in the miracles he was doing. They chose instead to oppose him and seek to kill him.
- *What or who are you placing your hopes on instead of God? Are you choosing tradition over God's word? Jesus wants to give you hope and a future! Turn your life over to him and let him heal your body and soul!*

Jesus took the initiative for us: while we were yet sinners, he died for us (Romans 5:8). Now his question to us is, "Do you want to be saved (from the punishment of sin)?" Don't tell him how you are trying to accomplish your own salvation! Let him save you!

8. Jesus is the Bread of Life *(New International reader's Version, Nlrv)*

John 6

¹ Some time after this, Jesus crossed over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. It is also called the Sea of Tiberias.

² A large crowd of people followed him. They had seen the miraculous signs he had done on those who were sick.

³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside. There he sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

⁵ Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. So he said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He asked this only to put Philip to the test. He already knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, "Eight months' pay would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

⁸ Another of his disciples spoke up. It was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁹ He said, "Here is a boy with five small loaves of barley bread. He also has two small fish. But how far will that go in such a large crowd?"

¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down. The number of men among them was about 5,000.

¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. He handed out the bread to those who were seated. He gave them as much as they wanted. And he did the same with the fish.

¹² When all of them had enough to eat, Jesus spoke to his disciples. "Gather the leftover pieces," he said. "Don't waste anything."

¹³ So they gathered what was left over from the five barley loaves. They filled 12 baskets with the pieces left by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ The people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did. Then they began to say, "This must be the Prophet who is supposed to come into the world." ¹⁵ But Jesus knew that they planned to come and force him to be their king. So he went away again to a mountain by himself.

²⁴ The crowd realized that Jesus and his disciples were not there. So they got into boats and went to Capernaum to look for Jesus.

²⁵ They found him on the other side of the lake. They asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. You are not looking for me because you saw miraculous signs. You are looking for me because you ate the loaves until you were full. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils. Work for food that lasts forever. That is the food the Son of Man will give you. God the Father has put his seal of approval on him."

- A large crowd of people had been following Jesus watching him perform miracles healing the sick.
 - Jesus' question to Philip was meant to test him – Jesus probably wanted to see if Philip would trust Jesus' power to supply the need or if he would try to "fix" the problem himself.
 - Sometimes God allows you to get to the "end of our rope" (the limit of your patience or endurance) to test our trust in Him. We need to learn to depend on Him for our every need (Luke 12:29-31). God tests us to improve our faith, not to make us fail.
 - Philip knew that it would require a fortune to buy enough food to feed that crowd. Andrew saw what little they had (one person's lunch) and was also dismayed. The disciples failed the test.
 - They calculated 5,000 men not including women and children (Matthew 14:21). That means that the actual number of people was probably closer to 10 thousand!
 - Jesus gave thanks to the Father – blessing the food– and began handing it out. The miracle was performed in the action of passing the food around.
 - Jesus provided so much food that they collected 12 baskets with leftovers. He probably wanted each disciple to never forget what they had witnessed and to trust him fully to provide for their every need.
 - Jesus has promised that he will never fail us nor abandon us (Hebrews 13:5).
 - The people wanted to make him king only because he provided food for them. They really did not understand who he was and what he had come to do. Jesus could not and would not allow them to do that.
-
- Jesus knew their hearts so he knew they were looking for him for what they could get from him.
 - He encouraged them to look not for material things that do not last but for things that last forever. Those are the things that only Jesus himself can give. The food He gives satisfies the soul. Only he has the approval of God the Father.

²⁸ Then they asked him, “What does God want from us? What works does he want us to do?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “God’s work is to believe in the One he has sent.”

³⁰ So they asked him, “What miraculous sign will you give us? What will you do so we can see it and believe you?”

³¹ Long ago our people ate the manna in the desert. It is written in Scripture, ‘The Lord gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ “—(*Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24,25*)

³² Jesus said to them, “What I’m about to tell you is true. It is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven. It is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

³³ The bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven. He gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “give us this bread from now on.”

³⁵ Then Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever go hungry. And no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty.

³⁶ “But it is just as I told you. You have seen me, and you still do not believe. ³⁷ Everyone the Father gives me will come to me. I will never send away anyone who comes to me.

³⁸ “I have not come down from heaven to do what I want to do. I have come to do what the One who sent me wants me to do. ³⁹ The One who sent me doesn’t want me to lose anyone he has given me. He wants me to raise them up on the last day. ⁴⁰ My Father wants all who look to the Son and believe in him to have eternal life. I will raise them up on the last day.”

- They immediately took Jesus’ offer as something they could earn. They wanted to know what type of work they had to do to get that food from God he was talking about.
- Jesus explains that what God really wants is that we believe in the One he sent: Jesus.
 - It is through faith and faith alone that we receive God’s blessings and salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). We cannot work to “buy” God or his blessings by doing good works or following rules and religion. We have to completely trust Him, trust what He says, and trust what He has done for us.
- They understood what Jesus meant –that he had been sent from God– so now they ask him to prove it by performing a miracle. As if they had not seen do that already!
- Since they had been talking about food –the bread Jesus had given them to eat, and the bread from heaven Jesus offered them- they bring up the story of what God did to feed the Israelites led by Moses for 40 years in the desert: He sent them manna from heaven (a type of “cereal” from heaven that they made into bread). They are basically challenging him to do something similar so they can believe Jesus came from God.
- Jesus states that what they receive in the desert was not the real bread from heaven. That was only to sustain their physical bodies. The true bread —the one that God gives— is truly from heaven and it will give life to the world.
- They were probably still thinking about material bread when they said “give us this bread”. They really did not understand what he was talking about.
- Jesus now explains to them that what they really need is HIM! He is the true bread of life.
 - What he was saying is that you need to experience him personally and intimately –as if you were eating him!– to really experience what God wants to give you. He wants a personal, intimate relationship with you! Only then you will receive the life —true, eternal life— that he will produce in you.
- He promises that if you experience him this way you will never have need –spiritual need– of anything else. No more spiritual hunger, no more spiritual thirst. You will be completely satisfied.
- Jesus knew they were not believing what he was saying. This is a spiritual calling as God himself is the one who leads us to Jesus. And those who come to Jesus will never be rejected by him.
- Jesus came to do the will of the Father, and His will is that all who see his Son Jesus and believe in him will have eternal life. That person will be raised up from the dead one day to live in heaven with God forever!
- Have you allowed Jesus to come into your life? Have you experienced his life in you? Are you still trying to earn your way into heaven or are you trusting and believing him like God wants you to do?

9. Leave Your Life of Sin and Turn to God (NlrV)

John 8

¹ But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² At sunrise he arrived in the temple courtyard again. All the people gathered around him there. He sat down to teach them.

³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman. She had been caught in adultery. They made her stand in front of the group. ⁴ They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught having sex with a man who was not her husband. ⁵ In the Law, Moses commanded us to kill such women by throwing stones at them. Now what do you say?” ⁶ They were trying to trap Jesus with that question. They wanted to have a reason to bring charges against him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

⁷ They kept asking him questions. So he stood up and said to them, “Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

⁸ He bent down again and wrote on the ground.

⁹ Those who heard what he had said began to go away. They left one at a time, the older ones first. Soon only Jesus was left. The woman was still standing there.

¹⁰ Jesus stood up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Hasn’t anyone found you guilty?”

¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then I don’t find you guilty either,” Jesus said. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Luke 13

¹ Some people who were there at that time told Jesus about certain Galileans. Pilate had mixed their blood with their sacrifices.

² Jesus said, “These people from Galilee suffered greatly. Do you think they were worse sinners than all the other Galileans? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you turn away from your sins, you will all die too. ⁴ Or what about the 18 people in Siloam? They died when the tower fell on them. Do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you turn away from your sins, you will all die too.”

Romans 3

²³ Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory.

Romans 6

²³ When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

- These Jewish leaders were always looking for ways to trap Jesus. Yet, by bringing the woman caught in the act of adultery but not the man she was caught with, the Jewish leaders themselves were breaking the law which states that both the man and the woman caught in adultery must be put to death (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). They were probably more interested in stoning Jesus than in stoning the woman!
- The Jewish leaders thought they had found a case that would allow them to catch Jesus one way or the other: if he failed to condemn the woman, they could accuse him of breaking the law of Moses; if he did condemn her to death, they could accuse him of breaking Roman law (only they had the power to dictate death sentences).
- Jesus knew it all; he refused to answer their questions. (*No one knows what Jesus was writing on the ground.*)
- Jesus knew the lives and the sins of everyone —*just as he knows ours*. He challenged them to look into their conscience to see if they were free of sin —any sin— and, if so, throw the first stone.
- No one is free of sin. The older, wiser men acknowledged that and left first. All the others had to do the same.
- Jesus does not question the guilt of the woman —there was no doubt she was guilty— but he does not condemn her either. He shows her love and compassion.
 - Jesus did not come to condemn but to save (John 3:17)
- Notice that he did not say, “Your sin is forgiven.” She had not repented. His compassion for the woman does not mean that he condones (ignores, excuses, overlooks) her sin. He sends her away with a warning to leave her life of sin. He is giving her the chance to repent and change her life.
- We are quick to point fingers at the sin of others but we are slow to acknowledge our own. We like to measure ourselves against the worse sinners. God measures us against His perfect holiness, and we do not measure up. The Bible says that: we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23), no one is right with God (Rom. 3:10), even our best efforts in doing good are tainted by our sin (Isaiah 64:6). The Bible does not differentiate between sins. Sin is sin. And the punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23a).
- We are all in desperate need of forgiveness and salvation (from the punishment of sin). God is willing and desiring to forgive us if we acknowledge our sin and repent from it (1 John 1:8-9; Acts 3:19). He is willing and desiring to save us if we trust Jesus as our Savior and surrender to him as Lord (owner, master) of our lives. (John 3:16, 18, 36; John 5:24; Romans 10:8-13)
- *The question is, what are you going to do about your own sin? What are you going to do with God’s offer of forgiveness? Don’t point fingers. Acknowledge your sin, repent from it, come to Jesus, receive his forgiveness. Surrender to Him, the One who truly loves you!*

10. The Blind Will See (New International reader's Version, Nlrv)

John 9

¹ As Jesus went along, he saw a man who was blind. He had been blind since he was born. ² Jesus' disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned? Was this man born blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?"

³ "It isn't because this man sinned," said Jesus. "It isn't because his parents sinned. This happened so that God's work could be shown in his life. ⁴ While it is still day, we must do the work of the One who sent me. Night is coming. Then no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶ After he said this, he spit on the ground. He made some mud with the spit. Then he put the mud on the man's eyes.

⁷ "Go," he told him. "Wash in the Pool of Siloam." Siloam means Sent. So the man went and washed. And he came home able to see.

⁸ His neighbors and those who had earlier seen him begging asked questions. "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" they asked.

⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No. He only looks like him." But the man who had been blind kept saying, "I am the man."

¹⁰ "Then how were your eyes opened?" they asked.

¹¹ He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed. Then I could see."

¹² "Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ The day Jesus made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.

"He put mud on my eyes," the man replied. "Then I washed. And now I can see."

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "Jesus has not come from God. He does not keep the Sabbath day."

But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So the Pharisees did not agree with each other.

¹⁷ Finally they turned again to the blind man. "What do you have to say about him?" they asked. "It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews still did not believe that the man had been blind and now could see. So they sent for his parents. ¹⁹ "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

- Though an illness or condition can be a result of a person's sin, Jesus explains that sometimes God allows a condition on a person so his power and mercy can be more fully demonstrated.
- Jesus declares that He is the light of the world, a declaration that points to what he is about to do—open the eyes of a blind man so he can see the light—, but also addresses the sad condition of those who are spiritually blind and who reject His light.
- Jesus likes to break religious rules made by men, not by God: they considered it a sin to make mud on a Sabbath day. And not only is he making mud, he is making it with his spit! Disgusting!
- The miracle did not happen because there was anything special about the mud or the water at the pool of Siloam. What made the difference was that the blind man believed Jesus and obeyed his command.
 - *Believe Jesus, obey Him, see miracles!*
- The man did not see Jesus when he came back. He would have no way of knowing what He looked like.
- The man's neighbors and everyone who had seen him begging did recognize him but, since he was blind no longer, they were not sure if it was the same man.
- Those who talked to the man picked on the fact that it was Jesus who had healed him and decided to take him to the Jewish leaders. They probably wanted to earn some points with them by turning in one of His followers (see v. 22).
- The Jewish leaders cannot see the miracle Jesus has realized because Jesus has broken their law by making mud on a Sabbath. They completely ignored the fact that only God or a man sent by Him can give sight to one who was born blind. They have set their law above all else and now they are blind to the very work of God.
- The former blind man can see clearly, physically as well as spiritually. He recognized that Jesus had come from God.
- The leaders are so blind spiritually that now they try to disprove the miracle itself! Yet, the parents confirm that the man was born blind. The leaders had no argument, except that they refused to believe.
- There are none so blind as those who do not want to see.

²⁰ “We know he is our son,” the parents answered. “And we know he was born blind. ²¹ But we don’t know how he can now see. And we don’t know who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is an adult. He can speak for himself.”

²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews. The Jews had already decided that anyone who said Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why the man’s parents said, “He is an adult. Ask him.”

²⁴ Again they called the man who had been blind to come to them. “Give glory to God by telling the truth!” they said. “We know that the man who healed you is a sinner.”

²⁵ He replied, “I don’t know if he is a sinner or not. I do know one thing. I was blind, but now I can see!”

²⁶ Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

²⁷ He answered, “I have already told you. But you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

²⁸ Then they began to attack him with their words. “You are this fellow’s disciple!” they said. “We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses. But we don’t even know where this fellow comes from.”

³⁰ The man answered, “That is really surprising! You don’t know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to godly people who do what he wants them to do. ³² Nobody has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man had not come from God, he could do nothing.”

³⁴ Then the Pharisees replied, “When you were born, you were already deep in sin. How dare you talk like that to us!” And they threw him out of the synagogue.

³⁵ Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out. When he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

³⁶ “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me, so I can believe in him.”

³⁷ Jesus said, “You have now seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

³⁸ Then the man said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

³⁹ Jesus said, “I have come into this world to judge it. I have come so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this. They asked, “What? Are we blind too?”

⁴¹ Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But since you claim you can see, you remain guilty.

➤ Their decision against Jesus was based on their own sense of righteousness based on their own law, not on the evidence of Jesus’ actions and teaching. If they had been able to see with spiritual eyes, they would have known that they had God himself in the flesh among them.

➤ Again, there are none so blind as those who do not want to see. However, the former blind man sees clearly, and he is happy to testify about Jesus. He even mocks the leaders!

➤ The man who had been blind has 20/20 spiritual vision. He understands that, if Jesus did not come from God as the leaders argue, then He could not have done what He did. The man himself was evidence and witness to what Jesus had done and, no matter how much they refused to believe, the leaders could not cover up the evidence.

➤ The man already believed Jesus had come from God, though he had not really met Him yet.

➤ Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man to the former blind man. [*Son of Man was Jesus’ favorite title; it refers back to a vision the prophet Daniel had (Daniel 7:13-14). It identifies Him as the One chosen by God who will fulfill the prophecies.*]

➤ The man now does what the Jewish leaders should have done if they had been able to see spiritually: acknowledge who Jesus was, believe in Him and worship Him.

➤ Some people are blind spiritually because they have never heard about Jesus. They will not be condemned.

➤ However, those who claim to see –who say they know about God but still refuse to receive Jesus and honor him as Lord of their lives–, they will never receive His forgiveness and will remain guilty before God. In due time they will also receive the punishment for their sin.

➤ The question is, how is your spiritual vision? Can you really see or are you refusing to believe? Can you see clearly who Jesus is? Are you willing to recognize Jesus is the One sent by God? Are you willing to confess that He is the Son of God and make Him the Lord of your life?

11. "I Am Like a Gate," "I Am the Good Shepherd" (NirV)

John 10

¹ "What I'm about to tell you is true. What if someone does not enter the sheep pen through the gate but climbs in another way? That person is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought all of his own sheep out, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him. They don't recognize a stranger's voice."

⁶ Jesus used this story. But the Jews who were there didn't understand what he was telling them.

⁷ So Jesus said again, "What I'm about to tell you is true. I am like a gate for the sheep. ⁸ All those who ever came before me were thieves and robbers. But the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I'm like a gate. Anyone who enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out. And he will find plenty of food. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired man is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when the hired man sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired man. He does not care about the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. ¹⁵ They know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I give my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ "I have other sheep that do not belong to this sheep pen. I must bring them in too. They also will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd.

¹⁷ "The reason my Father loves me is that I give up my life. But I will take it back again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me. I give it up myself. I have the authority to give it up. And I have the authority to take it back again. I received this command from my Father."

²⁷ "My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never die. No one can steal them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than anyone. No one can steal them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."

- Shepherds kept the sheep in a safe place during the night. Often there would be hundreds of sheep from different flocks together in one pen. In the morning the flocks were easily separated because sheep respond to no one's voice but their own shepherd's, and they follow wherever he leads. Sheep do not follow someone they do not recognize. (*In western countries shepherds are usually on horseback behind the sheep, leading dogs to maneuver the flocks. In contrast middle-eastern shepherds lead.*)
- The enclosures were often just a round or square wall of piled stones in a field, with only one entrance. The shepherds bring the sheep inside and one of them lies down across the entrance opening to keep thieves and predators away. He allows fellow shepherds in an out but he would fight intruders to death if necessary. Those who did not come through the entrance but jumped in over the wall were obviously up to no good.
- Jesus is comparing us to sheep: defenseless, in need of protection, care and direction. We need a shepherd who cares. We need Him.
- Jesus was using this story to talk about spiritual things but you cannot understand spiritual things unless your heart is willing and your spirit is ready to listen to God's voice and to obey Him.
- Jesus himself is the gate (gatekeeper). He will protect us from false shepherds, he will provide for our needs, he is the only one who can offer us complete safety and salvation, the only one who can give us true life.
- And he will not send a hired hand (worker, employee). He is willing to give his own life to save ours.
- This is just mindboggling: He wants us to know Him just as Jesus and the Father know each other!! God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit are ONE. That's the kind of personal relationship He wants us to have with Him. A deep, intimate relationship in which we become one with Him.
 - Think: the God who created the universe and all that is in it wants you to know Him and to have a loving relationship with Him!! He is not out to get you! He wants you to *know Him* and experience his love.
- Jesus' death on the cross was not an accident or mistake. No one could take Jesus' life unless he allowed it. It was God's plan from the beginning of creation. Jesus gave his life willingly because he wanted to save us.
 - John 3:16; Romans 5:8
- Jesus was giving up his life but he also had the power to take it back. This would be the final proof that he is God. Only God can give life. Jesus is God and he is life!
- The proof that you belong to him is that you recognize his voice and follow him. *You cannot say you know God unless you follow (obey) His word.* When you have a personal relationship with Jesus he gives you eternal life (with him in heaven). You will be safe and secure in his care. Trust HIM!

12. “I Am the Resurrection and the Life” (NlrV)

John 11

¹ A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. ² Mary would later pour perfume on the Lord. She would also wipe his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was sick in bed. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus. “Lord,” they told him, “the one you love is sick.”

⁴ When Jesus heard this, he said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory. God’s Son will receive glory because of it.”

⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ But after he heard Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days.

⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

⁸ “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short time ago the Jews tried to kill you with stones. Are you still going back there?”

⁹ Jesus answered, “Aren’t there 12 hours of daylight? A person who walks during the day won’t trip and fall. He can see because of this world’s light. ¹⁰ But when he walks at night, he’ll trip and fall. He has no light.”

¹¹ After he said this, Jesus went on speaking to them. “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep,” he said. “But I am going there to wake him up.”

¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he’s sleeping, he will get better.”

¹³ Jesus had been speaking about the death of Lazarus. But his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your benefit, I am glad I was not there. Now you will believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶ Then Thomas, who was called Didymus, spoke to the rest of the disciples. “Let us go also,” he said. “Then we can die with Jesus.”

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found out that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary. They had come to comfort them because their brother was dead.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed at home.

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask for.”

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again. This will happen when people are raised from the dead on the last day.”

- Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were very close friends. When Lazarus got gravely ill, the sisters knew that only Jesus could heal him. Because of their close relationship with Jesus, they expected Him to come running to save His beloved friend Lazarus.
- Jesus knew better. He knew something no one else could understand yet: God was going to use this situation to bring glory to Himself and to Jesus. So He did not respond immediately to their request. He waited until Lazarus died and was buried before starting on His way to their home.
 - Many times we pray fervently to God but He does not seem to respond. We need to learn to trust Him completely. He has a plan that we may not understand. He will always do what is best in every situation, even when sometimes it may not be what we want.
- Jesus timed His arrival so He would get there “late”. He was allowing time so there would be absolutely no doubt that Lazarus was dead. In fact, by the time He got there four days later, Lazarus’ body had already started to stink as only a decomposing body can (v. 39).
- Many people had come to console the deceased’s family. (Note: When it talks about “the Jews” it usually refers to people who did not follow Jesus. It was not meant as a derogatory label as Jesus, the apostles and all His first disciples were Jews themselves.)
- Jesus’ consoling words are not empty words. He really means what He says!
- In her words Martha declares her belief that Jesus had the power and authority over all illness.
- Martha had been taught well and she knew God’s word: the dead will come back to life one day, to receive reward from Jesus or to be judged by Jesus (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 20:4-6; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-15*).
- However, Jesus wanted to teach her something deeper: the resurrection and the life are not just concepts or ‘things’ but a PERSON. Jesus is the resurrection! Jesus is the life!
 - If you want to enjoy a life that will never end, you must believe in Jesus and surrender yourself to Him completely. Do you want to go to heaven? You must come to Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him.

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if he dies.

²⁶ And those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God. I believe that you are the One who was supposed to come into the world."

²⁸ After she said this, she went back home. She called her sister Mary to one side to talk to her. "The Teacher is here," Martha said. "He is asking for you."

²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Jesus had not yet entered the village. He was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ Some Jews had been comforting Mary in the house. They noticed how quickly she got up and went out. So they followed her. They thought she was going to the tomb to cry there.

³² Mary reached the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she fell at his feet. She said, "Lord, I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died."

³³ Jesus saw her crying. He saw that the Jews who had come along with her were crying also. His spirit became very sad, and he was troubled.

³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus sobbed.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how much he loved him!"

³⁷ But some of them said, "He opened the eyes of the blind man. Couldn't he have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Once more Jesus felt very sad. He came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance.

³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days."

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see God's glory?"

⁴¹ So they took away the stone.

Then Jesus looked up. He said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know that you always hear me. But I said this for the benefit of the people standing here. I said it so they will believe that you sent me."

⁴³ Then Jesus called in a loud voice. He said, "Lazarus, come out!"

⁴⁴ The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go."

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary saw what Jesus did. So they put their faith in him.

- Look at Mary's confession carefully. That's a confession that brings salvation: to believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Son of God, sent by God as Messiah (Christ); and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead (*Romans 10:9-10*).
 - Have you ever made such a confession of faith in Jesus Christ?
- Mary too believed that Jesus had the power and authority over all illness.
- Jesus had come specifically to bring Lazarus back to life, however, He is not insensitive to people's pain. He saw their sorrow and responded in a compassionate way: He cried with them!
 - God is not ignorant or insensitive to our needs and our pains. He knows and understands. It is not His desire to see us suffer, but we live in a fallen world and suffering is part of it. If He allows something to happen to us, that does not mean He does not care or does not have a plan to bless us. We have to trust Him and wait on Him to do what's best.
- He is ready to act now! Martha did not understand what He was doing. She only thought of the obvious: the body has been rotting in there for 4 days - it stinks.
- Jesus calls her to have faith in Him, to trust Him completely regardless of the circumstances.
- Jesus declares the reason He had allowed Lazarus to die: so that in raising him from the dead, people would believe that Jesus had been sent by God.
- At Jesus' command the dead man comes back to life. (I think He had to call him out by name so the other dead people would not come out too!) Lazarus came out wrapped in the cloth he had been buried in for all the world to see!
 - Who alone can give life to the dead? Would you put your faith in Jesus?
- Jesus alone had the power and the authority to give life to those who trust Him completely. It is God's will for everyone who believes in Jesus to have eternal life and Jesus will bring them back from the dead at the end of the world (*John 6:40*).
 - Do you believe Jesus has the power and authority to give life? Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe He died on the cross, was buried, and God brought Him back to life on the third day? Will you trust Him with your life?
 - Will you ask Him to forgive you of your sins and take control of your life? If you do that He will give you a new life, one that lasts forever, and you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven (*John 3:36, 5:24; and 1 John 5:11-12*).

[NOTE: Ask the questions but do not force people to give an answer right then. Let them think about it. Tell them to come and talk to you if they have questions or if they want to respond to your questions/invitation.]

13. People Honor Jesus: Blessed is the King of Israel (NirV)

John 12

¹ It was six days before the Passover Feast. Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived. Lazarus was the one Jesus had raised from the dead. ² A dinner was given at Bethany to honor Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was among those at the table with Jesus.

³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard. It was an expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

⁴ But Judas Iscariot didn't like what Mary did. He was one of Jesus' disciples. Later he was going to hand Jesus over to his enemies. Judas said, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold? Why wasn't the money given to poor people? It was worth a year's pay."

⁶ He didn't say this because he cared about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. Judas was in charge of the money bag. He used to help himself to what was in it.

⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "The perfume was meant for the day I am buried." ⁸ You will always have the poor among you. But you won't always have me."

⁹ Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there, so they came. But they did not come only because of Jesus. They also came to see Lazarus. After all, Jesus had raised him from the dead.

¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus too.

¹¹ Because of Lazarus, many of the Jews were starting to follow Jesus. They were putting their faith in him.

¹² The next day the large crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches from palm trees and went out to meet him. They shouted,

"Hosanna! "

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

—(Psalm 118:25,26)

"Blessed is the King of Israel!"

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. This is just as it is written in Scripture. It says,

¹⁵ "City of Zion, do not be afraid. See, your king is coming. He is sitting on a donkey's colt." —(Zechariah 9:9)

¹⁶ At first, Jesus' disciples did not understand all this. They realized it only after he had received glory. Then they realized that these things had been written about him. They realized that the people had done these things to him.

¹⁷ A crowd had been with Jesus when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead. So they continued to tell everyone about what had happened.

¹⁸ Many people went out to meet him. They had heard that he had done this miraculous sign.

¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "This isn't getting us anywhere. Look how the whole world is following him!"

- Some time after Jesus resurrected Lazarus the people from the town decided to honor Jesus offering a banquet. They knew what Jesus had done and, if they did not, Lazarus and his sisters were there to tell them!
- Mary's actions speak of a heart full of gratitude and love for Jesus.
- Pure nard is an exquisite perfumed oil extracted from the root of the nard plant from India. Extremely expensive, the amount Mary had was worth a year's pay. In today's terms, at minimum wage that would be about \$15,000!!! Even if Mary was a wealthy person (which most think she was not) something that valuable was not to be squandered. It was a small treasure!
 - When we fully comprehend what Jesus has done for us we cannot do anything but give Him our very best. Anything less is not worthy of Him.
- The custom was to pour oil over the head of those being anointed. Washing a guest's feet was left for the lowliest of servants. With her actions Mary expresses the deepest love and devotion she has for Jesus. She completely and unashamedly humbles herself before Him, in front of all their guests.
 - Sometimes we fail to show love and gratitude to God because we are too proud. We don't want people calling us "fanatics," we don't want to risk our reputation. Pride is sin. We forget that the praise of men does not mean anything. We should only be concerned about God's opinion of us.
- Jesus' statement may have come to Mary's mind after Jesus died and they were not able to anoint his body before burial, as it was their custom.
- In their arrogance and spiritual blindness, the Jewish leaders stubbornly ignore the significance of what Jesus has done and the living proof in Lazarus. They now decide to kill two people instead of one to get rid of the evidence! Others were not blind; the evidence was overwhelming and they put their faith in Jesus.
- Jesus was received as a conquering king into Jerusalem however, the people misunderstood the purpose of his coming. They wanted a powerful king who could deliver them from the Romans. Jesus showed that he was not a conquering king but the Prince of Peace, riding a donkey instead of a stallion, as a symbol of humility.
- Every detail of the prophecy about the Messiah was fulfilled in Jesus! He is the One sent by God to save us. He loves you! You can trust Him!!
- Everyone knew about Lazarus' resurrection. He was the living evidence of Jesus' power and authority. However, the Pharisees refused to see and acknowledge who Jesus was!
- How are your spiritual eyes? Can you see clearly who Jesus is? Are you willing to give Him your best—your own life? How do you show your gratitude to Him for what He has done for you?

14. I Will Bring All People to Myself (New International reader's Version, NlRV)

John 12

²⁰ There were some Greeks among the people who went up to worship during the Feast. ²¹ They came to ask Philip for a favor. Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee.

”Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.”

²² Philip went to tell Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to receive glory. ²⁴ What I’m about to tell you is true. Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only one seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

²⁵ “Anyone who loves his life will lose it. But anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it and have eternal life.

²⁶ Anyone who serves me must follow me. And where I am, my servant will also be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷ “My heart is troubled. What should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No. This is the very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, bring glory to your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven. It said, “I have brought glory to my name. I will bring glory to it again.”

²⁹ The crowd there heard the voice. Some said it was thunder. Others said an angel had spoken to Jesus.

³⁰ Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now it is time for the world to be judged. Now the prince of this world will be thrown out. ³² But I am going to be lifted up from the earth. When I am, I will bring all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show them how he was going to die.

³⁷ Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in front of them. But they still would not believe in him. ³⁸ This happened as Isaiah the prophet had said it would. He had said,

”Lord, who has believed what we’ve been saying?

Who has seen the Lord’s saving power?” —(Isaiah 53:1)

³⁹ For this reason, they could not believe. As Isaiah says in another place,

⁴⁰ “The Lord has blinded their eyes.

He has closed their minds.

So they can’t see with their eyes.

They can’t understand with their minds.

They can’t turn to the Lord. If they could, he would heal them.” —(Isaiah 6:10) ⁴¹ Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

⁴² At the same time that Jesus did those miracles, many of the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees, they would not admit they believed. They were afraid they would be thrown out of the synagogue. ⁴³ They loved praise from people more than praise from God.

- The name *Philip* is of Greek origin; that might be the reason why the Greeks went to him. They probably wanted a private audience with Jesus.
- Jesus had been saying, “My time has not come” but for some reason the request from the Greeks was a signal that the time for his suffering, crucifixion and resurrection had arrived.
- In vers. 24 & 24 He uses an agricultural fact as the analogy to explain the need for Him to die on the cross: As the grain dies so it can produce fruit, so Jesus had to die to produce the fruit of salvation for us.
 - His death was God’s perfect plan to save us. It was necessary that He die in our place or we would have no means of salvation. *How are you going to respond to God after He has done something so amazing for you?*
- He applies the same analogy to those who want to follow Him: they must *die to self* so they can produce the fruit that pleases God. To die to self has to do with your life’s priorities.
 - One who loves this [physical] life will only seek his own gain, his own will, his own plans. His priorities and his heart are on material things. Because of that he will lose the eternal life that God offers him.
 - One who “hates” his life is one who completely surrenders to God’s will, to God’s plans, to God’s standards. His priorities are on spiritual things; he desires to please God. That person will have eternal life with God in heaven.
- To follow Jesus requires absolute trust in Him, complete surrender and constant obedience to Him. His followers will enjoy His presence and receive honor from the Father.
- Jesus expresses terror as what is to come. His human impulse was to ask to be delivered from it all, yet He immediately submits himself to the will of the Father and sticks with the plan. His prayer is for God to be glorified in what is to come: the cross!
 - Jesus’ sacrifice began long before He died. He left His throne & glory in heaven to come as a baby; He experienced terror and torture, He suffered the separation from the Father when all our sins fell upon Him. Still, His incomprehensible love for us kept Him going. *Can you even begin to understand how much He must love you?*
- God the Father was pleased with Jesus and He wanted everyone to know!
- “The prince of this world” is Satan. Jesus’ seemed ‘defeated’ at the cross, but His resurrection destroyed Satan.
- His death would not be by stoning, or from torture or beheading. He would be crucified as the prophecies said.
- No matter how many signs –miracles and wonders– Jesus did they refused to believe. Because they were not willing to believe, God left their minds sealed to the truth.
 - Still today people do not come to Christ not because they do not know or understand who He is but because they choose not to. Salvation is free but you have to choose it. You must choose to trust Jesus and receive Him in your heart. Do not close your heart and mind to His voice! Let God open your spiritual eyes, and receive His truth!
- Some who believed were held back because of their pride and wrong priorities. They chose people’s opinion over God’s.
 - Don’t let anything or anyone keep you from coming to Christ! Only God’s opinion counts! He loves you!

15. Do as I Have Done for You (New International reader's Version, NlRV)

John 13

¹ It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. It was time for him to go to the Father. Jesus loved his disciples who were in the world. So he now showed them how much he really loved them.

² The evening meal was being served. The devil had already tempted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. He had told Judas to hand Jesus over to his enemies. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under his power. He also knew he had come from God and was returning to God.

⁴ So he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter.

"Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will understand."

⁸ "No," said Peter. "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me."

⁹ "Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet! Wash my hands and my head too!"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs to wash only his feet. The rest of his body is clean. And you are clean. But not all of you are."

¹¹ Jesus knew who was going to hand him over to his enemies. That was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You are right. That is what I am. ¹⁴ I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you.

¹⁶ "What I'm about to tell you is true. A servant is not more important than his master. And a messenger is not more important than the one who sends him. ¹⁷ Now you know these things. So you will be blessed if you do them.

[*Philippians 2:5-11*]

- Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen, how, and when. He knew that God the Father had already given him all authority on heaven and on earth. He is Lord over all! Jesus came from God and became human so he could save us; now he was about to finish the work he had come to do and then he could return to heaven to take the throne that belongs only to Him.
- He knew what Judas had done. But he still welcomes him as a friend.
 - Nothing escapes from Jesus' knowledge; your deepest thoughts and feelings are known to him (John 2:24-25) as is the number of hairs on your head! (Luke 12:7) But still he loves you and wants a personal relationship with you!
- Washing the feet of the guests was the work of the lowliest of servants. (*People did not sit at tables to eat; they lied on the floor around the mat where the food was display-ed. A person's feet would be very close to the face of the next person. Feet had to be washed or they would make for a very uncomfortable eating situation!*) There were no servants present at this meal so their feet had not been washed.
- The disciples showed their lack of humility as not one of them volunteered to wash the other's feet. They all wanted to be in a position of authority and would not want the others to look down on them. Such pride is sin.
- Jesus had told his disciples that they needed to serve each other and not seek positions of authority over one another (Matthew 20:25-28; Luke 9:48) but they did not learn the lesson. Now he teaches them by example.
 - He could have asked anyone to wash the others' feet, but he chose to do it himself. Jesus, the Son of God, Creator and sustainer of all that is, chose to humble himself, first, by becoming like one of his creatures and be born as a baby, then subjected himself to the authority of earthly parents. His entire adult life he served others and now he humbles himself even more taking the position of a lowly servant and washing his followers' feet. He would be humbled even more as he subjected himself to abuse, torture and the cross. He who could command the entire host of heaven or destroy the entire humanity with a single word is willing to become nothing so he can save us. That is a mindboggling kind of love!
 - Do you understand what Jesus has done for you? How would you respond to such expression of love?
- Jesus is the only one who can "wash" us spiritually –from our sins, by his blood– so we can share life with him in heaven.
- Jesus wants us to be humble and to serve one another. Being humble is not being weak or poor. It means that you are secure of yourself and you are willing to do anything that is needed to help others. You are not arrogant or pretentious, and you do not need praises of others to feel good. You are happy to do it to please the Lord. Whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23-24).

16. "I Am The Way" (NirV)

John 14

¹ "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.

² "There are many rooms in my Father's house. If this were not true, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am.

⁴ "You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father also. From now on, you do know him. And you have seen him."

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father. That will be enough for us."

⁹ Jesus answered, "Don't you know me, Philip? I have been among you such a long time! Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

¹⁰ "Don't you believe that I am in the Father? Don't you believe that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. The Father lives in me. He is the One who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say I am in the Father. Also believe that the Father is in me. Or at least believe what the miracles show about me.

¹² "What I'm about to tell you is true. Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. In fact, he will do even greater things. That is because I am going to the Father.

¹³ "And I will do anything you ask in my name. Then the Son will bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name. I will do it.

- They had just finished their Passover meal. Jesus had predicted that Judas was going to turn him in to the Jewish leaders and that Peter was going to deny that he even knew him, and that He was leaving them. Everyone was sad, especially Jesus as he is the only one who knows exactly what's about to happen and how much pain and suffering he will have to endure in the next few hours. However, he is the one comforting them.
- Jesus asks that they trust Him like they trust God the Father. He is basically telling them that trusting Him is trusting God.
 - *Placing our wholehearted trust in God in times of uncertainty is the best antidote to anxiety and depression.*
- The "Father's house" is heaven. There is plenty of room there for all who believe! Jesus has to go there first to make sure everything is ready before He comes back to take us to live with Him forever. This is his promise.
 - *Hey, wherever Jesus is, that's heaven!*
- Jesus had spoken to them about the things that had to happen to him –rejection, crucifixion, resurrection. And he had just told them where he was going. Thomas' question makes it obvious that they were not paying attention.
- Jesus' answer is one of the most important truths of the Bible: "I AM the **way**, I AM the **truth**, I AM the **life**."
 - Jesus does not show you the way. He IS *the* way. The ONE WAY to heaven approved by the Father. Any other way will lead you astray. Only through Jesus can you have forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Only He can connect man with his God.
 - Jesus does not lead you to truth. He IS *the* truth. He is the complete revelation of God in the flesh. If you want to know the truth of God, you must know Jesus.
 - Jesus does not lead you to life. He IS *the* life. He is the source of physical and spiritual life. Without him there is only death: a complete, eternal separation from God = hell.
- In case they missed it, he makes an emphatic summary of these truths: "No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus is IT! You have to know him personally to have access to God and to everything He offers to those who come to Him.
 - *How have you responded to Jesus' invitation to come through Him, to believe Him, to come to God?*
- Jesus is the complete revelation of God –who God is– and if we know Him, we know God. Everything that Jesus said and did was what He saw and heard from the Father. They are one (John 10:30).
- Those who surrender to Christ and receive Him in their hearts will have His power to do what He wants, the things God wills.
- When we pray, we are commanded to pray to the Father in Jesus' name. We have no merits of our own; it is because of His merits that we can come to the Father with our petitions. Here Jesus says that it he himself who will respond to our petitions.

