



The Gospel of John

CAPSTONE CHURCH | FALL 2015

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE | FALL 2015

LETTER FROM THE ELDERS

Thank you for your commitment to study The Gospel of John with us in community! Other than the preaching of God's Word, we believe community is the most important thing we do at Capstone Church. Community gives us the opportunity to apply the preached Word to our lives and see transformation (life change) take place. So as we continue to walk verse-by-verse together through John and unpack these great truths in our groups, we are praying that many lives are changed!

The Gospel of John is a life and heart-altering story about Jesus Christ. John is telling us about the most pivotal man in all of history and the greatest love story ever told! Just like we find in Genesis 1, John opens his book with three simple words, "In the beginning...." In Genesis, these words mark the start of God's breathtaking act of creation. John's "in the beginning" also speaks to a new creation, but this time it's not stars, planets, or animals that God is making. This time, through the man Jesus Christ, God is making us into new people!

Throughout his book, John uniquely focuses on the true identity of Jesus and what our right response to this truth should be. In fact, near the end of the book he tells us exactly why he wrote it! John writes, "30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John doesn't want us to be confused. He wants us to know that Jesus is the Son of God, sent by the Father to make us new, and that the promise of "life in his name" is the promise of eternal life with God! In our world where there is currently a lot of confusion as to what the "gospel" of Jesus actually is, John paints a simple yet profound picture that is truly "good news" for those who would believe.

During these next few months, our desire is that you spend time reading and studying John. We've provided a weekly reading guide based on the weekly sermon text and questions to help you think through the reading. Each week as you read, we would also encourage you to start back at the beginning (John 1:1) and read up to the end of that week's passage. Ask yourself, "What does John want me to know about Jesus here?" "What is John teaching me about life with Jesus?" "Why would God do all of this for me?"

Our prayer for you is that through the preaching of God's Word, the singing of God's Word, the reading and studying of God's Word on your own, and discussing God's Word in community, you might discover the true identity of Jesus and learn what it means to have life in His name!

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path.

— Psalm 119:103-105

It is absolutely critical for us as Christ followers to know the Word of God and apply it to our daily lives. We need to be reading Scripture, meditating on it, memorizing it and praying through it as we live life together and “stir up one another to love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24). Our hope is that this booklet helps guide you to growth whether studying God’s Word on your own, with your family or with other believers in a group setting.

Use this study like a travel guide through The Gospel of John as you journey to discover life in Jesus’ name. The booklet contains several elements for each week of the sermon series including a reading plan based on the sermon text, a memory verse, and a few questions to help you start a conversation with your kids (“For The Family”) about the passage.

Take a few minutes during the week to read through the passage. Pick out one or two of the “Examine And Apply” questions to think through. Spend a few minutes in prayer. We’ve even provided a few suggestions on how you can pray based on each reading.

Each week also contains questions for community groups. If you are in a group, read over the questions before meeting so that you will be better prepared to discuss them when your group decides to dig deeper. If you are not in a community group and would like more information or would like us to help you get connected, go to www.capstonechurch.org/next-steps.

— Capstone Church Elders

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE | FALL 2015

ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Who: John was one of Jesus' closest disciples. He grew up the son of a fisherman, but left his family and career behind in order to follow Jesus. He was an eyewitness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He was so close to Jesus that he often referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23, 19:26). He was one of Jesus' earliest followers and was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died.

When: Early church historians record that John wrote his letters toward the end of his life. This means John probably wrote his gospel around AD 80-90. His was most likely the last of the four gospel accounts written.

What: The Gospel of John is an eyewitness account to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In one sense, it is sort of like a biography of Jesus' life. However, John boasted that if everything Jesus said and did was written down, the whole world couldn't contain that many books. John chose specific teachings and events to include in his gospel. More than just telling us the story of Jesus, John wants us to understand the significance and meaning of Jesus' life and death.

Why: To our great benefit, John told us his exact purpose for writing. In John 20:30-31 he wrote, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John wrote so that we could know the true identity of our Savior. He wrote so that we would know how to experience true life in relationship with our Creator.

Basic Outline:

- I. The Son of God becomes flesh (John 1:1-18)
- II. The mission of Jesus explained (John 1:19-4:54)
- III. Resistance to and rejection of Jesus' offer of life (John 5:1-12:50)
- IV. Jesus prepares his disciples for their mission (John 13:1-17:26)
- V. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (John 18:1-21:25)

READING PLAN | FALL SEMESTER, 2015

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 13 - SEPTEMBER 19, 2015	JOHN 7:53-8:11
WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20 - SEPTEMBER 26, 2015	JOHN 8:12-8:30
WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 3, 2015	JOHN 8:31-8:47
WEEK OF OCTOBER 4 - OCTOBER 10, 2015	JOHN 8:48-8:59
WEEK OF OCTOBER 11 - OCTOBER 17, 2015	JOHN 9:1-9:41
WEEK OF OCTOBER 18 - OCTOBER 24, 2015	JOHN 10:1-10:21
WEEK OF OCTOBER 25 - OCTOBER 31, 2015	JOHN 10:22-10:42
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 7, 2015	JOHN 11:1-11:16
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 8 - NOVEMBER 14, 2015	JOHN 11:17-11:27
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 15 - NOVEMBER 21, 2015	JOHN 11:28-11:44
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 22 - NOVEMBER 28, 2015	JOHN 11:45-11:57

A) INTRODUCTION

For many of you, this will be the first time your group has met since taking a break for the summer. Take some time to introduce yourselves to any new group members and talk a little bit about what has been happening during the summer since you last met with each other.

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 7:53-8:11

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Ephesians 2:1-8;
Romans 8:1-4

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. What are the Pharisees trying to do to Jesus in John 8:1-7? How are they trying to use and twist the Law to their own advantage? Has there ever been a time where you've tried to make the Bible say something it doesn't say?

2. Read Galatians 6:1. Do you think the Pharisees were thinking about this when they dragged the woman to Jesus? Since we know the mercy and grace Christ has shown to us in the middle of our sin, how should that lead us to act around other believers? How do we actively show mercy and grace in our daily lives? How difficult is that to do in a world that doesn't show a lot of grace or mercy?

3. Read John 8:11. Does the command to "sin no more" come before or after Jesus tells the woman that she is not condemned? What do you think this says about the relationship between forgiveness and righteous living? What should the forgiveness of God lead to in our own lives?

4. Take some time to talk with your group about some practical ways that you could show mercy and grace this week at home, at work or out in the world. What are some ways we can show that the grace and love of Jesus is higher, deeper and wider than anything this world has to offer?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific needs in the group that need prayer. Pray that God would continue to knit your community group together and clear away distractions that keep your group from showing love to each other. Pray that God would give you specific opportunities this week to show love to your community group and people in your spheres of influence. Pray that your group would be a group full of grace who shows Christ to a hurting world.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

While you may not read this exact passage to younger children, it's critical that we talk about two things: A) Christ has shown us great grace by forgiving our sins when we didn't deserve it. We should share that same grace with the world. B) Being saved by grace does not mean we shouldn't obey the commands God gives us.

Family Question: What can we say and do this week that shows love, mercy and grace to each other like Jesus would show? How can we show this to people at school, at work and in our church?

REMEMBER

10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.

— John 8:10-11

A) INTRODUCTION

Go around the group and talk about a time you had to try to find something in the dark. How difficult was it to stumble around looking for something? What happens if you turn on the light?

Were you ever scared of the dark as a kid? What is it about the darkness that can make us afraid?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 8:12-30

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: John 1:1-4;
Ephesians 5:7-14

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. What is the importance of Jesus saying that He is the “light of the world”? Read John 1:1-4 for some more thoughts on this. How are light and life connected together in these verses and in John 8:12? What does this mean for people who haven’t trusted in Christ?

2. Read Ephesians 5:7-14. How do we “walk as children of light” on a day-to-day basis? How do we “take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness” even as we live in a dark world? What does it mean for us for Jesus to be the light? If we have the only light of the world living inside us, what does that call us to?

3. Why couldn’t the Pharisees see who Jesus is, and why did they object to the Gospel? Are there times in our own lives when we’ve objected to the difficult parts of the Gospel that call us to come and die? How do we keep our

hearts from becoming cold and calloused to the Gospel?

4. How do we know that Jesus’ testimony about Himself is reliable and true? Why do you think the Pharisees shifted the conversation away from what Jesus was saying to ask questions about His authority? Has there ever been a time when someone was trying to tell you a difficult truth and you changed the subject on them?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Pray as a group that Jesus would continue to shine His light into every area of your lives, exposing sin and revealing His outpouring of grace. Commit this week to pray for a particular family in your community group. Write their name down, put it on your fridge, in your calendar, or anywhere that will help you remember to lift up this family in prayer during the week.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage gives you a great chance to talk about Jesus being the light of the world with your children. An easy way to talk about this is to turn all the lights off in a room and ask them to bring you something. If they are scared of the dark or stumble around as they struggle to see anything, you can turn on the light and talk about how Jesus is our light.

Family Question: How does Jesus show us the way to go?

REMEMBER

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

— John 8:12

A) INTRODUCTION

1. This may seem like an easy question, but what is a lie? How do you know that something is a lie? In contrast, what is truth? How do you know that something is the truth?
2. Have you ever had an addiction to something that you didn't even realize until somebody pointed it out to you?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 8:31-47**SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES:** Galatians 4:1-7

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. What does it mean to “abide” in Christ? How can we abide in Christ on a daily basis? How can we help each other abide in Christ together as a community group?
2. What does it mean to be a slave to sin? Is it possible to be a slave without knowing about it or realizing it? In verse 32, Jesus speaks of being set free by the truth. What does that mean? Free from what? Free to be what? Free to do what? Have you ever felt like there were still areas of your life where you are bound to sin? How do we live in the knowledge that Christ has set us free from sin? How do we help each other live in this knowledge?
3. In verse 43, Jesus says, “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.” Are there times in our own lives when it is difficult to hear the Word of

God when it speaks difficult truth? How do we keep our ears open to hear what the Word of God says to us?

4. From verses 38 and 42-43, what does it mean for Christ to have this kind of relationship with the Father? Why do the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders object to Jesus saying things like this? How will our family, friends, neighbors and co-workers object when we talk about Jesus being the ruling, reigning Son of God?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Pray that your group would abide in Christ and learn how to better abide in Christ by trusting in the Holy Spirit to lead the way. Pray for every lingering bondage of sin to be broken by the power of the risen, victorious Christ. Pray for your community group to develop a love for the Word of God even as the distractions of the world grab your time and attention.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Read John 8:31-32 with your family this week and take some time to talk about the difference between the truth and lies.

Family Question: What kinds of lies does the world tell us? What truth does Jesus tell us? How can we learn to love the truth that Jesus tells us this week?

REMEMBER

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

— John 8:31-32

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF OCTOBER 4 - OCTOBER 10, 2015

A) INTRODUCTION

What are some famous or infamous last names of people that you know? Do you know anybody who makes a big deal about what family they are a part of? What are some of the things that make them such a big deal?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 8:48-59

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Genesis 22; Exodus 3:12-15; Galatians 3:27-29

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. From verses 48-49, what is the way that the Pharisees and other Jewish people try to discredit the message that Christ is proclaiming about Himself? How do people in the world today try to discredit the Gospel that Christ proclaims about Himself?
2. How does Jesus claim to be greater than Abraham in these verses? How does Jesus claim to be God in these verses? How does this claim set Christianity apart from other religions that do not accept Jesus as Lord? What does this also mean for religions such as Judaism and Islam that set Abraham on such a high pedestal?
3. How does Jesus' claim to be God affect our daily walk with Him? How does this affect (or how should it affect) how we present Him to other people in the world? Can we separate the moral teachings of Christ from the deity

and lordship of Christ? What happens if we do separate those things about Christ?

4. From verses 51-52, how do we keep God's Word? What does that look like? How do we trust in God's Word more? How can we help each other trust in God's Word more?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Take some time to thank God that he is the Great I Am, the living God who rules over the cosmos and who has ruled since before the beginning of time. Pray that God would give your group boldness to proclaim Christ's lordship to the world. Pray that your group would be a shining light to a world and a culture that seeks to minimize who Christ is and the power He has over our lives.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

1. Read John 8:58 with your kids this week and take some time to go through Genesis 22. Talk to them about the awesome mercy of God to save Abraham's son and Abraham's faith that God would do the right thing no matter what.
2. Read John 1:1-4 and Colossians 1:16-17 with your kids and ask them: Is Jesus God? Did He make everything in the world? If He made you and me, does that mean that He cares about us?

REMEMBER

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

— John 8:58

A) INTRODUCTION

What type of stigmas still exist in our culture about people with disabilities (either physical and/or mental)? How can we, as Gospel-proclaiming people, stand against these stigmas and welcome these people into our groups and our church?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 9:1-41

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Romans 8:18-28; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. After reading John 9 and the supplemental passages above, what is the ultimate purpose of suffering in our lives? How do you usually deal with suffering in your life? Do you blame God? How should we respond to suffering? How can we trust (and ultimately rest) in God's sovereignty over every situation? Also, how can we be a group that comforts and cares for those who are suffering?
2. There's a major theme in this passage about sight and blindness. Reread verse 39. What does it mean to be spiritually blind? What are the effects of spiritual blindness on our lives? Why do you think the Pharisees missed seeing the miraculous with the blind man receiving his sight? How do people get spiritual sight? How do we make sure we stay in the light of Christ? How can we avoid missing out on the miracles Christ is performing right in front of us today?
3. Reread John 9:35-38. What does the formerly blind man do after he believes in

Jesus? What is the connection between belief and worship? What is worship? Is it just singing songs on Sunday or is there something more to that? How do we worship God on a day-to-day basis? How do we worship together as a group?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Take some time to thank God that He took our spiritually blind minds and hearts and gave us sight. Pray for God to continue to shine His light through us. Pray for God to give us courage to face suffering in our lives. Also, pray for our weary hearts and weary minds to trust that God is working all things out for His glory and our ultimate good.

"'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus / Just to take Him at His Word / Just to rest upon His promise / And to know, "Thus saith the Lord!" / Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! / How I've proved Him / o'er and o'er / Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! / Oh, for grace to trust Him more!"

— Louisa Stead

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Read John 9:1-11 with your family this week. This is a great chance to talk with your kids about the power God has in the middle of difficult times. When they are going through really hard times, Jesus is right there. Not only is He there, but He truly cares for them.

Family Questions: What did Jesus do for the blind man? Where did Jesus get the power to heal the man's blindness? Can we trust Jesus to always do the right thing?

REMEMBER

Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

— John 9:39

A) INTRODUCTION

Go around the group and talk about some of your favorite pets that you've ever had growing up. What did you have to do to take care of them? What happened if you didn't take good care of them?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 10:1-21

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Psalm 23

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. What are some attributes of sheep? Do any of these attributes match up to us? What does it do to our pride to be compared to sheep? What do sheep need? How does the knowledge that we're like sheep affect how we live and treat people in the world?
2. What is the difference between a good shepherd and a bad shepherd? How were the Pharisees bad shepherds? How is Jesus a good shepherd to us? What does He do for us? Does He run away when things get tough? Since Jesus is the Good Shepherd, how do we let Him lead us to green pastures and still waters (Psalm 23)?
3. What does it mean that Jesus "came that they may have life and have it abundantly"? What is the "abundant life"? Is this talking about possessions/money/health or

something greater than those things? How can someone in another country (or right down the street) with no electricity, running water or even one dollar to their name have an "abundant life"?

4. Why is it important for Jesus to establish that no one takes His life, but that He gave it up willingly for the sake of the sheep? What does this authority say about Christ's power and His relationship with the Father?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Take some time to thank God for sending His Son to be the Good Shepherd for us. Thank Him that we are not lost and that He does not abandon us when times get tough. Ask Him to lead you to His green pastures and still waters. Also, ask God to continue to change your affections to treasure Christ above everything this world has to offer.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Take some time this week to read John 10:11 with your kids. As you read it with them, talk about how we are just like sheep and Jesus is a Good Shepherd for us.

Family Question: How can we let Jesus lead us like a shepherd?

REMEMBER

14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

— John 10:14-15

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF OCTOBER 25 - OCTOBER 31, 2015

A) INTRODUCTION

Start out your community group meeting this week by playing a quick game. Have someone in the group close their eyes and have others in the group speak out. Even with your eyes closed, can you recognize the voices of the people speaking?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 10:22-42

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: John 6:37-40; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:33-39

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. What are some of the ways that Jesus claims to be God in this passage? What is the importance of that connection? How do the Jewish people respond to Jesus' claims to be God? What is the response that people in our culture and world have today when we claim that Jesus is more than a good teacher, but God Himself? How can we be a people who proclaim the power and the grace of God to the world?

2. Read verses 28-30 again. What is the connection between Jesus being the Good Shepherd and this passage? Who is the one giving eternal life in this passage? Who is the one doing the saving work? How does this affect the way that we live? Read Romans 8:33-39. Do these verses allow us to rest in Christ? Are there times in your life when you don't rest

in Christ? What happens when we don't rest in Christ?

3. Read verses 37-38 again. How is Jesus showing great mercy in these verses? What is the connection between the words of Jesus and the works of Jesus? What is the connection in our lives between the words that we speak and the actions we take?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Take some time to thank God that our salvation is not dependant on our work or our performance. Thank Him for doing the work of saving us and for doing the work of keeping us in His hands. Thank Him for the security and rest that we have in Him. Pray that God would continue to give us strength to rest in Christ's finished work on the cross for us.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Read John 10:27-30 with your family this week and talk about the safety, security and rest we have in Jesus. We don't ever have to be afraid because Jesus will never leave us or forsake us or let us slip out of His grasp.

Family Question: Does Jesus care about us? Can Jesus ever misplace us or let us get lost? When we get scared, who can we go to for help?

REMEMBER

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

— John 10:27-30

A) INTRODUCTION

Would you consider yourself to be a “planner person”? Someone who checks things off on lists or wants things organized? What happens when something happens that isn’t in your plans? How do you react?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 11:1-16

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: 2 Peter 3:8-9;
Romans 8:28-30

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. In verse 4, Jesus says that the illness would not lead to death, but in verse 14, Jesus says that Lazarus is dead. What is going on here? How do we see the sovereignty of God at work here? What is the purpose of God here?

2. Read verses 5-6 again. What is the connection between how Jesus feels about Mary, Martha and Lazarus and His decision to stay two more days before heading to them? Why does He wait two more days before He goes to Lazarus? How does it feel when God doesn’t do things in the timing that we want Him to? Does it cause us to doubt His love for us or His desire to work for our good? What should our response be when God doesn’t do what we want when we want Him to? How can we grow to trust Him more in our day-to-day lives?

3. How did the disciples misunderstand what Jesus was saying in verse 11? Does it give you hope when you see the disciples, the people who most closely followed Jesus, missing something that Jesus says? How often do we miss hearing what Jesus says to us? Why do you think Jesus reminds us of the Gospel week after week and of his love every morning?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Pray for God to give each of you more and more faith to trust God’s timing with the circumstances happening in your life. “We believe; help our unbelief” should be the cry of our hearts. Pray for the peace that passes all understanding to guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7). Also pray for the strength to trust in the goodness and grace of God when we don’t understand why something happens the way that it does.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Read John 11:4 with your family this week and talk about how Jesus is trustworthy even in the middle of hard times. When things are tough at school or at home, God will work for His glory and our good.

Family Question: Can we trust in Jesus even when times get hard and things don’t go exactly like we planned?

REMEMBER

4 But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

— John 11:4

A) INTRODUCTION

Reading through this passage, we see that Mary and Martha didn't expect Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead. Has there ever been a time in your life when Jesus has done something completely miraculous that you didn't expect?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 11:17-44

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Revelation 21:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:12-32

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. Read verses 23-27 again. Who has the ultimate power over death? What is the end result of placing our trust in Christ? What kind of hope do we have about seeing our loved ones again who have died in Christ? What kind of hope do we have for ourselves through this story? How does this (or how should it) cause us to trust in Jesus more? How do these verses encourage you to share the Gospel with others?

2. Read verses 21 and 32 again. Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt like God was absent in the middle of your suffering? Have you ever questioned God like this? What is the truth in this passage? Was Jesus ever truly absent? Was there a purpose to their suffering?

3. What does Jesus being the "resurrection and the life" mean for us today? Is this just

something we look forward to after we die or does this impact us in our daily lives right now?

4. How does Jesus demonstrate that He truly cares about the situation Mary and Martha are going through? What does this say about the compassion that Christ has in suffering? Can Jesus truly sympathize with us as we are going through trials, suffering and loss? How does the sympathy, compassion and love that Jesus shows change the way we live? How should we act when we see suffering in the world?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Take some time to thank God that He rules over the universe and has the power over death. Thank Him for giving us the gift of eternal life and for shining His light into our dark hearts. Pray for the courage and compassion to share the truth of the resurrection with a world that sees this idea as foolishness and folly (1 Corinthians 1:23-25).

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Take some time this week to read John 11:25-27 with your kids. Talk about how even when we lose people that we love, if they are believers in Christ, we will be with them again. We will see them again, and Jesus will raise them from the dead one day!

Family Question: Will we see our family and friends again who have placed their trust in Christ? Can anything, even death, defeat Jesus?

REMEMBER

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

— John 11:25-27

A) INTRODUCTION

Go around the group and ask the question: What is your absolute favorite movie in the world?

Now, how would you feel if somebody in the group said they hated that movie and hated you for loving it?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 11:45-57

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Matthew 5:10-11

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. From this passage, why were the Pharisees concerned about Jesus? Was it really a concern for the nation of Israel or a concern for something else? How does Jesus disrupt the status quo of the Pharisees? What happens when people don't like having their lives disrupted or their sin pointed out? How does Jesus disrupt the status quo in our lives? Do we let Jesus disrupt our lives in every way or just up to a point?

2. Can people be apathetic when you talk to them about the Gospel? What are the possible reactions that people have to Jesus when you speak the truth? Are those reactions similar or different to the way the Pharisees acted when Jesus spoke the truth to them?

3. How does God ultimately use the evil that the Pharisees were planning to accomplish the ultimate good for the world that God intended? What is the irony in what Caiaphas predicts about what the death of Jesus would do? Can anything stop the Gospel from spreading to the ends of the earth?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Take some time to thank God that He opened our dark hearts to hear and respond to the Gospel. Pray specifically for people in your family and at work who don't know Christ. Pray that God would soften their hearts to hear and respond in a positive way to the Gospel. Pray that you would trust in God more each day to surrender your plans and dreams to His kingdom.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Take some time this week to talk with your kids about the fact that when we talk about Jesus in public, at school or outside the church, people might not always say the nicest things or respond in a positive way.

Family Question: How can Jesus make us strong when people ridicule us about our faith in Him?

REMEMBER

47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

— John 11:47-48

A) INTRODUCTION

Have you ever given a really, really expensive gift to someone who you loved? What was their reaction? Did anybody in the room say something negative about giving them a gift like that?

3. We see over and over again in John how the Pharisees and religious leaders try to put an end to Jesus and put an end to the Gospel. How well does that work out for them? What happens when people try to silence the Gospel? How can we be a people that live out the truth of the Gospel in a culture that is increasingly hostile toward it?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 12:1-11

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

1. How do we see Mary worshipping Jesus? How do we see Martha worshipping Jesus? How do we see Lazarus worshipping Jesus? What are some of the ways that you currently show lavish love (worship) toward Jesus? What are some other ways that we can show this kind of love toward Him?

2. What happens when we treasure anything (like money or power) above Jesus? How does that work out in the end? Have you ever seen people that use Christ to their own advantage? How do we treasure Christ for who He is and not for the gifts or advantages He can give to us?

E) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs in the group. Spend some time going around the group and thanking God for saving you from your sins. Ask God to tear down any idols or distractions that would keep you from treasuring Him above anything this world has to offer. Pray for the courage to live in light of the Gospel no matter what the consequences, and pray that God would be glorified through your lives.

F) FOR THE FAMILY

Take some time this week to read John 12:1-11 with your kids and talk about the way that Mary worshipped Jesus because of what He had done for her.

Family Question: How can we worship Jesus every day (not just on Sundays)?

REMEMBER

7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

— John 12:7-8



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