

A Walk Through John

Chapter 1

'In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. '

John 1:1-3

How old is Jesus? When did He begin? He has always been God, together with the Father and with the Spirit. He was before creation, and all creation came because of Him. His joy and satisfaction were already complete with Father and Spirit. Yet they chose to make something amazing.

God's Word, Jesus, created the heavens, and the earth, light and dark, sun moon and stars, land and sea, and all the creatures and life found there. He made man and woman just like himself, and gave them a beautiful place to live. All by saying the word.

First word. Final word. Jesus knows everything beginning to end. And we know Him!

'The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. '

John 1:4-5

Jesus gave light to everything He created. THE light is for everyone. He is a global universal light giver! And nothing can quench His light! We will never be in darkness again!

'God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. '

John 1:6-9

John the Baptist came to tell about the light coming into the world, Jesus. John was a witness, pointing to the True Light. Jesus gives light to everyone. It's a new day!

'God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. '

John 1:6-9

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Wake up! God is sending His light to us! John came to warn us, to warn everybody, that God's light is coming! It's Jesus, but I don't want to spoil it for you. John was the voice crying out, ahead of time, to get the people ready. Are you ready? Life is changing quickly, and you will want to be on board!

'He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. '

John 1:10-13

God Creator came to His world, to His people, and they turned away. They argued and quibbled, rather than learned and worshiped. They nmeeded the rebirth. We need the rebirth. I need the rebirth. Oh Jesus, fill me with your Spirit. Wash away every vestige of sin and tarnish, and make me new again in you!

'So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

John 1:14-15

The Word became a man, one of us. His unfailing love is amazing. Faithfulness exudes from Him. And we have seen His glory. He's the Father's one and only Son. How does God reach us? He becomes one of us, and then pours out amazing love and grace. God from eternity past has chosen to expand His fellowship by engaging us and bringing us into His relationship! Heaven was complete, but God wanted to share with a people who will love Him. And so we do!

'From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us. '

John 1:16-18

Jesus has poured His abundance all over us, one blessing followed by another. His unfailing love never stops, and His faithfulness continues day after day. Jesus continues revealing God to us. So we walk with joy, every day, looking forward to Him, to His love, His faithfulness, and His blessings! Tell a friend!

'This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?"

He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

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“Well then, who are you?” they asked. “Are you Elijah?”

“No,” he replied.

“Are you the Prophet we are expecting?”

“No.”

“Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?”

John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: “I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Clear the way for the Lord’s coming!’”

John 1:19-23

A voice pointing to a coming King. A herald. The Ruler is coming, and everything will be in His hands. But the priests and temple assistants didn't respect John, or maybe they were threatened. Worse, they were not inquiring about the King. They had consternation, not humility. Let's be like John, humble, longing for our King!

Then the Pharisees who had been sent asked him, “If you aren’t the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?”

John told them, “I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. Though his ministry follows mine, I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal.”

This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

John 1:24-28

Oh these poor Pharisees. They had rules, laws, structure and traditions. Most were crafted to follow Moses and his teachings about God. But these guys didn't know God, or understand His great plan to restore mankind back to Himself. We are watching God of the Universe break through all the traditions, and reintroduce Himself. He sent His Son to restore relationship, later to die for all our sin, and to bring His blessing and kingdom into the realm of man. Jesus was there in the crowd, and Satan's dominion was getting ready to be crushed. And the religious leaders had no idea. Jesus changes everything, and returns mankind to their Creator, reaching all nations. And they exult in bringing God His glory. All because God loves you and me.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ I did not recognize him as the

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Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.” ’

John 1:29-31

John gets his "Aha" when he sees Jesus, and knows that He is Messiah. John was preparing the way, baptizing people into repentance, so Israel would be prepared for the coming King. Interesting that John didn't know ahead of time. He was simply walking in and watching for God's timing and the reveal of Messiah. Have you recognized Jesus as God's coming Messiah?

'Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God. " ’

John 1:32-34

It was Jesus! John meets the Trinity! God the Father told him, He will be the one whom Holy Spirit descends upon. Wow, that's quite an entrance.

And then it happened. John saw Holy Spirit descend on Jesus, at baptism. And John tells all of us, Jesus is the lamb. He is the sent one. He is the messiah. He takes away our sins. That's the message!

'The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. '

John 1:35-37

"There He is. He is the Lamb of God. He's the one."

They left John and began following Jesus. What do you do when you realize Jesus is the Lamb of God? Go for it. Leave what you are doing and follow Jesus!

'Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. '

John 1:38-39

Where are you going, Teacher? Because where you go, I want to be. When you teach, I want to listen. When you heal, I want to be there. When you restore, I want a part. When you feed, I want to help with the dishes. Let's do this your way. But I am in.

'Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the

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Messiah” (which means “Christ”). Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”). '

John 1:40-42

Friends bring friends to Jesus. John the Baptist introduced Andrew. Andrew brought his brother Simon. Once you've found the Christ, you bring your family, you bring your friends. The world is looking for answers, and we have Jesus. There's nobody better, nothing to replace Him! And look at Jesus' reply - you've got a name. Jesus bolsters our name and reputation. He has a plan and it's the best!

'The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.”

Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown. Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.”

“Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

“Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied. '

John 1:43-46

Jesus comes and invites to follow. What do you do? Already convinced, Philip went for his brother. "We think we have found him, Messiah!"

Nathanael is not so convinced. First thing he does is look for a gap, a missing part, some evidence that it's not true. "Nazareth." Here it is. Old prejudices come up, and we hold them like truth.

Philip's response is not an argument. It's an invitation. Come see what might come from Nazareth. He skipped the apologetics course, and invited to a get together. Come meet Jesus!

'As they approached, Jesus said, “Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity.”

“How do you know about me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, “I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.”

Then Nathanael exclaimed, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!”

Jesus asked him, “Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.”

Then he said, “I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up

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and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth. ”

John 1:47-51

Are you ready for greater things? Nathanael is all in. He was alone, praying under the fig tree. He was private, nobody knew where he was or what he was doing. Devotion to God is highly valued by Nathanael, and he was faithful.

After Philip found him, and brought him to meet Jesus, he got a surprise. Jesus commended his integrity and devotion. Nathanael was stunned.

Jesus saw him praying - but only God could see him praying. He had made sure to keep private his time with the Lord. And he knew, Jesus is the Son of God.

How about you. Where are you in the pursuit? Have you turned and placed your whole devotion into Jesus?

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Chapter 2

'The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

"Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." '

John 2:1-5

They joined in the celebration. They were invited guests at the wedding. And a terrible problem arose, the wine was gone. The wedding hosts would be ridiculed and wholly embarrassed. So Jesus' mom goes to her son so He will do something.

He says it's not time, but she goes right to the servants, and says, "Do what He tells you." Something is about to happen here!.

'Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him. '

John 2:6-11

Jesus revealed his glory. But He only revealed it to the servants and the disciples. Not His time yet for the world, but beginning His time to show who He is to a few. Jesus has always been about the few, in order to reach the world. Disciple making begins with just a few. Like the servants, we must do what He says. We get blessed and He gets glory!

'After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples. It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me." '

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John 2:12-17

After the wedding, he went to his mom's place. Imagine the conversation. His mom and the disciples saw the wedding and the wine!

Soon after he went to Jerusalem for Passover. He was appalled at the commerce overtaking the outer court of the Temple, and the complete lack of regard for God. His house, His Court of the Gentiles. They had missed it, but He had not. He drove them out. The disciples remembered the prophesy of Messiah's zeal.

They are learning. We are all learning!

'But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

"All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

"What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?"

But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.'

John 2:18-22

They must have known Jesus was right. But their corrupt machine was being dismantled and they couldn't allow it. They confronted Jesus, and demanded performance. Jesus gave them a scenario they didn't understand. But it wasn't for them. Not today. Jesus setup a play that his followers would remember later, and would forever know who Jesus really is. Jesus was playing the long game, building just for the few. His master plan was to build his small group of disciples. And this would conquer the entire world for all time.

'Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people. No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart.'

John 2:23-25

Because of the signs, people began to believe in Jesus. Are you beginning to believe? When will they go completely in? When will I? On good days it's easy. On hard days I seem to trust more in myself. So the question is for us, right now. Will I be completely in, and simply trusting Him as God?

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Chapter 3

"There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. "

John 3:1-6

Nicodemus came secretly, but he wanted to know more about Jesus. Nic wanted to follow Jesus, but for now was beginning the exploration. Jesus told him that he needed a new, birth that comes from the Spirit.

Nicodemus wasn't sure, so asked about being reborn from the mother. This didn't make sense. Jesus began to reveal to him that entering the Kingdom of God requires a relationship with God. Holy Spirit must instill a new spiritual birth into the inquirer. Belief means living relationship with God, by the Holy Spirit.

Ask Spirit today to show Himself fresh in you. If you've never done this before, ask Him to pour His Spirit into you, a rebirth in the Spirit. You'll never be the same, it's a whole new life!

'So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? "

John 3:7-12

Nicodemus couldn't envision a new birth. He always operated in the realm of what he could touch and feel, and his teaching was always in this space. Jesus calls him to be born of the Spirit, and Nicodemus

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is lost. He doesn't grasp it. He doesn't know God's Spirit, and Jesus is showing him that his relationship with God is pretend, mechanical, about rules and laws.

Yet there's a prompting. Holy Spirit is at work challenging Nicodemus, drawing him away from empty religion, and showing him life. He's getting there.

Jesus challenges his failure to believe. Jesus asks him, how he can possibly believe God, when he doesn't trust what Jesus says. And Nicodemus has already recognized that Jesus speaks from God, and that his miracles authenticate his message. When will Nicodemus begin living a new life in the Spirit? How about you?

'No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. '

John 3:13-15

Nicodemus knew the sin and curse over the nation rebelling. And he knew the provision of God that anyone who turns and gazes on the snake lifted up will be healed. What a picture Jesus gives of himself.

He starts with the claim that no one has ever gone to heaven and returned, except himself. And then he turns it to the account of people looking on the serpent lifted up, looking to Him will be rescued.

Deeper still is the veiled picture of Jesus on a cross. They won't remember this until Golgotha.

All of this to woo Nicodemus into wrestling with a living messiah standing in front of him. Jesus cannot simply be a good teacher, because His assertion is that He is the Son of Man, God present, right here, right now. Jesus is either God, or a lunatic/liar. And every evidence points to the first.

How could Nicodemus have not seen Jesus coming? Was Nicodemus not watching? All of Jesus' teaching and work aligns with scripture, and yet the leaders were oblivious. Nicodemus is personally discovering that his diligence in the law still missed the presence of this Jesus. Nicodemus is undone.

Were you expecting Jesus, Son of Man, God Himself, beckoning you? He is, right now. Will you follow Him as your Lord? What's He directing you to do today?

' "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear

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their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants. ”

John 3:16-21

Everyone who believes will have eternal life. Jesus was sent to save people, not to judge them. But the choice is clear. Draw near and love Jesus. Don't hide from the light, but relish Him in the light. Skip the evil and do good. It all starts with Jesus loving us, and we in turn loving Him.

'Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people. At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. (This was before John was thrown into prison.) A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. '

John 3:22-25

Jesus was baptizing people. So was John the Baptist. They weren't too far from each other, close enough for a debate to arise. Both were baptizing people as a sign of humility and repentance before God. As always, debates came up among the followers. But let's not do that. Instead, let's encourage people toward the Lord, and bless those who also work in the field with us.

'A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. '

John 3:25-30

As Jesus gains followers and recognition, John is not panicked. Instead, he is glad, filled with joy. He understands his role, preparing the way for the Lord. And his only wish is that many come to Jesus. John must become less and Jesus must become greater and greater.

So it is with me and you. We love to tell people about Jesus. But we must become less as they draw near to Him and follow Him. He must be the greatness in their lives! We are channels to bring people to Him.

"He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. He testifies about

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what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. For he is sent by God.

He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

John 3:31-36

John tells us of an amazing entrance, God came down as the Son from the Father. He's different from any other man. The Father loves Him, and has put everything into His hands. Eternal life comes from believing in Jesus. Wow, we have suddenly been thrust right into the midst of the Father-Son love relationship, and we get life from it. Believe my friends! Trust! Count on Him alone. Live!

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Chapter 4

'Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.'

John 4:1-3

Jesus was the master of His calendar. His disciples were increasing, others were coming for baptism, and the Pharisees had heard of it. Making disciples was His work, but tweaking the Pharisees was not his focus. He left them, Judea being their controlled space. He returned to Galilee, where He could continue making disciples. The disciples handled baptisms, and were learning Jesus' craft. He had no reason to provoke the Pharisees, not at this time. His work was to draw men and women into His flock, and nurture them.

This is what we do as well. Our ministry is not to provoke the leaders, but to encourage and strengthen Jesus Followers. So be wise, and get after it. Leave the other things behind, and make disciples!

'He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"'

John 4:4-9

Jesus was tired from the long walk, and was resting by Jacob's well. He was also a bit thirsty. They were making the long walk from Judea back to Capernaum. They were going home. The disciples, ever practical, were hungry and went into town for food. They are going to miss something remarkable.

The Samaritan woman came to the well in the middle of the day. This isn't when the women draw water in the morning, or the men water the flocks going out. Nor is it the late afternoon when the flocks are coming back in, or the women are drawing water for the evening. This is the safe time, when a woman of shame can quietly come and draw her water, without consternation.

Jesus looks at the woman, and politely asks her to please give him a drink. And she is stunned. He respects her, and will share her vessel. He is fine with the interaction between him, a Jew, and her, a Samaritan. And this is only the start. Something big is going to happen here!

She was stunned. Why would a Jew have anything at all to do with a Samaritan. Moreover, He was respectful and kind in asking. Why was He asking her for a drink?

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"The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." '

John 4:9-14

Jesus provokes her further, with an offer, a gift of God. Her real need is living water, life from Jesus. With this living water, she'll never thirst again!

She's beginning to get it. And she's probing who this man really is. Is he greater than Jacob who gave the well? This is getting interesting!

"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

"Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

"I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" '

John 4:15-18

Jesus is drawing her to Himself. Living water sounds luxurious compared to the life that she is in. So she takes the offer, and asks for the living water. Not having to come to the well would be convenient. And it would also allow her to hide her shame.

So Jesus goes there. He reveals to the woman that He knows all about her. He calls her in the context of her sin and shame. Yet He does so graciously. Her first response is to meekly admit she doesn't have a husband. But Jesus takes it further and presents the whole scenario.

What will she do? Will she leave in shame? Will she admit the situation and allow Jesus into it? What would you do?

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“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus told her, “I Am the Messiah!” ’

John 4:19-26

He told her of her sin and shameful life. But she didn't run away. Instead she began delving into Messiah, who one day would come and explain everything.

And Jesus told her it was Him.

He is the one coming. He is the one gathering in people who will worship in Spirit and Truth. And it won't matter which mountain we worship on. What matters is His invitation and our joining in!

What a fantastic day for the woman. What a fantastic day for you and me.

'Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?”

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?”

So the people came streaming from the village to see him. '

John 4:27-30

When the woman realized she was talking with Messiah, all of her shame was forgotten. She had to tell everyone. So she dropped her vessel, ran to town, and spoke to all the people. "Could this be the Messiah?"

And all the people went out to the well to meet Jesus.

How about you and I? We've met Messiah. Let's drop everything, and tell everyone we know too! They could meet Him as well!

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'Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something."

But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about."

"Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other.

Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.

You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!

You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."

John 4:31-38

Jesus teaches the satisfaction of making disciples. And His own followers learn by observation, and afterward, by explanation. He's not talking about lunch. He's talking of the fulfilment of God's work, and the joy of seeing fruit.

And then He reminds them that they have already seen the harvest, where believers came forth, even though the disciples hadn't done the work for it. "And now you will get to gather the harvest." God has a place in His work where He pulls us in, and we get the satisfaction!

'Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!"

When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, long enough for many more to hear his message and believe.

Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

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John 4:39-42

She was provoked, and she shared. She told everybody, and they came out. But Jesus provoked each one. They begged him to stay, and he did for a couple days. Many more believed.

She was willing to be humbled, to carry her shame, and instead to champion Jesus, and now many more know that Jesus is the Savior of the world!

A Walk Through John

'At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee. He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there. '

John 4:43-45

People were turning to Jesus. They hadn't turned before, but now, seeing what he had done in Jerusalem, they were turning. We share about God's kingdom. But sometimes, it just takes time. The Samaritans got Jesus for two more days, and they relished being with Him. And now, even his hometown is believing. Keep sharing. Keep trusting. Some times it's just a matter of time.

'As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die. Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?" The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies." Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!" Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.'

John 4:46-54

Jesus doesn't need to come. He heals already. His challenge was simply to begin believing. All he knew was that if Jesus came, his son would be healed. Jesus challenged him to believe without the visit to his home. So the man believed and went home.

When his servants caught up with him, they shared his son is now well. So the official asked when did recovery happen. And it was exactly when Jesus announced the healing. The official's part is to believe. The challenge is that we believe immediately in Jesus. It's not our begging, or the size of our faith. It's merely our faith in Jesus, God Himself. This is the lesson Jesus gave. Healing the official's son was the second sign Jesus did after coming home from Judea.

For us, go to Him and believe!

A Walk Through John

Chapter 5

'Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?” '

John 5:1-6

Sick for thirty eight years. The man is tired, but faithful. He is still at Bethesda, hoping maybe one day he will get his turn. And these are his people. This is his place. He will be here for the rest of his life. Crippled, laying on a mat. His friends were there, blind, lame, paralyzed. It's the Sabbath. Nobody's going to the temple, because nobody is going anywhere.

Jesus is walking through the crowd, and He sees the man. Jesus knows how long he's been sick. Jesus knows he has little hope. so Jesus asks him, "Would you like to get well?"

I wonder if it had been so long that the man had forgotten. Maybe he had just given up, but will go through the motions. Jesus is probing.

Have we lost hope? Are we going through the motions? Jesus is asking if we want the healing, if we are up for the change.

“I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”

But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

“Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded. The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd.

But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him. '

John 5:7-15

A Walk Through John

When my “I can’t” is met by Jesus’ “Done.” The man couldn’t be healed because he had no one to put him into the pool. His idea of healing was to get someone, some day, to be first into the bubbling water. And it wouldn’t happen.

Jesus burst into the situation with a more direct question. Simply, do you want healing? Suddenly the man focuses on his need, not his ability. He had no ability, but had great need. And Jesus tells him to stand up and pick up his mat.

That’s it. He did, and immediately is healed. He’s walking. And Bethesda is suddenly buzzing with the sight of the lame man healed. The authorities had a choice to celebrate or to regulate. They chose regulation, accusing the man of working on the Sabbath. And Jesus disappeared. Later Jesus meets the man and tells him to stop sinning. And the man tells the authorities it was Jesus.

Here’s a glimpse of the Kingdom of God restoring the pool of Bethesda, one man restored, out of the domain of the devil. This is how the Kingdom restores what was lost in the garden, one bite at a time!

What am I facing? Am I stymied because I can’t control the means? It’s time to look beyond that, and tell Jesus what we want, the desires He has already placed in us. And then expect Him to work. If He says to stand up, we do so. Whatever He says. Expect Him to show up.

'So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.”

So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished. ”

John 5:16-20

Jesus is bursting God's Kingdom onto the scene. He is rescuing lost people, healing the broken, redeeming what was God's but has been in the hands of the evil one. The lame are healed as the Father empowers the Son. And greater works are coming.

How do the leaders respond? They want to kill Jesus. They hate that He shows up with miraculous power, that healed people celebrate on the Sabbath rather than conform to the leaders' rules.

Jesus shares what this Kingdom is, greater works from the Father. The Father's love for the Son is proclaimed, and demonstrated. Intimacy is here too, where the Father shows everything He is doing to His Son.

This relationship with the Father is here for us too. He beckons us. He draws us. He speaks to us. He

A Walk Through John

works in and through us. We can do great astonishing things, because it is the Father doing it. We are His if we have entered into faith in Jesus.

'For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.

In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.

Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him. '

John 5:21-23

Jesus just said that the Father loves the Son, that the Father shares everything with the Son, and that more is coming. They will be astonished!

Just as the Father gives life to the healed man at the pool, Jesus gives life to anyone He wants. They work together, a God Community including the Spirit, loving each other and working amazing things.

Father has given all judgement to the Son, who alone is judge. Father has passed all of it to the Son, with absolute authority. And we are all to honor the Son. In fact, anyone who does not honor the Son, is also not honoring the Father.

Each member of this God Community has differing roles, unique but yet each one is fully God. We've called this "the Trinity" in theology. When we watch Jesus, and the Father, and see the works of the Spirit, we recognize what we are seeing. A textbook explanation is hard to make, but watching Jesus work and teach makes it easy!

Honor Him, love Him, and count on Him. He is faithful.

' "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

"And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.'

John 5:24-25

After healing the lame man, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees. And He is showing His authority as God. Anyone who listens and believes has eternal life. Never condemned, these are rescued forever! And the dead will hear Jesus' voice and will live.

What about you, are you hearing His voice as we read this? Are you believing? Eternal life is here for us now! Take hold of it!

A Walk Through John

'The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man. Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment. I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will. '

John 5:26-30

The Father and the Son both have life-giving power. And they are the right ones for all judgement as well. Jesus has been given both the power and the authority to judge every man. Soon He will call the dead out of their graves, and they will rise when they hear His voice.

Jesus is a just judge, bringing to heaven those who love God, and sending away those who hate Him. He won't get it wrong, because He carries out the will of the Father. So choose life! Follow and love Jesus, and look forward to eternity with Him!

' "If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid. But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true. In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true. Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved. John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message.

But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face, and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you. '

John 5:31-38

John testified to Jesus' deity and lineage, the sent one of God. And the leaders didn't believe him. And then the Father testified of Him, with miracles, with knowledge, and with fulfilled prophecies. These leaders wouldn't believe.

Jesus calls these leaders out as having never believed. They actually don't believe the Father, otherwise they would love the Son and His work.

What about you? Are you all in with Jesus, or are you skeptically standing off and simply curious? Throw in with Jesus today, and you will never regret it.

' "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life. '

John 5:39-40

A Walk Through John

These religious leaders search the scripture, but for what? They skip every reference to Messiah coming, and any reference to relationship with the Father. They are studious, but not children of God. They have activity but they have rejected the life given by God, and the love extended.

Here's a warning and a welcome to us. Study, but do so to know more of your loving Father and His gracious Son. Learn of Messiah and receive the life He brings. Know and love Him. Study works when our love for God grows. Receive Him!

' "Your approval means nothing to me, because I know you don't have God's love within you. For I have come to you in my Father's name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.

"Yet it isn't I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes. If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

John 5:41-47

These lost leaders are stuck. They built a standard where they are elevated and honored among their peers. But they will not consider the Son of Man, sent from God. So He takes issue with them, and raises the challenge. Are they listening? What about me, do I act the same, disregarding Jesus who is sent by the Father?

Judgement will come. For these men who claim to be the keepers of the Law of Moses, judgement will come from Moses himself. Moses knew of the promised Son, and wrote of Him. And Jesus declares He is the Son of whom Moses wrote. Moses is coming, his writing in hand, and judgement will be swift.

Take time to welcome Jesus. Worship Him, give Him glory. Listen to Him, and obey. He is worthy. He thinks we are worth it too.

A Walk Through John

Chapter 6

'After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do. '

John 6:1-6

Jesus is God and knows what He is planning. But often for my sake He puts me in a place of not knowing, where the way forward is unclear. What will we do? I thought everything was going well, but now this happens? How do we get through it? Maybe I missed Jesus' leading. Oh the thoughts that go through my head.

But it turns out Jesus brought me here. He knows the way forward. He places the problem in my hand, to consider what to do. I try to make it happen and sometimes He gives success. Other times He provides another way. But all in all, He wants to be in the conversation, and He is able to make the provision. Always walk with Jesus, and see where He will go!

'Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!"

Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

"Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.)

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted.

After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves. '

John 6:7-13

So Philip saw the ten thousand people or more, and was overwhelmed. His thought is that it can't be done at all. Andrew felt the same, but noticed a boy with his five loaves and two fish, so he told this to Jesus. And then Jesus does His thing.

The people were sat down, and Jesus thanks God for the bread, and started distributing it to the people. And He thanked God for the fish, and then distributed these. The food went on and on, and everybody

A Walk Through John

had as much as they wanted. Then Jesus had the disciples pick up all the leftovers so nothing would be wasted. Each disciple had a solid basket of food at the end.

Jesus knows the needs. He knows how to meet them. And He knows how to bless people, so there will be enough. In fact, He makes sure the disciples get the message. One boy, two fish, five loaves, twelve disciples, five thousand men and then women and children, this is more than a numbers game. This is God's sent one bringing provision, hope, joy and power to the lives of ordinary people. He has enough for me too.

'When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself. '

John 6:14-15

The bread was awesome, and the fish as well. The crowd decided that Jesus could be their King and throw off Rome. They had been expecting God to send Messiah to free them. But oh how they missed it.

Jesus liked sitting on the hillside with the people. He liked the fellowship, the discipling, the turning hearts to God, the message of repentance. Jesus wants the relationship. The Father does as well.

But the people wanted a politician. The great sign that day of God's care and provision was getting stolen for a political purpose, and Jesus would have none of that. So from a crowd of roughly 10,000 people, Jesus slips out to the hills, by Himself.

Be sure to come to Jesus for relationship with Him. This is His call to you and me. Love Him and follow. Let's learn what He has for us!

'That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here! " Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination! '

John 6:16-21

They were caught in a storm, miles from where they started. The winds were howling and the waves were rough. The situation was precarious. And then they saw Jesus walking on the water toward their boat. They didn't know what to think, and were terrified. Jesus called out to them, "Don't be afraid, I am here!" They gladly let Him in the boat, and immediately they were at their destination.

Are you stuck in a terrible situation? Let Jesus in. There's no need to be afraid. And you will get where you need to go.

A Walk Through John

"The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. "

John 6:22-26

Why am I pursuing Jesus? Am I looking for more of that bread, more of that wine? Is my identity being one of Jesus' biggest fans? Am I seeking the show?

But the signs are an invitation to quietly draw to the Father, to learn of Him. Become a disciple who sees God and receives His love. He is the one who calms the storm. He is the one who reveals Himself in Jesus. Come to Him and be His person, for His work. Whatever He says, we will do, where He sends we will go. And our hearts will learn of Him!

"But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. "

John 6:27-35

They wanted to do magic. But the Father sent Jesus so they would receive Him and love Him. Our task is to welcome Jesus, and stay depending on Him. We love Him, and we trust Him. We wait for Him. And this is the wonderful relationship that the Father wants for us.

A Walk Through John

'But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.' '

John 6:36-40

Oh what a promise to us! We have come and given our full trust to Jesus. He is our redeemer. He is our Lord. He is the one Father gave to us, and He will never lose us. We are forever His, through all of this life, and all of eternity. Oh What a savior!

'Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.) "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life! Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. '

John 6:41-50

They understood His claim, that He had come from Heaven and was God. But they remember His upbringing, and couldn't see how God could be a man, or more, how God could be Jesus whose family they knew.

But Jesus knew this wasn't an intellectual exercise, this was a question of whether the person actually loves God. If they love God, they would draw near to Jesus and believe. And then Jesus brings up the wilderness.

God gave manna to absolutely every Jew walking through the desert. For decades God provided bread from heaven. Jesus points out that every Jew ought to recognize bread from Heaven, and ought to draw near to God. If they did, they would receive Jesus as God's provision. And now it comes to you and me.

Do we see Jesus as God's provision? Do we receive Him, believe on Him? It's a question of life and death. Choose life!

A Walk Through John

'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.'

Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever." He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. '

John 6:51-59

Imagine a couple years later, at a Passover meal with Jesus and the other disciples, and Jesus taking the bread and breaking it. Immediately they were lifted back to this synagogue in Capernaum and hearing the words all over again. Jesus is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, the sacrificial lamb of Exodus 12, the restoring messiah of Malachi 3. Jesus is the bread broken for our sins. He is the poured blood of the new covenant.

But in this synagogue, Jesus declares He is the embodiment of God's truth, the substance of God's relationship with us, and we are to embrace Him, devour His teaching, and receive His fellowship. We are to depend and rely on Him, and then we will live, and live forever.

'Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?" Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me." '

John 6:60-65

Nobody can come to Jesus unless the Father gives them to Him. He is explaining a loving relationship fully dependent on receiving what He offers, and loving Him for it. To many it was confounding. But the real issue is their unwillingness to believe He comes from the Father, from heaven, and is equal with the Father. It's the words that He speaks - they are spirit and life. Grab ahold of Him and don't let go!

A Walk Through John

'At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God. "

Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil." He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.'

John 6:66-71

So which is it? Did God choose us or did we choose Him? This is an age old question. I am sure the Lord put the hunger in me to listen to Him and follow Him. But I am equally as certain that I chose on my own to follow Him and never leave. Both are true!

What a sad situation where people turn away from Jesus. They never really understood God's invitation to draw near to Him and be fed spiritually. They didn't get the relationship and trust in Jesus. But they liked the flashy miracles.

So they left. But for us, where would we even go?

A Walk Through John

Chapter 7

'After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!" For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. You go on. I'm not going to this festival, because my time has not yet come." After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee. '

John 7:1-9

Jesus wasn't building an army to overcome Rome. He was working with people, one at a time, bringing truth and life to each one. The Kingdom of God is Holy Spirit reclaiming the lost souls bound in Satan's chains. Each one restored to the Father, and the clutch on their life removed, replaced by the Holy Spirit. The battle is against Satan and his domain of darkness. Every person restored is forever changed, forever united with the Father, forgiven, walking in grace. This is not simply tricks with fish and bread.

'But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people." But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders. '

John 7:10-13

How are you when you are under pressure? Your family doesn't believe you or trust you, the authorities are after you, and you are working it out? Add in this, you are God of creation, whose word created the darkness and light, the heavens and earth. You are the one come to redeem and restore people of faith to a relationship with God. Jesus lived his life fully man, and dealt with the pressures and assaults of a nation who wouldn't believe. Yet he is God in the midst of a crooked people. He is the picture of grace in real life.

'Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. The people were surprised when they heard him. "How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?" they asked. So Jesus told them, "My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies. '

John 7:14-18

A Walk Through John

Jesus' message is not His own, but comes from God who sent Him. And anyone who wants to know the will and plan of God will know that Jesus' words come from God.

Here's assurance. I know that Jesus' words are from the Father. So I will know His will as I need it!

'Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me.'

The crowd replied, "You're demon possessed! Who's trying to kill you?"

Jesus replied, "I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed. But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses' law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath? Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly." '

John 7:19-24

Jesus heals and does good as the Father gives Him opportunity. But the people are stuck in tradition, just as are their leaders, and they cannot see their own hypocrisy. Jesus calls us to evaluate our direction, and our faith. Is it real? Do we seek the Lord's best? Yes, look beneath the surface!

'Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah? But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from."

While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I'm not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don't know him. But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you." '

John 7:25-29

We catch a glimpse of Jesus, Son of God, who is yet born of a woman and fully man. The people were perplexed, not understanding how Messiah could be a man like us, known to others, even them. And the leaders were perplexed as well, because Jesus taught about God in a way the people really liked. They were learning of the Father, of the welcome, of relationship, and of being righteous inside.

And the leaders were not laying a hand on Him. So the people wondered if the leaders knew He was from God. Jesus clears it all up. They know Him and where He is from. And He is sent from God, His Father, to them. Great, now we are clear?

'Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. "After all," they said, "would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?"'

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When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus. But Jesus told them, “I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going.”

The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. “Where is he planning to go?” they asked. “Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands? Maybe he will even teach the Greeks! What does he mean when he says, ‘You will search for me but not find me,’ and ‘You cannot go where I am going?’”

John 7:30-36

The people loved Him. The leaders feared Him. So they sought to arrest Him. Jesus answered that He would only be with them a little while longer, and then would return to the Father.

The people wanted to know more about the Father. They saw God at work in Jesus, and embraced Him. But the leaders feared Him, and wanted to kill Him. So which group are you in?

'On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, “Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.” Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others said, “But he can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.”

So the crowd was divided about him. Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.'

John 7:37-44

Rivers of living water will flow from the heart of any who believe in Jesus. Living water, refreshing, power, knowledge, cleansing, purifying, blessing, bringing life.

But you must decide - is Jesus the promised one? The crowd was divided. Where are you regarding Jesus? Where do you want to be?

'When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” “We have never heard anyone speak like this!” the guards responded. “Have you been led astray, too?” the Pharisees mocked. “Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God’s curse is on them!”

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Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. “Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?” he asked. They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!”. Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.'

John 7:45-53

When you hear the words of Jesus and see what He does, something happens. You've entered into a discussion with God Himself. And you know it.

Jesus is bringing the Kingdom of God against the strongholds of Satan. And He is redeeming the fallen world one lost person at a time. Come to Jesus and meet Him. Give Him the hearing He deserves!

A Walk Through John

Chapter 8

'Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them.'

John 8:1-2

The leaders had chided the people for listening to the teaching of Jesus. They argued His origins were from the wrong place. The soldiers who went to arrest Him refused after hearing His teaching. They hadn't heard anything like it. The leaders pronounced a curse over the followers. But Nicodemus suggested a real audience, to learn whether Jesus' teaching was from God.

After this Jesus retreated to the Mount of Olives, a kilometer walk down the Kidron Valley and back uphill a few hundred meters. He rested, and probably prayed. This was His time to refresh with the Father.

The very next day he returned to the temple, and sat to teach. The crowd grew as many began to discover what a new life in God was like. Can you imagine the excitement and joy as Jesus invited you into relationship with the Father?

'As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!"

Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust. When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman.'

John 8:3-9

What do you do? This woman is obviously caught, and publicly known for her sin. Do you jump in and join the leaders in condemnation?

Augustine wrote of this, "You have heard, O Jews, you have heard, O Pharisees, you have heard, O teachers of the law, the guardian of the law, but have not yet understood Him as the Lawgiver. What else does He signify to you when He writes with His finger on the ground? For the law was written with the finger of God; but written on stone because of the hard-hearted. The Lord now wrote on the ground, because He was seeking fruit. You have heard then, Let the law be fulfilled, let the adulteress be stoned. But is it by punishing her that the law is to be fulfilled by those that ought to be punished? Let each of you consider himself, let him enter into himself, ascend the judgment-seat of his own mind, place himself at the bar of his own conscience, oblige himself to confess... Each looking carefully into

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himself, finds himself a sinner. Yes, indeed. Hence, either let this woman go, or together with her receive ye the penalty of the law... Having struck them through with that dart of justice, Jesus deigned not to heed their fall, but, turning away His look from them, "again He wrote with His finger on the ground."

Don't miss the amazing grace of Jesus who neither condemned the woman, nor the sinners trying to lay a trap. God's call is to repentance, and is still here today!

'Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

"No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

John 8:10-11

Nobody was worthy to accuse, because each one was tainted with his own sin. There the woman stood alone. Sinful, just as the others. And ashamed, as they tried to spotlight her sin. Before her stood the only person capable of casting that stone, yet He had already chosen to be the sacrificial lamb for her.

Nobody condemned her, but Jesus freed her. Never again can they confront her. And never again will she walk in that sin. She is free, and her value is affirmed. God loves her and has now restored her. She has a new life!

The accusers would destroy a life if they could gain advantage and oppose Jesus. But their plan fails. The Son rescues a life, and steals one more portion out of Satan's dark domain. The woman is now free, and no longer under bondage. The Kingdom of God is here, and there's one more member restored to the King!

For you and me? No accusers. Go and sin no more.

'Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

The Pharisees replied, "You are making those claims about yourself! Such testimony is not valid."

Jesus told them, "These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don't know this about me. You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other." '

John 8:12-18

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People are learning, Jesus is the light. He replaces darkness, and makes everything clear and beautiful. The invitation is for you, for me, for every man, woman, boy and girl. Come and follow Jesus. Let His light replace your darkness!

And Father has shown Jesus is His son. Look at the wedding and the wine. Look at the cripple at the pool. Look at the hungry listeners, the thousands. Look at your need. Father shows that Jesus is His son, and that you are welcome to follow. Let's do this!

“Where is your father?” they asked.

Jesus answered, “Since you don’t know who I am, you don’t know who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” Jesus made these statements while he was teaching in the section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not arrested, because his time had not yet come. '

John 8:19-20

They wouldn't believe Jesus, and they wouldn't accept His miracles as testimony from the Father. But Father has demonstrated, He has worked, He has rescued. They wanted nothing to do with Him.

Some people refuse the Father, and they refuse the Son. These two come as a pair. If you receive one, you receive the other. But if you refuse one, you are refusing God altogether.

Receive Jesus and the Father! Don't miss Him!

'Later Jesus said to them again, “I am going away. You will search for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going.” The people asked, “Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, ‘You cannot come where I am going’?”

Jesus continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I Am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.”

“Who are you?” they demanded. Jesus replied, “The one I have always claimed to be. I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won’t. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful.” But they still didn’t understand that he was talking about his Father. '

John 8:21-27

Jesus is The Father's sent Son, God Himself. He's opening up Heaven for them, and they just don't get it. But what about you, who do you say that Jesus is?

'So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I Am he. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.” Then many

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who heard him say these things believed in him. '

John 8:28-30

What a miserable death. What a heinous act. Crucifixion is torture, meant to shame and cause deep pain. When the Son of Man was nailed to the cross and left to suffocate, when his heart burst and his blood poured out, that was all because of my sin. The Father placed all my sin on Him. God placed all of your sin on Him. The punishment, the torture, was mine. It was yours. His sinless body was tortured for the sin of the whole human world, for all time.

When they see the Son of Man on the cross, they will know He is Messiah, the sent-one, the full payment for what could never be paid. Jesus tells them, tells us, that there will be a day when they will look and realize He is God.

This was enough for some on this day to realize He is God. And they believed.

'Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

"But we are descendants of Abraham," they said. "We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, 'You will be set free'?"

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. '

John 8:31-36

Oh to be set free from sin. The ones crushed under the weight of this trap, they are being set free. But those who don't even see the crushing sin, they are forever in their sin.

Be set free! Follow Jesus, and you are truly free!

'Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there's no room in your hearts for my message. I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father."

"Our father is Abraham!" they declared.

"No," Jesus replied, "for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example. Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. No, you are imitating your real father."

They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you

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from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. '

John 8:37-44

There are two Fathers, and every person follows one of them. These people were claiming to follow God, the Father of Abraham. But their hearts, and their actions were proving that their Father is actually the devil. These are followers of Satan, and not God.

If you love Jesus, long for His teaching, and await His coming, then you are children of God. If you hate Jesus, you are not children of God. The scripture is very clear. So set your hearts on Jesus, and love Him!

'So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don't listen because you don't belong to God.'

The people retorted, "You Samaritan devil! Didn't we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?"

"No," Jesus said, "I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me. And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!" '

John 8:45-51

Jesus tells the truth. He has no sin, and none of these detractors can point to sins of His. Jesus asks people to believe Him. And Anyone who belongs to God gladly listens and does believe Him. These won't believe Him because they don't belong to God.

Such wonderful and frightful truth. Do you believe in Jesus? This is a judgement on us, not on Him. He has no sin and it's evident.

So the people got upset and accused Him of being a devil and carrying a demon. Jesus simply dismisses this, and then goes further. God will glorify Him. And anyone who obeys Jesus will never die. This is such a high reward that comes with very little cost. Make the purchase!

'The people said, "Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, 'Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!' Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

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Jesus answered, "If I want glory for myself, it doesn't count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, 'He is our God,' but you don't even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad."

The people said, "You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham? "

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I Am! " At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.'

John 8:52-59

God pours His glory on His son Jesus through miracles, through knowledge, through wisdom and teaching, and through discernment.

Abraham longed for the day when his seed would be the blessing to all the nations. Here it is! The promise made to him in Genesis 12:3 is pouring joy and grace, power and restoration among the Jews and among the gentiles. They all get fed. They all get welcomed. Any who want to know and love God find restoration. And the subtle "I AM" is a claim only God can make. Jesus made the claim legitimately. He is our God, full of love and grace. Oh how the nations are blessed, including us!

A Walk Through John

Chapter 9

'As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing! '

John 9:1-7

We must quickly do the work the Lord has planned for us! And nobody caused this blindness. God the Father planned to demonstrate His power and glory in this man. And the Father shows it's His Son working in power. The rabbis wanted to catch Jesus with a bad explanation. Instead a little spit, some dirt and mud, and then some obedience, and God shows His power! Boy will the neighbors be talking!

'His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!" They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?" He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

"Where is he now?" they asked. "I don't know," he replied. Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!" Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them. Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?" The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet." '

John 9:8-17

Jesus healed the man who had been born blind. And He did so on the Sabbath. Oh the Pharisees were mad. Their stone cold hearts had no room for love of God or love of sinners. They merely worked to

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keep control. The blind man can see! Shouldn't everyone be celebrating? Satan's domain loses grip on one more sinner, now saved. Heaven celebrates. We should be celebrating too!

"The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

"I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

John 9:18-25

So what do you do with Jesus? One camp wants you to believe Jesus is a deceiver, manipulating people, and disobeying the law and traditions of the synagogue. These leaders were all about control and manipulation.

The other camp is a simpler camp. They see miracles and proclaim that God is with us. Look what He does. Listen to what He says. Experience time together with Him.

Oh the old manipulative synagogue is being shattered, by the one who made each man, woman and child. He is pouring fresh teaching, new life, and vibrant relationship. And the leaders are scared, losing their grip, and headed for a panic.

What about you? Is this simple enough to proclaim, "I was lost, and am now found? I had no idea, but Jesus came for me?" He's here for you right now. Love and follow Him!

"But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?"

"Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

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Then they cursed him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! We know God spoke to Moses, but we don’t even know where this man comes from.”

“Why, that’s very strange!” the man replied. “He healed my eyes, and yet you don’t know where he comes from? We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he couldn’t have done it.”

“You were born a total sinner!” they answered. “Are you trying to teach us?” And they threw him out of the synagogue. ’

John 9:26-34

Did you catch that? The blind man is no longer blind, and he can plainly see the lack of faith in the synagogue leaders. God answers the prayers of His followers, and He has answered Jesus. The result is the blind can now see.

Do you want to be His follower too? I do. But these poor leaders are only about control. So they threw the blind man out of the synagogue.

‘When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man? ”

The man answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

“You have seen him,” Jesus said, “and he is speaking to you!”

“Yes, Lord, I believe!” the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

Then Jesus told him, “I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind.”

Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, “Are you saying we’re blind?”

“If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty,” Jesus replied. “But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.’

John 9:35-41

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Everyone who wants to believe will believe. They will meet the Son of Man. Jesus came to give sight to anyone who needs it, wants it.

But He also came in judgement, to let the world know that unbelief is a choice, a fatal choice, and no accident.

Welcome the Son of Man. Receive healing. Be forgiven. And worship Him for all that He is!

A Walk Through John

Chapter 10

' "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice." '

John 10:1-5

Jesus is the true shepherd. He comes through the gate, the sheep know His voice and they follow Him! Learn to hear His voice. Follow what He says. Do as He commands. This is real life!

These other religious leaders argue and twist, but they don't know the sheep, and they don't know the Father. Jesus is coming for His own, and this includes you!

'Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. '

John 10:6-10

We know the true Shepherd. It's Jesus, and He gives life. Rich, satisfying life. The Thief's purpose is to steal, to kill, to destroy. We know Jesus, and are so glad. All those who came before were imposters, trying to destroy what God is building. So come to Jesus. Enter God's Kingdom through Him. You'll never look back!

' "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.'

John 10:11-16

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Not only does Jesus bring us life, He loses His own life as a sacrifice, to pay a ransom we could never pay. He gave up everything to bear our sin, remove our guilt and shame, and restore us forever to the Father. He is an amazing Shepherd. And all who need a shepherd turn to Him. We all listen to His voice, and follow!

' "The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him. Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?" Others said, "This doesn't sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" '

John 10:17-21

The Father and the Son were working their plan. Saving men and women was always at the forefront. And the Father and the Son loved each other, longing for restoration with the men and women who were lost. And Jesus laid down His life to redeem us. We love it. Father loves it. And Jesus loves us. So He chose to, and then did it. Notice the people who don't understand God's plan. They are the accusers of Jesus. The believers are the ones who trust, even if they don't understand. Which are you?

'It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one." '

John 10:22-30

We know His voice. He knows us, and we follow Him. We receive eternal life, and will never perish. Nobody can wrest us out of Jesus' hand, held forever by the Father's power. This new life is amazing, filled with promise, wonder, power and joy. What a great week to walk with Jesus!

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'Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?"

They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!' And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,' why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father." '

John 10:31-38

Jesus claimed to be the son of God. And the Father proved it by doing miracles. Jesus' teaching and works demonstrated that He indeed is God. Everyone who believes in Him finds out that He really is God. The Father confirms this for us too. We have truly found life in Him!

'Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them. He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile. And many followed him. "John didn't perform miraculous signs," they remarked to one another, "but everything he said about this man has come true." And many who were there believed in Jesus.'

John 10:39-42

They can't arrest Jesus until the Father lets it happen. But they wanted to arrest Him. He went away, across the Jordan where John was baptizing. Many followed Him, and look at their thinking. John didn't perform miracles, but everything John said about Jesus has come true. And many believed in Jesus. So the question for you and me, is do we believe in Jesus? Do we come to the same conclusion that they did? If so, what do we do next?

A Walk Through John

Chapter 11

'A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. '

John 11:1-6

I know what I want. I want to be well. And then there is Jesus. He knows the end from the beginning, so sickness lasting a couple days longer is fine, within God's plan. Oh how my view and Jesus' view are different. I want relief now. Jesus wants to work in God's timing. I'm still trying to figure out God's timing.

'Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea." But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?" Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light."

Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up." The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him." Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus." '

John 11:7-9,11-16

Jesus wasn't about his own safety or protection. He was focused on doing the work of the Lord, His Father. He already knew where to go and what to do. And He is teaching us to focus on the works of the Father as well.

Jesus' invitation is to "come, let's go see him." Shall we? Or shall we like Thomas, see only the risk? Thomas had yet to realize that Jesus is Messiah, and His work must complete. The safest place in the world is walking with Jesus.

A Walk Through John

'When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

"Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

John 11:17-26

Do you believe this? What a hard question! Jesus had a plan to raise up Lazarus immediately. But Jesus doesn't always do this. Not in front of my eyes. Jesus asked a fair question, and Martha gave a reasonable answer.

I miss my son. I have absolute confidence I will see him again and live with him forever, never dying. But for now my son is absent, buried, but already with the Lord.

Jesus is the resurrection. He is the life. Everyone who lives in Him will never die forever.

"Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." So Mary immediately went to him.

Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there.

When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled.

A Walk Through John

“Where have you put him?” he asked them. They told him, “Lord, come and see.” Then Jesus wept. The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” ’

John 11:27-36

Jesus met Mary and Martha at their darkest hour. Their brother had died, and they had buried him. All was gone, and they were hopeless.

We know Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in Him will never die. Yes we believe it. And yet, we ache and hurt when someone passes. And the closer the person, the more personal is the pain. We will see him again! He isn't dead, he's simply changed his address. Reunions are spectacular, and I can't wait!

'But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?” Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.

“Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

Jesus responded, “Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?” So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.”

Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!” ’

John 11:37-44

Jesus ached with Mary and Martha. He taught about resurrection and life. He challenged the people to believe. Yet He was also angry. Not at people's unbelief, but at the horror and travesty of sin, of pain, of loss, of hurt and grief. The first garden brought in sin and desperation, and He is bringing life.

His first destination was Mary and Martha, to grieve with them. A shoulder to cry on, a hug, tears, emptiness. He didn't rush past this, even knowing what He would do. He met them in their grief, and would stay there with them.

But then the finger-pointing of the people. The blame game, as if anyone other than Satan had caused the death. And opportunity for critics of Jesus to get in another dig. Sin and death plays out in hurt and

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anger. So yes, Jesus was angry.

"Roll away the stone!" Jesus has a better plan. "Lazarus come forth!" And he did. "Quickly, unbind him!"

One day we will hear the very same voice, "Come forth." Our ears will be getting the forever call, and eternity in Heaven begins. Jesus showed us exactly how it works. Our job? Rest, trust and believe!

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. '

John 11:43-46

Here's a very mixed crowd. Jesus is with Lazarus, alive from the dead. Mary and Martha are overjoyed and amazed. The disciples are taking this in, one more amazing Jesus-event. Mary and Martha's friends were split. Many now believed in Jesus. This is the kind of belief that changes lives forever. But some of the crowd were critics, sceptics. These were the ones who went off to tell the Pharisees what Jesus had done.

We have choices. Do we adore Jesus, thrilled that He comes through? Are we uncertain, watching and waiting, and then glad for the result? Are we on the fence, but now throwing in with Him? Or are we forever against Him, and heading off to fire up the Pharisees? Where are you with Jesus?

'Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation."

Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, "You don't know what you're talking about! You don't realize that it's better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed." He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world. '

John 11:47-52

The Pharisees were focused on protecting their religious world, focused on not upsetting Roma. Watching Jesus perform miracles and teaching freedom by relationship with God was a huge threat. If only they had stopped, and realized relationship with God is the ultimate satisfaction. If only they recognized the Kingdom of God changes lives. They could have overseen a huge turning of Israel and the nations to God. But their focus was only on protecting their place in an oppressive regime.

A Walk Through John

Caiaphas expected perhaps Jesus would cause so much tumult that Rome would come down on Him, killing Him. Caiaphas said the quiet part out loud - "He's going to get us all killed!" But in fact Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus' death would be better. Turns out Jesus' death was the greatest redemption in world history. Caiaphas had no idea.

Friends, you matter. Jesus has come for you! The authorities and demands of our culture will all be met in Him. Come to Jesus, and let Him pour His Kingdom through you!

'So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus' death. As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began.

They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, "What do you think? He won't come for Passover, will he?" Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.'

John 11:53-57

Lazarus is back alive, and the leaders want to kill Jesus. Their plot, their planning, was all about killing Jesus. So Jesus' ministry came to a public halt. Jesus and the disciples left Jerusalem and stayed in Ephraim instead.

The Pharisees want to kill Jesus. This is their plan to destroy His ministry.

The Father is planning on killing Jesus. This is His plan to redeem every man, woman, boy and girl to Himself.

Satan thinks he is so smart. Our Father is smarter. Satan thinks he can stop God's amazing plan by death.

Our Father is completing His eternal plan, by death.

Jesus gets it. So He is quietly spending time with His followers in Ephraim, sharing and teaching them all about Himself, His Father and what will be coming.

A Walk Through John

All of history is narrowing down to what's coming!

A Walk Through John

Chapter 12

'Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him.

Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.

Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." '

John 12:1-8

Jesus is back in Bethany with Mary, Martha and Lazarus at a dinner in His honor. And He was on His way to offer the world's greatest sacrifice. But who knew it?

Mary knew it. She brought out her own treasured perfume, and bathed Jesus' feet in it. This was a sign of His upcoming death for all people.

But Judas, ever the opportunist, wanted to steal the vial, and keep the money for himself. He might be the only one in the conversation who didn't know what was going on.

What about you? Does the dinner get your attention? Jesus is great and worthy of an honor celebration.

Does the perfume catch your eye? He is on His way to die for you and me. And Mary will honor him right now for it.

Does the waste catch your soul? What are you living for? Where does your path lead, and do you want to follow Jesus?

Or maybe you are like the disciples, just observing. You're watching a whirlwind, and not sure what the end will be. Let me just hint that it is a great ending, and includes you!

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'When all the people heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus. '

John 12:9-11

This is Lazarus' hometown, and he is no longer dead. Jesus is with them, and everybody was there to celebrate! Look, there He is! But the poor priests were angry, because nobody is following them. They have been deserted. And how did they cope? They began plotting to kill Jesus, and Lazarus.

'The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted, "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord ! Hail to the King of Israel!"

Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt." '

John 12:12-15

Don't be afraid. Your King has come! He is the fulfilment of all the promises of old. He is the Savior, the one who washes away sins, who restores men to their kids, people to God, and brings God's Kingdom. Your King has come!

'His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him. Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!" '

John 12:16-19

When God is in it, nobody can stop it! The disciples didn't yet realize the answered prophecies. But they knew something was right, and they followed, learning. Many who had seen Lazarus raised had followed, and were excited. And the poor Pharisees were now dejected. Everybody has gone out to follow Jesus. What will happen next? Are you following Jesus today?

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'Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.'

John 12:20-26

The Greeks are welcome. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus is welcome. But following Jesus means losing your life. Following Jesus means dying to dreams, giving my future to Him. Keeping my life forever with Jesus is the gift of the Father. I am going where Jesus went. I am going to where He is. And He is welcoming me and all who go with us. We are going with Jesus. And the whole world is invited. Be sure to come with us!

' "Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name." Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again."

When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this to indicate how he was going to die.'

John 12:27-33

It's coming. The event that cast Satan out. The tree. The cross. The one-time wholly acceptable sacrifice for all of man's sin. The final conquering of evil. It's almost here. And it will be hard. Brutal. Jesus embraces it. But for the first time ever, there will be a huge cavern between the Father and Himself. Sin will be horribly painful. Yet He embraces the battle.

You are worth it. I am worth it. The nations are worth it. And Father will receive the glory to which He is due.

'The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?"

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Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.” After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them. '

John 12:34-36

Who is this "Son of Man?" He's the one in the light, calling us out of darkness. Once we see the light, we can never go back to the darkness. He's the sent-one from the Father. And He is beckoning you and me to put our trust wholly in the light. So what is the light? It's The Father, the Son, the Spirit, and it's our place in Their Family. It's forever joining God in His work, walking after Him, engaging others to come to the light too. Be Children of the Light!

'But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted:

“ Lord , who has believed our message?
To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?”

But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said,
“The Lord has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts
— so that their eyes cannot see,
and their hearts cannot understand,
and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them.” '

John 12:37-40

But so many still did not believe in Him. Lazarus was there. Healed people were around them. Miracle after miracle had been offered before them. And Jesus' own words were gracious and kind, revealing the Father's invitation.

But Satan has blinded them, and their own hearts refused. Pray for hearts today to open, to hear, to see, understand and be healed. Pray the Lord builds His Kingdom, and brings our family with Him.

'Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah's glory. Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the

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synagogue. For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me."

John 12:41-45

Jesus is compelling, but then comes the exchange. Will I trust in Him as I believe the Father? Does He say what the Father says? Does He demonstrate that He is from the Father? Do His works back Him up? Can I risk the applause of men in order to follow Jesus?

'I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.'

John 12:46-50

Jesus isn't judging, and He's not bringing insurance to avoid a tragedy. He is giving new life, and welcoming lost people back to the Lord. Father and He worked a plan of welcome, of restoration. Listen to His invitation and embrace Him. Come be saved! Father wants you home too! His commands lead to eternal life! Yes, there's dire consequences for the ones who refuse Him. Come to Jesus, and be received!

A Walk Through John

Chapter 13

'Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. '

John 13:1-3

Jesus knew. It was time for Him to return to His Father. And He loved His disciples, loving them to the very end. Judas was doing his betrayal thing. Father has given all authority to the Son, authority over everything. Jesus was preparing for His final work, an act so great that all mankind can have a relationship with the Father. The invitation includes you and me.

'So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean." '

John 13:4-11

Jesus serves. He alone can wash the feet, because He alone is the sacrifice for all men's sins, for all time. He is the savior. He has established who He is. And now He is headed into the "What He does" portion. Merely a couple days, with intense teaching, but more so, and intense refutation of Satan's domain. Jesus will crush once for all the curse of sin over man. He will very simply wash us clean. We

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need it. All who come to Jesus are washed clean. But not all men. Some refuse to come.

'After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them. '

John 13:12-17

First He washed their feet. He begins by caring for each one. They are clean. Next He tells them, and tells us, we must do this one for another. Wash each others' feet. Make them clean again. Restored. Washed. Ready for what is next. This is what we must do too!

' "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I Am the Messiah. I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

John 13:18-20

Jesus is God's Messiah, the Sent One promised long ago. He is the Son of God, and anyone who welcomes Him also welcomes the Father. God's gift is open to anyone!

But Jesus also knows who will and who will not welcome Him. So He is speaking to His redeemed ones, those who will welcome Him and walk with Him. These are the saints, the chosen ones. AND these include you.

Anyone who wants can come, and anyone who comes will not be turned away. So Jesus speaks to these, to you and me, and He reminds us He is Messiah. And He has chosen His own - you and me.

Oh how perplexing. Anyone can come, and will be welcomed. And, Jesus knows the ones He has chosen. With man there is confusion. WITH God there is no confusion at all. So Come to Jesus!

'Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!" The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean.

The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. Simon Peter motioned to him to

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ask, “Who’s he talking about?” So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus responded, “It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl.” And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him.

Then Jesus told him, “Hurry and do what you’re going to do.” None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. So Judas left at once, going out into the night. '

John 13:21-30

Hurry and go do it. Jesus always knew who would betray Him. He knew the heart and deceit in Judas. And He was sad to see Satan get a grip on Judas. Yes the scriptures long ago predicted the betrayal. And Jesus expected it.

Jesus has agony for each one who chooses death, who embraces the darkness rather than the light. He knows what man is made of, and He longs for their trust and fellowship. He is able to meet the challenge, but so many turn away.

Tonight it is Judas. Disappointed with the suffering Jesus, Judas wanted a kingdom. He wanted acclamation and rule. He wanted to win. But a branch of Jesse whose course was to serve and sacrifice was not what Judas sought. And he thought he knew better.

Judas is the one. And it's a sad day. One day the others will understand.

'As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” '

John 13:31-35

Judas never heard God's plan. He never understood Jesus was bringing a Kingdom based on absolute forgiveness, and a new relationship with the Father. He never grasped the deep love of God, or the love

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poured out in relationships of the brothers and sisters. He never heard of the commandment to love each other, or the promise of proof to the world. But we are commanded so. Love each other. The world will watch and be amazed. God will prove Himself in our love.

'Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later." "But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you." Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.'

John 13:36-38

Simon Peter is all in. He wants it, to be with Jesus, no matter where Jesus goes. And Jesus gives him a promise and a truth. You can't come now. Jesus is doing a work, a cataclysmic world-changing epic for all the ages. This is for you. It's for me. For our families, neighbors. For all peoples in all times.

We can't come. It's not our work. Yet. In fact, we are not even sold out for this yet. The call is going to become personal. And Peter is not ready. I am not ready. Nor are you. For Peter, he is going to fold under pressure, before daybreak. You and I are folding under pressure too. But there is a promise.

Where Jesus is going, we too shall go. We will stand up under the pressure. Following Jesus is worth it. Even to the point of dying. And Peter will. He makes it. And the nations will hear. Because of us. We make it too. We will be where Jesus is going. Take comfort my friends.

A Walk Through John

Chapter 14

' "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going."

"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'

John 14:1-6

Where do I put my trust? How do I know what is next? These disciples have been with Jesus. They have seen Him work. They have heard Him teach. They have received grace and forgiveness, blessing and power for Jesus.

Now He is going away, and they are not sure. But His promise is He will return for His own people. This invitation is for all who will believe in Him. He is the way. Where am I going? I'm going with Jesus. He is the truth. When I don't understand life, He remains a pillar of what is true. I go back to what He says, and I count on it. He is what I need for sustenance - my whole life. His life in me gives me hope and encouragement. I get the whole life from Him. And I come to the Father, through Him.

When life is confusing, or my plans show no way forward, He is the way, the truth and the life. And I come to the Father, through Him. So I trust. And I step forward. Etep by step!

'If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even

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greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! '

John 14:7-14

Oh Philip there's a promise for you. From now on you will know the Father. You've been walking with the Son, and yet the Father has been here all along.

Moving forward, believe in Jesus. Remember the things He said, and trust them. Step out in faith and ask for His work. Expect the Father is here, listening and doing. He's crazy about you, and is working even now. God will get the glory as we follow Him and ask for His work!

Jesus is connecting the dots for His disciples. Soon they will need to count on these things. Until now they've enjoyed the ride. Soon they will be calling the shots, and asking Father to work.

You can count on Him too. Follow Him. Ask Him to work, to overcome, to heal, to redeem. He will do it!

' "If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live.'

John 14:15-19

Obey Jesus. That's how we show we love Him. And He sent Holy Spirit to live in us, our assurance, our helper, our champion and advocate. The world doesn't get the Spirit, but we do. And Jesus will not leave us as orphans. He's coming for us. And He's with us by the Spirit as well. Our new life is filled with His power, His truth, and His direction! He really is the way!

'When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.' '

John 14:20-21

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When He was raised to life again, we grasped the truth. Jesus is in the Father, we are one with them, and He is in us. That's when it happened for me. When did it happen for you?

And what's next? Hearing Jesus' commands and obeying them is the sign that we love Jesus. And remarkably the Father loves us, Jesus loves us, and they reveal themselves to us. Our whole life ahead is learning from and obeying Jesus, and relishing this new life of love with Him!

'Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. '

John 14:22-26

Jesus didn't rush to proclaim Himself. Instead He slowly builds loving relationships with His followers. He reveals Himself to them, and He and the Father come make their home in the disciples. And then He sends the Advocate. That's Holy Spirit, the forever-encourager and strengthener of our relationship.

So how is Jesus' home in you going? Are you drawing near to He and the Father? Are you listening to Him, responding to Holy Spirit who is the champion for you? Judas was learning that Jesus is building a home, which becomes a whole life! How is that whole life in you?

Draw near to Jesus. Receive His love. Listen for His voice. Read what He has said. Obey what He commands. Others will see, and when they are ready, they will receive Him too.

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe. '

John 14:27-29

How will the disciples fare when Jesus returns to the Father? What will happen to them? Jesus has two answers for them, and these are for us as well. The first is a promise that when He goes to the Father,

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He will come again for us. He is coming back to us. And then He promises peace. The disciples will have peace of heart, not worry. And they will have peace of mind, to comfort amidst all of life's details. He will be with the Father, who is greater than Jesus. Father is not bound by the constraints of humanity. He doesn't tire. He doesn't run out of energy. He doesn't fight sin. He knows fully the situation of the world, even our situation. And He has us covered. We have His peace.

Oh we look for Jesus' return. We are happy to live in relationship with Father, trusting Him through life's challenges and trials. But we long to be with Him forever, in the company of Jesus who saves us. And until then we rely on Spirit who is our advocate, our champion, our support! Even so, come Lord Jesus!

'I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe. "I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going.'

John 14:29-31

Jesus has a plan. He told us ahead of time, so that in the crazy events coming, we will know that He knows, and we will not panic. The ruler of the world is almost here to wield his evil. A time of calamity is ahead, but he has no power over Jesus. Be assured that everything coming is under God's hand, and Jesus is entering in on His own commitment. The world's future hangs in the balance, and Jesus will do what the Father asks. This will work out, as strange as it may appear. Trust in Jesus.

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Chapter 15

' "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.'

John 15:1-8

We are in Jesus, so bear fruit! We stay connected to Jesus through prayer, His word, spending time listening to the Spirit, and obeying His commands. And there is fruit, our lives changing, other people hearing. Our world gets a great impact - because of grapes and vines and fruit and stuff. Our challenge is staying in Jesus, but we choose it and pursue it. He is worth it. So are you!

' "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! '

John 15:9-11

We are people who love Jesus, and we remain in His love. The way we do this is obeying His commandments. Jesus showed us how He loves the Father by obeying everything the Father says. So we obey Jesus and remain in His love. And there's joy, overflowing joy that we get from following Jesus.

What commands? Here's a quick summary which covers most everything. Repent and believe the good news. Be baptized and filled with the Spirit. Break bread with the believers, remembering the Lord's supper with His disciples. Love God, and our neighbors, and one another - and even our enemies. Pray in the name of Jesus for needs, for healing, for provision, for situations that come up, for God to send workers into the harvest. Give generously, almost hilariously, to any who ask or have need. Go tell others the good news of Jesus, making disciplemakers who make more disciplemakers. The key words

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are Repent, Baptize, Bread, Love, Pray, Give and Go. Memorize them and practice regularly! Remain in the love of Jesus!

'This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. '

John 15:12-14

Jesus commands me to lay it down. Place my life aside for the sake of everyone else. Love them as Jesus loves me. Serve them. Encourage them. Welcome them. Take time for them. Let them be first, while I can be second. Protect them. Care for them. Provide for them. Teach them. Pray for them. Love them.

What Jesus did for me. Let me do this for them. I love Jesus. I love them. This is His command. This is how He knows that I love Him.

'I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other. '

John 15:15-17

We are Jesus' friends. He chose us. He has told us everything the Father told Him. He appointed us. As we go, we will bear fruit that will last, and the Father will give us what we ask in Jesus' name. And we are commanded to love one another.

The fruit is people who also follow Jesus. The fruit is repentance. The fruit is relationship with Jesus. The fruit is growth in trusting Him and living with and for Him. The fruit is asking the Father for needs to be met, for healings, for guidance, for deliverance, for knowledge, for understanding, for release of the bound, for doors to be opened, for whatever is needed. The fruit is a large body of fellow believers, also following Jesus. The fruit is love which we share for one another.

Jesus chose you and me, and appointed us to these things. Thank you Jesus! OK, let's get after it!

' "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the

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master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.

They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures : 'They hated me without cause.'

John 15:18-25

The world is not our friend. We have many friends, and we hope and wish they would follow Jesus. He brings restoration to the Father. But the world hates Him. And they will hate us as well.

Jesus has already proven Himself, and will do more, even in us. But the world may likely hate us, because they don't love the Father. Just remember this as we walk with Him. Remember His love, and trust in Him. But there will be hard times.

' "But I will send you the Advocate —the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.'

John 15:26-27

No matter what we face, how we live, Jesus has sent the Advocate. Holy Spirit is now in us. He is true. Everything He says is true. He testifies of Jesus for us! He is God, sent by the Father and the Son, for us, to us, and lives in us.

And it's crucial we have the advocate. We must testify of Jesus. Where we go. While we work. As we live. Every day. We are Jesus to those around us. And they need restoration. Healing. Forgiveness. Sustenance. Direction. Life. Jesus gives it. We bring it. Spirit advocates for it. This is our "must."

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Chapter 16

' "I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith. For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. This is because they have never known the Father or me. Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer. '

John 16:1-4

The disciples must have been shocked. These last three years have not brought about the Kingdom of David, but a confrontation. Jesus invites us into the assault, where sin and death is the culprit, and we are bearers of light. But the world will not like us. High places will be torn down. Spirits will be released. Sin and Satan will strive to retain control. And we carry the bread of life. We bring the only remedy that works. But the world will hate us.

' "But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged. '

John 16:5-11

Jesus is going away. But it's good. He is sending the Advocate. And the Advocate is the one who will do the work. He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. And the best part, He will be doing the work of bringing many sons and daughters back to the Father. Satan is getting his desserts, but Father will bring many back to Himself. And we are part of it!

' "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.' '

John 16:12-15

There's so much more. The Spirit of Truth was sent by Jesus and is still being sent. He guided the early disciples, and He guides us as well. He opens understanding. He declares truth. He shares more of

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Jesus, things that Jesus wanted to convey but deferred for the Spirit to teach. He tells the future. And He gives us what we need too. You know it is Him when your heart aches to give glory and praise to Jesus. There's nothing hidden, but the Spirit reveals it. So draw near. Open your heart, and listen. What is commanded, obey. What is assured, trust. Walk in Him and you will have life!

' "In a little while you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again."

Some of the disciples asked each other, "What does he mean when he says, 'In a little while you won't see me, but then you will see me,' and 'I am going to the Father'? And what does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand."

Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, "Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. '

John 16:16-22

Trouble is coming. Travail, anguish and sobering astonishment. The disciples loved being with Jesus, learning, sharing, becoming trusting followers. But the work which Jesus has come to do will include false accusations, heinous beatings, torture, abuse, and Jesus will need absolute resolve in order to carry Himself through it. This is the final battle where Satan's dominion over all of mankind is finally broken, and destroyed. But the cost will be the life of Jesus. They didn't grasp it. So Jesus is planting the seeds of future hope, of future restoration, and the guys don't even know they need it.

Jesus still does this. He prepares us for what we don't yet know or understand. He is at work. And He is trustworthy. We will have sorrow. But we will have joy again, and be with Him again. Count on it.

'At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy. '

John 16:23-24

This time of seeing Jesus again would be filled with awe and wonder. For now it will be travail, but one day, there will be a joy-filled reunion of seeing Jesus again. And after that everything would be

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amazing. Jesus has been preparing them for the interim, the endurance of hardship and trouble. But a new time is coming. They didn't know this would be gin next week. And look at the promise, we will be restored not only to Jesus, but directly connected to the Father. We will have relationship with the Father, asking for help, getting needs filled, and seeking the kingdom of Jesus, here on earth. Whatever is needed, we ask, and Father provides. Our joy will be immense, because it's a whole new life. So today, like those disciples, seek the Father and His kingdom. Ask whatever it takes, and see Him provide. Let your joy be filled because of Him! And to think, this all began three days after Jesus told them!

' "I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God. '

John 16:25-27

Jesus has been walking with these men and women for three years. He's been introducing them to a real life of interactive relationship with the Father. And He has been teaching them of what is coming. Now it's time to turn over the relationships with God to the Father Himself. We can ask directly of Father, and He listens and responds. There's no distance, no barrier, no wall or veil between us. And He loves us. So interact, talk, pray, and listen. He's Father.

"Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God." Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

John 16:29-33

When Jesus spoke plainly, the disciples understood. Or at least they knew Jesus is God and they could trust Him. Yet they have yet to begin learning that He can carry us through deep troubles. He is preparing them for the long endurance of living by faith in a trying world. Trials will come. Being scattered is almost upon them. So He reminds them that He will not really be alone, because they are going to see something awful. But He wants them to know that He has overcome the world, no matter what days lay ahead.

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The same assurance is for us too. He understands adversity and trial, and has overcome. We can have peace as we walk in faith. He has overcome the world, and offers assurance to us.

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Chapter 17

'After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began. '

John 17:1-5

The time has come. Jesus is done teaching His disciples. He's done with bringing glory to the Father through His works and instruction. He's finished with the work. Now comes the obedience part. "Oh Father, pour your glory out in me, so I can bring the glory back to you!" Jesus is asking for the full glory He had with the Father at the beginning.

Eternal life has been demonstrated, preached, and bestowed. This is that life, to know the Father and the Son personally. Seek Jesus, and spend time with Him. Know and love the Father. Receive and fellowship with the Spirit. Let God move you, direct you and lead you. This is eternal life, and it really does go on forever. Come on in!

' "I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

"My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are.'

John 17:6-11

"They were always yours." Did you know that? We were always the Father's kids, but He sent Jesus so that we might discover this amazing truth. We are the Father's. Next we learn that we are people who bring Jesus glory. That's just part of the deal. So we raise our hands, and declare Him, the amazing one who did everything for us. And then the third thing, Jesus prays to Father for us. Jesus asks our protection, until that day when we are back with Him. We belong to God the Father, and His son, who created the world, prays for our protection. There is nowhere safer than in the hand of God.

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'During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

“Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ’

John 17:12-16

We were protected when Jesus was here. And now we realize that we were rescued by God from the snares of Satan. We've been kept by God's nature, character and trustworthy word. Jesus gave us God's word, taught us His truth, and given us His purpose. Now He's asking Father to keep us by God's power and nature. We don't get rescued from travail and trial, but God keeps us through these. We don't belong to the world, we belong to the Father.

When Jesus asks, He gets what He asks for. This prayer over you and me is completely solid. God will keep us while we are in the world. And our days may be hard. We will face horrible challenges. Yet we belong to God, and He will keep us. Place all your hope in Him! He will come through.

'Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. ’

John 17:17-21

Oh how Father loves and cares for us! He makes us Holy. He uses His Truth to do so. He teaches us His word, which is truth! He gives His son as a sacrifice to make us holy. And We are sent into the world as bearers of His grace and invitation. We are completely His, and nothing is lacking.

Jesus spoke this over His immediate followers, and then extended all of it to us. You and I are part of His unified team, deliberately, and all who hear through us are welcomed as well. Tell a friend!

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' "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.'

John 17:20-23

Jesus calls us into Himself, to find our identity in Him and the Father and the Spirit. And He calls us to be unified together, enjoying His glory, and conveying Him to the world.

All of God is in you and in me. They fully live in us, and we follow. Sure we have days that feel uncertain, but these are Their days, and They are at work in us. And They are at work through us. God's glory, power and wisdom is poured out in you and in me. Lift your hands and hearts in praise to Him. Ask Him to keep bringing glory. Tell Him you're all in for whatever He has as next!

And buckle your seatbelt, this could be a very fast and wild ride!

'Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

"O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

John 17:24-26

Oh how we were drawn into the fellowship of God the Father, Jesus the Son and Holy Spirit. Father looked on us and sent His Son for the restoration. Jesus would draw us back to God, and then would step up and carry our sin in our place. And resurrection brings everyone together, including us. Where Jesus is, that's where we are headed. Jesus changes everything!

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Chapter 18

'After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove. '

John 18:1-3

Having prayed to the Father for these disciples, that they would be sustained and protected by Him, Jesus led them across the Kidron Valley to a familiar garden. Gethsemane was the place of prayer. Gethsemane was the place of refreshing. Gethsemane was the garden where Jesus met with the Father.

And Judas knew the place well too. He had a contingent of soldiers and guards, given by the leading priests and Pharisees. They wanted to end Jesus' life and work. They wanted this guy to go away, and they intended to do this themselves. And with blazing lamps and torches, they also arrived at Gethsemane. The ultimate battle for the future of mankind is beginning.

'Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

"Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.

"I Am he," Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) As Jesus said "I Am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground!

Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

"I told you that I Am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me." '

John 18:4-9

Imagine the power in that garden. Jesus using the phrase "I AM" declares deity. He is God, and His words carried power. They lurched backward, hurtled to the ground, thrust by the power in Jesus' declaration. And it happened again. Everyone is completely clear, Jesus is God, and wicked man is coming for Him. Romans guards and Jewish leaders were attacking Jesus, and His word counter punched with the clear statement that He is God.

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And then Jesus doesn't resist. Instead, he provides release for His followers, along with a promise. He has lost none of those who are His. This promise was true then, and is true every day since. He loses none of His. Every one of His followers remains in Him, and will be with Him forever as well. So Jesus demands the others be freed. We will soon see this is true!

They came for Jesus, whose voice has the power to stun. And Jesus provides release for His own. There's a turning here, Jesus is preparing to go with them. Such a confounding situation!

'Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. '

John 18:10-12

Peter panicked. Suddenly, the bold fisherman saw a fight, and Jesus at risk, and he drew his sword. Nobody was taking Peter's friend and leader. Peter wouldn't sit idly by. He pulled his sword and slashed at the nearest guy. The High Priest was there, and so was his slave. Malchus caught the sword with his ear, and lost it. Peter was willing to fight for Jesus, but he didn't know what Jesus knew.

Put it away, Peter! This is the work of the Father, preparing His own perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Even enough for Peter's bold slash. Malchus was hurt, but Jesus stopped the fight. And He told the followers that this is the cup of suffering which the Father has given Him to drink. "Shall I not drink it?" Jesus was obedient, even at deep personal cost.

And so Jesus was arrested, by the Temple guards, the soldiers, and their commanding officer. The High Priest was right there too. And they tied Jesus up.

Who ties up God? Nobody, unless the sheep Himself is offering to carry the punishment. And this punishment would be for every man, woman, boy and girl who ever lived. The Kingdom of Satan is crumbling before them. But nobody saw the demise. These men thought they were winning by arresting Jesus. What a difference a couple days will make!

'First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted

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with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. '

John 18:13-16

Caiaphas was in the garden. His servant Malchus lost an ear to Peter. So they took Jesus to Caiaphas' father-in-law's home. These leaders were complicit in arresting Jesus. This is no holiday gathering, this is cold, deliberate intent to quash the so-called "Son of Man."

Peter and John are following. They aren't deterred. They know Jesus is God's sent one, and they are hoping The Father will step in with some sort of restoration. They don't know what, but they are going along faithfully.

'The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself. '

John 18:17-18

We get afraid of what might happen to us, so we retreat from the hard stuff. Peter was asked whether he was with Jesus. But Jesus was being interrogated. And Peter said "No."

When it's hard, or there's risk, do we shy from associating with Jesus? How was Peter's spirit inside when he said "No?" I would have had a lump in my throat, an ache inside, seeing Jesus being arrested, and wondering if I was going to suffer too.

Let's not be the people who blend in and hide around the fire.

'Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said." '

John 18:19-21

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The interrogation of Jesus begins with a foolish question. They asked Him what He had been teaching. Rather than walk into a word trap, Jesus merely points out that all His teaching has been public, in the Temple, nearby.

Adversarial Evangelism might be a name for Jesus' approach. He is forcing the interrogators to work to recall His teaching, His words, His miracles. The Father is fully in control, and the gates of Hell are not prevailing.

There is a crowd watching, including Peter, the guards, household help and others. Just outside are more people who followed, and an entire city who has been hearing Jesus. These temple leaders are being forced to inspect the fruit of Jesus' ministry. This is the crux of a spiritual battle between the Kingdom of God and the earthly rule of Satan. How will it play out?

'Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"

Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.'

John 18:22-24

Jesus took this one for us. He wasn't there because of justice. He was there because of mediation. Annas had nothing on Jesus. But the religious leaders pushed to have Jesus punished. And we were just like Peter, looking on, not admitting we were a part.

But here's the great secret: Jesus was there in our place. Isaiah makes this clear: 'But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.' Isaiah 53:5

Jesus is walking this walk so that we can walk forever with the Father. Jesus is removing our sins and transgressions from us, and paying a price. When we see Jesus stricken, we are watching our own evil being cleansed. We are finding healing.

'Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off,

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asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?” Again Peter denied it.

And immediately a rooster crowed. '

John 18:25-27

<https://www.bible.com/bible/116/JHN.18.25-27>

Jesus knows our darkest failures. He knows even when we fail Him. He brings the joys and the hard stuff too. And He knows what breaks us.

Jesus knew Peter could not continue in his own strength. Peter was committed, and willing to follow Jesus. But when the threat becomes personal, he panicked. To preserve himself, he denied Jesus. And the cock crowed, after the third denial. Jesus said this would happen.

What a sudden shock to Peter, when he realized he had denied Jesus. Depression, regret, self-hate are pouring in. Consequences are rushing at him. And the one who could restore everything is bound, arrested, and headed for demise.

Sometimes our life falls apart, and we walk from Jesus. We don't see any way forward, and all we have is suddenly at risk. We deny Jesus, and try to protect ourselves. And then the cock crows. Something happens to shock our thinking.

Hang in there, hope is coming.

'Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, “What is your charge against this man?”

“We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!” they retorted.

“Then take him away and judge him by your own law,” Pilate told them.

“Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone,” the Jewish leaders replied. '

John 18:28-31

The High Priest Caiaphas held a trial, but no crimes were proven. So they took Jesus to Pilate so the Romans could judge Him. But Pilate couldn't see a charge either. Pilate tried to give Jesus back. And the Jewish leaders weren't allowed to execute Jesus, though this was their hope.

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Jesus has completely blasted the Jewish tradition, and set forth a true life of righteousness. Jesus showed God's power, and His personal relationship.

Now there are two choices. Either listen to Jesus, turn from sin and join the Father, or try to condemn Jesus in order to avoid the demand for repentance. Which of these is you? For me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true." '

John 18:31-37

Pilate figured it out. Jesus was not threatening Rome. His Kingdom was to bring God's truth to people, and cause them to follow Him. Forgiveness and restoration are a part, but no overthrow was planned or in process. In fact, Jesus' work and teaching were not on Pilate's radar.

The Jewish leaders were incensed because Jesus had called out their hypocrisy. But they couldn't kill Him. They were hoping to convince the Romans to destroy Jesus.

Jesus came to teach and testify to the truth, and to gather followers who would love and trust God. Be restored. Give everything to Him and trust, obey and lead.

'Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

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“What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this ‘King of the Jews’?”

But they shouted back, “No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!” (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)’

John 18:37-40

With Jesus before him, Pilate dismissed any charge about Jesus. Obviously Jesus wasn’t trying to assert a Kingdom over Rome. In fact, Jesus was a teacher, and His acts were acceptable. So Pilate decides to dismiss the “King” charge with an offhand comment. Pilate is keeping Jesus at arm’s length, working to remain uninvolved.

Jesus won’t let Pilate walk away. “All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true!” Jesus is calling Pilate to accountability. What will he do with the teaching of Jesus. How will he respond to Jesus opening relationship with God, and beckoning him to join in? Pilate is now making a personal choice, no longer offering a simple distant opinion. God’s call is to Pilate as well, and he must make a choice.

Pilate fails. He disregards Jesus’ teachings and villifies the truth. Next he tries to move the crowd to walk away from the pursuit. But it’s not going to happen. Jesus is demanding obedience and following. And the crowd is seeking blood. Well Pilate disregards the call of Jesus. What about you?

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Chapter 19

'Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip.

The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face. '

John 19:1-3

Pilate took offense at Jesus' demand. Would he also choose whether to obey God, and love others? No, he would not bow the knee to Jesus. He would not listen to God's invitation and find restoration with Him. Instead he ordered Jesus to be whipped with a torture device, a whip with nine tails, the ends having sharp bone and lead weight. And he ordered Jesus beat excessively. The Jews would only whip someone thirty-nine times, but Pilate ordered more than that. Jesus embraced the torture, as it truly was.

The soldiers were no better. They also chose sides, and joined in the flogging. They even wove a crown of thorns and shoved it into Jesus' head. Their choice was against God's invitation as well.

What a beating Jesus took. Yet He was the one without sin. He was the only right one in the chamber. And the reason is extraordinary. Isaiah says:

'He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all. '

Isaiah 53:3-6

My sin put Him there. And He embraced the flogging, on my behalf. Your rebellion placed Him there. And He took it for you. God Himself placed the punishment we deserve onto Him. And He carried the price to restore the whole world.

Will you repent and follow Jesus? Will you receive His restoration? Will you drink His cup, and

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recognize that you have been bought and paid for by His blood. God loves you so much that He completely paid for your sin, and simply wants you to come and walk with Him. He can be your Lord. So, come!

'Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty." Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!" '

John 19:4-5

Pilate wants no part in this, yet he is the official. He cannot walk away. He knows Jesus is innocent, but the mob is demanding. So Pilate brings the beaten Jesus out to the crowd, and declares Jesus' innocence.

Are you also trying to avoid the decision? Will you go with the crowd, or will you go with Jesus?

I am with Jesus. Let the results land where they will.

'When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"Take him yourselves and crucify him," Pilate said. "I find him not guilty."

The Jewish leaders replied, "By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. '

John 19:6-8

Pilate was sure he could just hand Jesus back to the Jewish leaders, and he would escape the situation. But they wouldn't take Jesus back, and Pilate was forced to deal with Jesus.

Here's a teacher, beaten, whipped, tortured and mocked, and the people force Pilate to deal with Him. God is unrelenting. You must deal with Jesus. God has poured His love through Jesus, and now His punishment for sin as well. It's all on Jesus, and you must figure out what to do with Him.

Will you honor, love, and accept Jesus as Lord? Will you turn from your sin, and give Him your life? Or will you try to keep Him away? Will you just pretend that Jesus is someone else's problem?

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God reminds us that we are the ones filled with sin and evil. And He has given us a savior. What will you do with Jesus?

'He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?"

Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar." '

John 19:9-12

Pilate will not deal with Jesus' claim of being sent by God, that Jesus says and does what the Father wants, and that anyone whom the Father draws will come to Jesus.

Simply, Pilate has no room in his life for a relationship with God. Jesus continually pries at the gaping spiritual hole in Pilate's life, but Pilate ignores it.

Pilate is running from Jesus, and trying everything to not be the one to punish or kill Jesus. But the religious leaders are turning this into an issue of loyalty to Caesar. They simply want to do away with Jesus. Better if they can get the Romans to do the execution.

But what about us, what will we do with Jesus? Is He your King? Is Jesus the Lord of your life?

'When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover.

And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!"

"Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!"

"What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back.

A Walk Through John

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus away. '

John 19:13-16

Pilate hoped the mockery of Jesus would satisfy the angry crowd. But the leaders wanted death. Pilate even challenges that Jesus might be their king. But their blood thirst was driving their sinful rejection. They were not simply mad at Jesus. These men and women were rejecting the kingship and lordship of God the Father. They would have no king before they would bow the knee.

So what about us. Are we going away from God the Father, who has sent His Son for us? Forgiveness is in this man. Absolute washing and regeneration come only through Him. And a future and hope await the follower. But will we go with the crowd and reject Jesus?

And Pilate thought that he somehow would be pardoned by simply letting the crowd have its way. Jesus is a demand notice for payment to the Creator of you. He wants full recompense for your sin and hatred. And there is only one offer that pays what is due. Will you take the offer?

Accept Jesus and make Him your Lord!

'Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus away. Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it. '

John 19:16-20

Pilate let them crucify Jesus. Beaten and flogged, Jesus still had to carry his cross to the place. And for shame, he was accompanied by two other criminals, also to their deaths.

Pilate placed a very controversial sign over Jesus. "King of the Jews." Jesus really was their King. And so much more. He was their Creator. He was their Protector. He was their Liberator. And by hanging and dying on that cross, He was their Savior. There is salvation in nobody else.

Is Jesus now your King?

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'Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"'

Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written." '

John 19:21-22

These vile atheists would do anything to erase Jesus. There his body hung, dead. And yet many thought what Pilate thought, this really is the sent-one from God. He really did bring people back to faith. He really did miracles, restoring, redeeming. The healed were among them.

But these leaders were trying to erase Jesus. They didn't know that you cannot erase God. This raises a point. Do we try to erase God? Do we forget what He has done, and what He has claimed? His "Fear not!" messages belong to us, but we fear anyway. His "Trust in the Lord!" declarations still stand, yet we panic.

Am I erasing what God is doing? Or am I turning to Him, and saying, "Yes, Lord?"

'When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing." So that is what they did. '

John 19:23-24

"This doesn't apply to me." The soldiers had grown callous. They saw opportunity in taking the goods there, the robe and His garments. Opportunity comes with the job, or so they thought. Surrounded by a crowd, the angry leaders demanding a change of sign, while Pilate insisted the title was correct. But these soldiers completely disregarded the situation. "It's not for me."

But God had foretold of this, and these soldiers' actions directly fulfilled what He had said. God is completely on point, and the soldiers are accountable. When they get to Heaven, the question before them will be, "What did you do with the Son?" And this is the question before every man and woman today. "What did you do with the Son?"

"Jesus, you were there, where I should have been. You paid for sin, which I caused. I need you, and I receive you in my place on that cross. What would you like from me today? Where are you leading, because I am following."

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'Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home. '

John 19:25-27

Jesus knows. He knew His mother was in shock. His mother was racked with agony, wailing inside, as her son was arrested, beaten, whipped, abused and now crucified. These days were the hardest of her life. No easy day. And Jesus knows. He was going through it, and God has a purpose. But His mom, there, convulsing in despair, because, her son! And Jesus knows.

His dear friend, disciple, the fisherman who cared to mend nets, John was also bewildered. How did we get here. So much time together, amazing miracles, blessings and learning from Jesus. A new relationship with the Father, a whole new life. But now, this? Everything is up for question, and nothing makes sense. Jesus knows.

His aunt Mary, and Mary from Magdala. The humble, and the deeply forgiven, loving encouragers of Jesus, but for what? It's all crashing down, and they can hardly look. But stay there, they must, this is their Jesus. He is family, He is friend, He is the quiet confidant, the trusted brother. And now bedraggled, torn, whipped and mocked, they couldn't leave Him. And Jesus knows.

He looks at His mother, and says to John, this is your mom. And to His mother, this is your son. They will care for each other, and at least have a shoulder to share. They must watch out for the other. Jesus knows.

On they look. What will happen? It's all crashing down. Jesus knows.

'Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. '

John 19:28-30

The Son of Man, Jesus, is giving up His life. Nobody is taking it from Him. This is Messiah, stepping in for you and for me. And He reminds us here!

Crucifixion is torture, and Jesus is going through it. But in the midst, several prophecies are being fulfilled. Each one includes an element which was beyond Jesus' doing. They cast lots for His clothing.

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They gave Him vinegar. They pierced His side.

Here Jesus offers a reminder that this is all part of the Father's plan. We didn't know it, but discovered later that Psalm 69:21 is playing in front of us all.

Everything is going according to God's plan. This was all settled before. Jesus is giving His perfect life as an offered substitute for our sinful wrecks. The right one given for us sinful people.

And then, "It is finished." The work is complete. My sin died that day, and my forgiveness was purchased. Yours too.

'It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.)

These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," and "They will look on the one they pierced." '

John 19:31-37

Certainly the death of Christ fulfills scripture after scripture, and none of it was orchestrated by Jesus. John the disciple was watching all of it. He was eye-witness to the many acts which God arranged, but which were all beyond the control of Jesus.

Something great is happening here. God is bringing a substitute death. Sin brings death. Mine does, yours does too. But here's a man who never sinned. In the scales of heaven, His life cannot be demanded for sin.

Jesus says, "I give my life. Nobody takes it from me." And His life for mine is the crux of Heaven's economy. I don't deserve it. I desperately need it. And Jesus gave it.

These testimonies of Old Testament scriptures demonstrate how God the Father arranged all of this. And it's because of His deep love for you and me. Before time began, He worked out an exchange that

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would bring eternal life to any and all who might come to Him. So come to Him, give Him your life, and receive the Father's gift of His own Son for you!

'Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.'

John 19:38-42

Joseph and Nicodemus took on a horrible job. There's nothing worse than holding the form of the one you loved and cared for. These men despised the hypocrite leaders who would persecute followers. But they went anyway, to honor Jesus, and properly care for His body. Holding the poor beaten and misformed corpse of Jesus was hard. Oh the dreams, and hopes, dashed and gone. Yet these men went forward, because they wanted to protect and honor Jesus, as best they could.

They didn't know that their dashed hopes and dreams would all be restored and renewed in just a couple days. And that transformation would be the hope of every mother and father, every brother, sister and friend. They cared for him, despairing in sorrow, yet shortly this very man would be the hope of the nations. It's Friday.

A Walk Through John

Chapter 20

'Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" '

John 20:1-2

She came to honor the one who cast out her demons. She came in sorrow to the beaten and tortured teacher. Her heart was empty after watching the crowds turn on Jesus, the leaders humiliating Him, the Romans torturing and allowing crucifixion. She came because it was Jesus. And now, even in death, they were still after Him. His body wasn't left in the grave, it was gone. Someone was doing even more dastardly deeds. Mary didn't wander or walk back. She ran and found Peter and John. She had to tell them, someone had taken Jesus. And she didn't know where. What was terrible was even now, worse.

There are times we don't have answers. What has been going well is now turned, and going badly. Circumstances have turned against us. We can't endure much more of this. Our life can feel like this. And then there's another crushing blow. What do we do? Who knows? Some things we must simply continue through. Jesus spoke of trusting the Father. But when they have taken Jesus' body, then what? Can we still trust when it gets this dark?

'Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Then they went home. '

John 20:3-10

The news was startling, that Jesus' body was gone and someone must have taken Him. So the boys ran, and John gets the prize. But Peter went in, and amazingly, the body was gone. But strangely, the wrappings were there. And the face covering, or napkin, was carefully folded.

Nobody stole or snatched the body. Had they done so, the cloths would have gone with it. The spices would have helped with the smell of death, and nobody would set those aside.

Unless the body wasn't dead. In fact, the napkin was carefully folded, as if someone had changed out of His pajamas. One thing is for certain, Jesus isn't dead. And His body isn't here, wasting away.

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What were Peter and John thinking? We don't know the details, except that they began to understand the scriptures that Jesus is not dead. So they went home.

'Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.

“Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him.

“Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”

“Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message. '

John 20:11-18

This changes everything. Mary had returned to the tomb, simply to be there. She wanted to preserve and care for her teacher Jesus, though dead for a couple days. But the body was gone, so she was simply there, forlorn. And then the tables turn. First the angels care for her, and then turning, she discovers Jesus.

He's alive. Everything is flipped now. Heartache becomes joy. Sorrow becomes surprise. A deep loss becomes an amazing victory. And the future is remade. Go tell the disciples! Go tell others.

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So what's next? What about you, what's different because of this? How shall we live now?

'That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!

"Peace be with you," he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!

Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." '

John 20:19-23

The disciples were cowering, afraid of the Jewish leaders. But Jesus shows up and tells them not to cower. Don't be afraid. He showed them His wounds, His hands, His side.

It's really Him. Hey guys, relax. The Jewish leaders have no power. You can probably unlock the doors too. Don't be afraid! Jesus has overcome death. He has overcome the authorities. They all saw Him, they all heard him, and it was really Him.

Then He gave them the Holy Spirit, power, authority. The very same Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus the last three years, now empowering them. And they have His authority. Forgive anyone's sins, it's on you!

Have you received the Holy Spirit? Have you set aside fear? We have a message, power and authority. The whole world is waiting. So unlock the doors, let's get going!

'One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said.

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"

A Walk Through John

“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.” ’

John 20:24-29

Put your hand into my side, it's Me! Put your fingers into His hands. Have you dug into the claims of Jesus? Have you really put everything into scrutiny, to find out if He is really who He claims?

These followers did just that. And their answer was overwhelming. Almost all of them held their conviction that He is God risen even to martyrdom. Unescapable.

So make Him your Lord, and worship Him, your God!

'The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.'

John 20:30-31

The disciples had the front row seat. Their changed lives, and pursuit to tell the nations shows the truth found here. There were many other things they saw and learned. But John takes the time to write down what we have read here, and it's for one purpose.

John wants us to know that Jesus is God's sent one, the sacrifice for us all. Jesus is God's Son, and is given to us to believe in. We must place our whole trust on Him, His love, His power, His life poured into ours. And we will find real life by following and counting on Him. Are you in? I am completely sold out to Jesus, my Savior, my Lord, my brother and my friend.