



JOHN'S GOSPEL

God's Greatness On Public Display

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INTRODUCTION

Getting to grips with the gospel of John is a little bit like climbing Mount Everest: the views are stunning, but the journeys are long. Hopefully this introduction will provide the map that we will seek to follow.

John's Structure

John has structured his gospel to be divided into three parts.

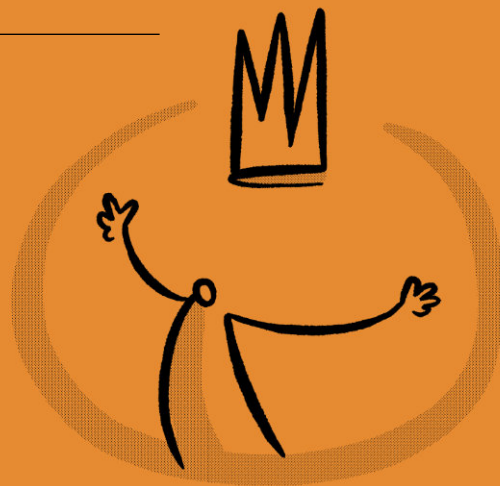
Section 1: John 1-12 – When The Glory Shines

Relationship

At the heart of everything Jesus does in chapters 1-12 is his relationship with his Father. This relationship is the hub of everything Jesus says and does, and the reason why people either reject or believe in him. This relationship becomes the model for how Jesus relates to the disciples, and then how they relate to the world *John 13-21*. Just as the Father sends the Son into the world to reveal his glory, so Jesus sends us *20:21*.

Signs

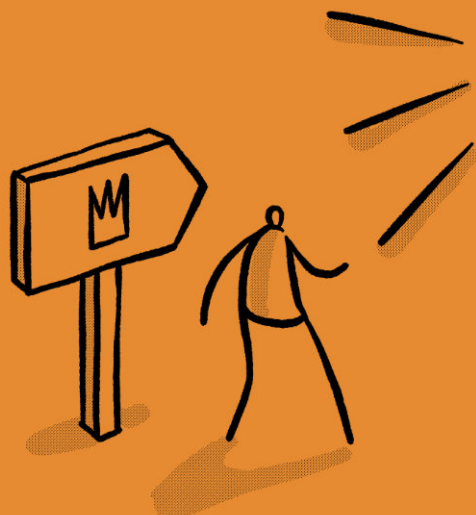
In this section we get the first six signs which point to Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of God *20:31*. The crowd are always divided when Jesus explains and applies the truth of what the signs mean. When people see the signs, and listen to his words, they either rebel or rejoice, hate him or believe in him.



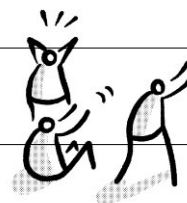
Section 2: John 13-17 - When The Glory Leaves

In the second section of John, the emphasis changes from the relationship between the Father and Son, to Jesus and his followers. The Son is returning to the Father, so the question Jesus is answering is, 'how will His followers survive once He's gone??'

The following table reveals how this theme works its way out in chapters 13-17.



Txt	Jesus speaks of his departure	Txt	Disciples' response
13:1	He's returning to the Father via the cross		
13:33	Jesus will leave them. Where he goes, they cannot follow		
13:36	Where he goes, they cannot follow	13:36	Peter does not understand Jesus
14:1-4	Jesus will leave them in order to prepare a place for them	13:5	Thomas does not understand Jesus
14:18	When he goes, he promises not to leave them as orphans		
14:19, 25, 28	They will soon not see him any more		
15:26	When he leaves, he will send the Spirit		
16:5, 10	Returning to the one who sent him	16:5	Disciples grieve Jesus leaving
16:16	He may be speaking of the cross or his final departure	16:19	Disciples do not understand
16:22	He promises they will see him again, which guarantees their joy		
17:11	Jesus will remain in the world no longer		
17:12	All the time Jesus was with them he protected them		
17:13	Jesus will return to the Father		



There are three questions John wants us to focus upon in chapters 13-17:

1. What are we to expect when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

Up until now, the focus has been the relationship between Father and Son. That relationship is now the model for every disciple to follow, which will prevent them from falling away **16:1**.

"This is where the 'farewell discourses', as they are often called, really start. The disciples ask questions from time to time, but from now until the end of chapter 16, Jesus is explaining to them the fact that he is 'going away', and that they cannot follow him just yet. He is showing them what it all means for their future life, their own sorrow and joy and mission to the world. This then ends with the great prayer of chapter 17, after which the story picks up again with the arrest in the garden". T. Wright.

Section 3: John 18-21 - The Glory Of The Son

This final section of John's gospel has four main themes:

The Seventh Sign

The final section of John's gospel introduces us to the last of the seven signs, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Txt	The Sign	Its Purpose
2:1-2	Water into wine	Jesus is God's very best 2:10 Rejection of Jesus leads to a graceless religion 2:16
4:43-54	The nobleman's son is healed	The creator's word is all powerful 4:50
5:1-15	Paralysed man is healed	The creator's word defeats pain and humiliation 5:11
6:1-35	Feeding of the 5,000	The Exodus feeding is replicated by Jesus 6:12
9:1-41	Healing of the blind man	Only Jesus gives physical and spiritual sight 9:25
11:1-44	Raising of Lazarus	Only Jesus can raise the dead 11:25
18-21	Jesus' death and resurrection	Jesus is the new Adam who secures the new creation

The Glory

The definition of the word 'glory' we have used throughout John is **'God's greatness on public display'**. The table below shows how the theme of glory has been developed.

Txt	How Glory Is Revealed
1:14	The glory of God is seen most publicly through the life of Jesus
2:11	His signs reveal his glory
5:41, 44	He refuses to allow mankind to define his glory
7:17-18	The only glory we should pursue is the glory of God
8:54	The Father glorifies the Son
11:4, 40	His signs reveal his glory
12:41	The Old testament's prophets pointed forward to the 'glory of Jesus'
15:8	When a disciple's character reflects Jesus, they bring glory to the Father
17:4	God is glorified through the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus
17:5, 24	Jesus' glory is eternal

These verses show the glory of God through the life of Jesus. Yet the glory of God is seen most uniquely at the cross **7:39, 12:16, 23, 28, 13:31-32, 17:1**.

"The 'glorifying' of Jesus always means His dying 13:3. It is God who glorifies Him, and in His dying, God himself is glorified. The cross is the complete manifestation of God's glory, revealing His goodness to the uttermost". R. H. Strachan.

The Garden

The book of John started in the Garden of Eden with Jesus as creator **1:1-3** and finishes in a garden with his arrest **18:1**, crucifixion **19:41**, and resurrection **20:15**.

"The first garden was the place where death was born out of life; the second garden was the place where life was born out of death". Brock.

The Governor

As we study these chapters with our young people, it will feel like those who hate and oppose Jesus have total control. A closer look reveals a different story, for all the power people have is given from above **19:11**. Three Kingdoms are on a collision course, but only one is eternal **18:36**.

"John emphasises in many ways the truth that the death Jesus died was not simply the result of the raging of wicked men but was the divine plan for men's salvation. This is not a side issue. It is the very heart of the story". Leon Morris.

Big Themes

One of the best ways to approach a book like John is to work out its biggest themes. As you teach each passage, you will see how John's main themes are reflected, thus helping you teach it well.

The Prologue = Jesus' CV – 1:1-18

The Prologue is the seedbed and springboard to all that John wants to say about Jesus. As we journey through John, we will see the Prologue works as Jesus' CV. Everything Jesus says to the crowds, his disciples, and individuals comes from his CV. Different people and situations cause him to apply it in many colourful and creative ways, but the sermon notes always come directly from his CV.

The Prologue = Jesus' Postcode – 1:1-18

When Jesus preaches his CV, he's constantly calling people to a decision. Do they want to stay in their darkness, or come into His glorious light? Many are deeply offended when he preaches his CV, and show their disapproval by asking, "Who gives you the right to say that about yourself?" The answer is always the same, "I've been sent from heaven by the Father." In other words, my postcode is heaven. In most cases, this is the last straw for those who want to remain in darkness.

The Cross – The Hour Of His Glory

Throughout John, Jesus will use the term 'hour' to speak of his cross. The nearer Jesus gets to the cross the clearer it will become that his crucifixion is the greatest display of God's glory.

"The cross is the throne from which Christ rules" J. Stott.



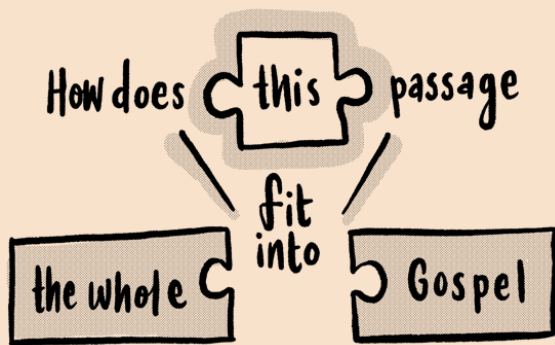
Creation To New Creation

The book of John is structured around a creation theme. The Prologue is a reworking of **Genesis 1**, and chapters **18-21**, is the seventh sign, where Jesus guarantees the New Creation through His death and resurrection. The gospel of John started in the Garden of Eden with Jesus as creator **1:1-3**, and finishes in a garden with his arrest **18:1**, crucifixion **19:41**, and resurrection **20:15**. The creation of man was renewed at the incarnation **1:14**.

The focus of the majority of John was on the sixth day, the creation of the God-man, awaiting the seventh day, the day of rest, to arrive. But the seventh day has now come and gone! Jesus, 'the man' 19:5, has completed his work 19:30, ceasing from all his activities. The biblical irony is stark: the Son of God rested from his creative work in a new tomb located in a garden 19:41. In this one statement the entire biblical story is summarised, for all of creation has been reborn. From this garden tomb life (eternal) was recreated. Thus, as the sun rose on this new 'day' so did the unique Son, for whom this day would henceforth be named "the Lord's Day." T. Wright

Txt	The Hour When The Son Is Glorified
2:4	The first sign points forward to the ' hour ' when Jesus will be glorified
7:30, 8:20	He alone is in control of the ' hour ' of his death
12:23	His cross is where he will be glorified
12:27	The cross is the hour where he will be glorified
13:1	His death is the hour
17:1	The hour of the cross, glorifies both the Father and the Son

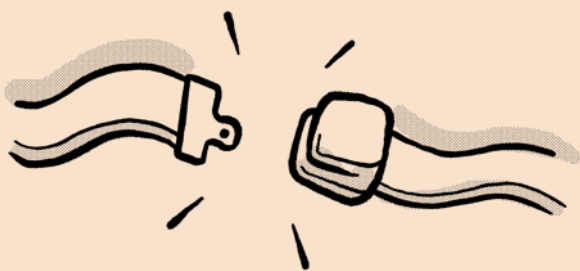
Introduction to Session Outlines



The Link – Connecting The Jigsaw

The biggest problem John has in writing his gospel is that he has too much outstanding material **21:25**. Each story has been chosen carefully, so as to point to specific truths about who Jesus is, and why he's left heaven to enter earth. *The Link is designed to help you understand two things:*

1. How does this passage / story fit into the immediate stories that surround it?
2. How does this passage / story fit into the main themes of the whole gospel?



The Truth – The Seat Belt Test

Imagine one of your young people is getting into their parents' car. As they put their seat belt on, the parent asks, "what was it all about today?". The young person's answer should reflect the main point of the session. This will be reflected in the teaching from the front and the questions in the small groups.

The Message – The Meat Of The Passage

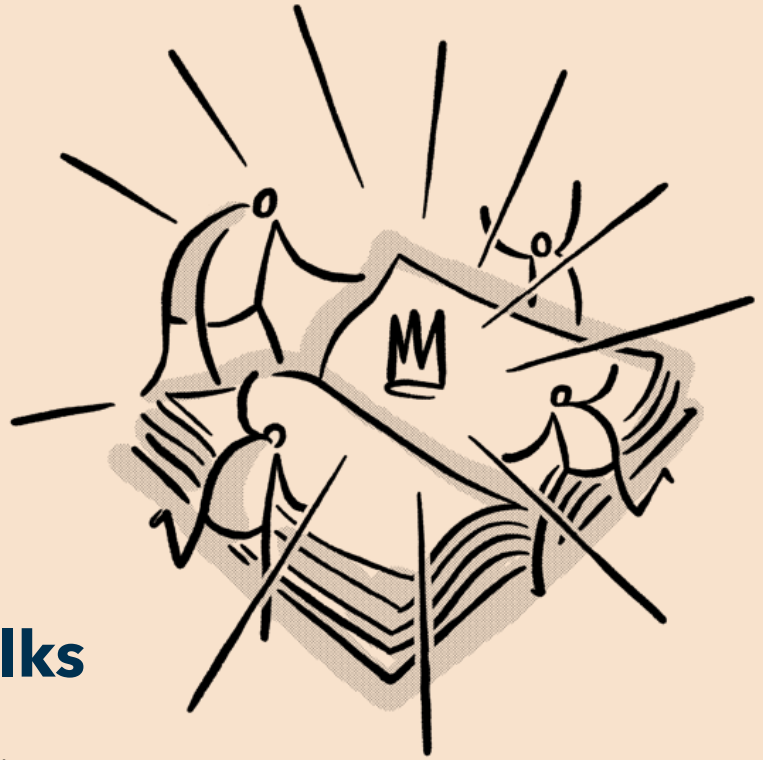
This basically works as a mini commentary to help both the person giving the talk and the small group leaders. It will take you through the central truth of the passage, highlighting the main points the story makes. At different points, I will seek to give hints on how you might want to apply it to your young people.



Small Group Questions – A Time To Apply

A good small group time will seek to do at least three main things:

1. Build good relationships as you teach God's word.
2. A time to apply the main points in a sensitive way.
3. A time to correct any misunderstandings.



Tips For Giving Talks

One of the main aims of these notes is to help those who want to give upfront talks.

Hopefully, these notes will work as a mini commentary, helping you understand the passage while also giving you tips on how to apply and preach it.

Below are what I call the Four Friendly Fears. Every time I give a talk from God's word, these are the four things that burn in my mind and heart as I prepare.

FRIENDLY FEAR 1:

Have I understood God's Word clearly?

Is it flowing through my bloodstream?

FRIENDLY FEAR 2:

Have I taught God's Word clearly?

Have the young people left properly understanding God's Word?

FRIENDLY FEAR 3: Will the young people remember what I have taught them?

Is it flowing through their bloodstream?
Have I taught them in such a way that they can remember what I have taught them?

FRIENDLY FEAR 4: Will the young people know how to apply God's Word on a Monday morning?

Have I undermined the lie of secularism or reinforced it?

Here are a few thoughts on giving a Bible talk that might help you.

A good sermon has to have three elements, which I call 'three p's':

"It proves an appeal to the intellect, it paints an appeal to the imagination, and it persuades an appeal to the heart"
Mervyn A. Warren.

PROVES = Intellect = God's truth properly understood

PAINTS = Imagination = God's truth creatively explained

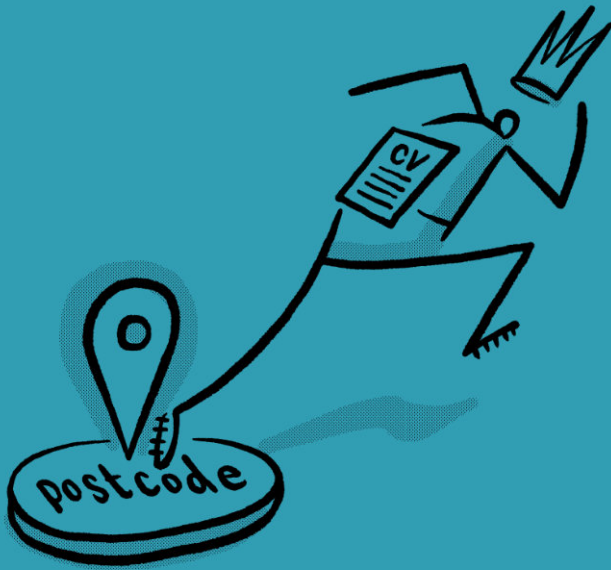
PERSUASION = God's truth passionately applied

A talk is like a good film:

- Good content
- Clear structure
- Engaging style

Session 1 – John 1:1-18

CV, Postcode, And Sermon Notes



Introduction

This first session is longer than the ones that follow. In that light, I have written two sets of small group notes.

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The Prologue acts as Jesus' CV and postcode. As we read it, the author wants us to draw the parallels to creation and Israel's exodus. The themes of creation and exodus will be important as we journey through John.

Gen 1-2	The Origin of Jesus' CV and Postcode	John 1	Jesus' CV and Postcode
1:1	In the beginning, God	1:1-2	In the beginning was the Word
1:30, 2:7	All life comes from God	1:3-4	The Word is the creator and source of all life
1:2-3	God alone changes darkness into light	1:5	The Word changes darkness into light and life
1:3-6	God is the true light	1:9	The Word is the true light
1:26-27	God creates mankind	1:12-13	Our attitude to the Word determines whether we are a child of God
3:8-10	Adam and Eve, God's image bearers, run from their creator God	1:11	The Word is rejected by his own people
Ex 40	The Glory fills the tabernacle	1:14	The Word is flesh and blood
Ex 40	The Glory fills the tabernacle	1:14	The Word is the new temple, that displays the Glory of God
Ex 20:1, 21:1	Moses received the law from God	1:17	Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God's truth and grace
Ex 33:18-20	No one can see God and still live	1:18	Jesus is sent by the Father full of grace and truth

The Purpose of The Prologue / CV

The Prologue is the seedbed for everything we will learn about Jesus, working as both CV and sermon notes. As we journey through John's gospel, the Jesus we encounter is always on the front foot, refusing to take a backwards step. He has a divine postcode, for he's been sent by the Father, and a mission to save the world that's been planned by Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This Really Happened

The author passionately wants us to know that God's Son arrived into a specific historical context and situation. He wants us to know that he was an ear- and eye-witness of all that Jesus said and did **20:30-32**.

This is The Impact

No person has changed the whole of history more than Jesus Christ. His life fulfils all that God had promised within the Old Testament and will completely fulfil all God has promised for the future. He's God in the flesh **1:14** and his impact upon the world changes everything.

Application

The picture we're to have in our mind is Jesus with his CV in one pocket and his sermon notes in the other. His authority comes from the one who has sent him and the divine character he possesses.

His one aim is to reveal to people the reality of his CV and then preach and apply it to people's present circumstances, and eternal future.

Our aim must be to help our young people get a thorough grasp of Jesus' CV so they can learn how to apply it to their own lives, and all those they meet.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

- This is Jesus CV
- Jesus will preach and apply His CV to crowds, the twelve and individuals that he meets.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

1. The Word - 1:1-5

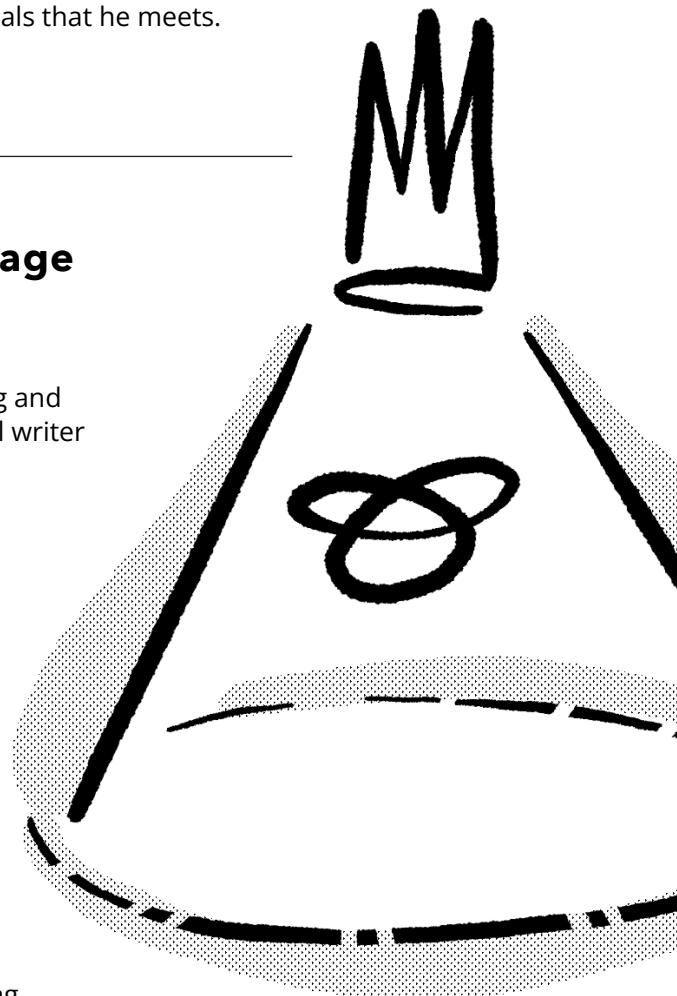
The major title on the CV of Jesus, which he will be preaching and applying to the lives of all he meets, is 'the Word'. The gospel writer wastes no time in telling us what the title means.

The Word Is Eternal God - 1:1-2

Straight away John takes us to **Genesis 1-2** so we fully understand the Word's nature. The Word was 'in the beginning', for he is eternal. This is developed by Isaiah when he compares the nature of God to everything else, **Isaiah 40:6**. Every human being up to now has been like a flower: they blossom and wither, but this Word-Man is eternal.

Application

It's not hard to prove that we live in a world where created things blossom and then wither. Our world is marked by mankind's glory quickly appearing and then fading. Suddenly, on the world's stage we have a man whose 'glory' blossoms but never fades. A man whose words and actions match his eternal nature. This man is eternal, so won't be intimidated by anyone. He's always on the front foot.



The Word Creates All Things - 1:3

Having introduced us to the Word's eternal nature, John now wants us to focus upon His power. The one who created the world by speaking is now walking the streets of Palestine 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29. In one pocket he's got his CV and in the other his preaching notes. *When the eternal creator speaks, we should expect displays of divine power, which is what we see, as the table below shows.*

Txt	Jesus The Word
1:43	Jesus commands Philip to follow, and he obeys
2:8	He speaks, and water is changed into wine
2:22, 3:34, 7:17, 18:9	The words of Jesus and scripture have identical authority
4:42	His words give spiritual life to the woman and her whole town
4:41, 50	Jesus heals the official's son by speaking
5:8	He heals the lame man by commanding him to 'Get up'
5:25	His voice will raise the dead on the last day
6:68	His words bring eternal life
9:7	His words heal the blind man
11:43	His words Jesus raise Lazarus
18:5	His words cause a detachment of soldiers to fall to the ground

Application

The brilliance and majesty of our created world is a wonderful way of helping our young people to appreciate the power of the Lord Jesus. The gospel writer wants us to connect the voice that spoke creation into being with the voice that turned water into wine and raised Lazarus from the dead. This man is creator of all things, so won't be intimidated by anyone. He's always on the front foot.

The Word Sustains All Things - 1:4

If the Word created the world, then it's logical he will also sustain it. When people in John's gospel meet Jesus, they are looking at the one who created and sustains them. Every breath they breathe is under his divine control, for he's the source of all life.

Although the word 'life' in this verse points to creation, it also introduces us to the main way the word is used in John, which is to point to salvation.

"Life is either resurrection life or spiritual life that is its foretaste". D.A. Carson

Application

Our secular world drugs our young people to think everything spiritual is part of an imaginary world. The gospel of John confronts that lie as it constantly reminds us that we are dealing with history 20:30-31.

The Word Is Unquenchable Light - 1:5

We've been introduced to three stunning truths which make up Jesus' CV. We know he's the eternal creator who sustains all things. That



being the case, it shouldn't surprise us to know that darkness will always be defeated by the light that Jesus brings.

The Theme of Darkness and Light

When Jesus preaches his CV and declares to people his postcode, the consistent response is hatred. Here are a few examples.

Chapter 3 - People love their darkness, so hate the light - 3:19.

Chapter 8 - When Jesus claims to be the light of the world, the Pharisees at first challenge him **8:13-14** and then try and stone him **8:59**.

Chapter 9 - Jesus declares himself to be the light of the world **9:5**, and people reject his postcode **9:29**.

Chapter 12 - Again, Jesus declares himself to be the light **12:35-36**. People respond by choosing the approval of man rather than living in God's light **12:42-43**.

The Theme of Sin and Believing

These three examples open up the nature of sin: 'refusing to believe in Jesus' CV and postcode' and true belief: 'trusting that Jesus' words and works prove him to be the Messiah and Son of God.' *"The 'darkness' in John is not only the absence of light, but positive evil," (D. A. Carson);* positive evil being the rejection of God's light.

Application

The way to build gospel confidence in our young people is to teach them to look away from themselves to Jesus' CV. As our young people seek to share the light of Christ with their friends, they will, at times, meet the same kind

of opposition and even persecution. When that happens, they are to look away from their own resources to the person of Christ, for he is the eternal creator who sustains all things. The more their confidence is placed in Jesus' CV, the more clearly his victory over darkness will be seen. The eternal Son enters his world, and His light will ultimately triumph.

2. The Witness - 1:6-8, 15-18

1:6-8

Standing alongside Jesus at every point in the gospel are witnesses. Their roles are to testify, as if in a court of law, that Jesus' CV is true and his postcode is genuine. Here we meet the last great prophet sent from God.

1:15-18

The point that's being made here is the same as **1:6-8**. The great prophet Moses and the Law was given by God to point to Jesus. The purpose of John, Moses, and the Law, was to point to Jesus. Not only has the Word arrived on history's stage, but the script has always been about him. The table below gives a few examples of those who witness to Jesus' CV and postcode.

Txt	The Witness	Jesus' CV and Postcode
4:39	The Samaritan Woman	Many Samaritans believe because of her witness
5:36, 10:25	Jesus' Works	His works are given to him by the Father, therefore witness that his postcode is from heaven.
8:18	The Father	The Father gives witness that His postcode is from heaven
12:41	Isaiah	Isaiah is a witness to the 'glory' of Jesus
	Moses	Moses' role was to point forward to Jesus' CV and postcode
15:26	The Spirit	The primary role of the Spirit it to point to the truth of Jesus' CV and postcode

Application

Not only is Jesus' CV and postcode super-impressive, but having those who stand by his side declaring it to be true is also pretty mind-blowing.

3. The World – 1:9-13

When Jesus preaches and applies his CV and postcode there are always two responses, rejection or belief. One of the reasons for the constant division is the nature of Jesus' preaching, for he's always calling people to a decision. His mission from His Father is to call people out of spiritual darkness and into His glorious light.

Wrong – 1:9-11

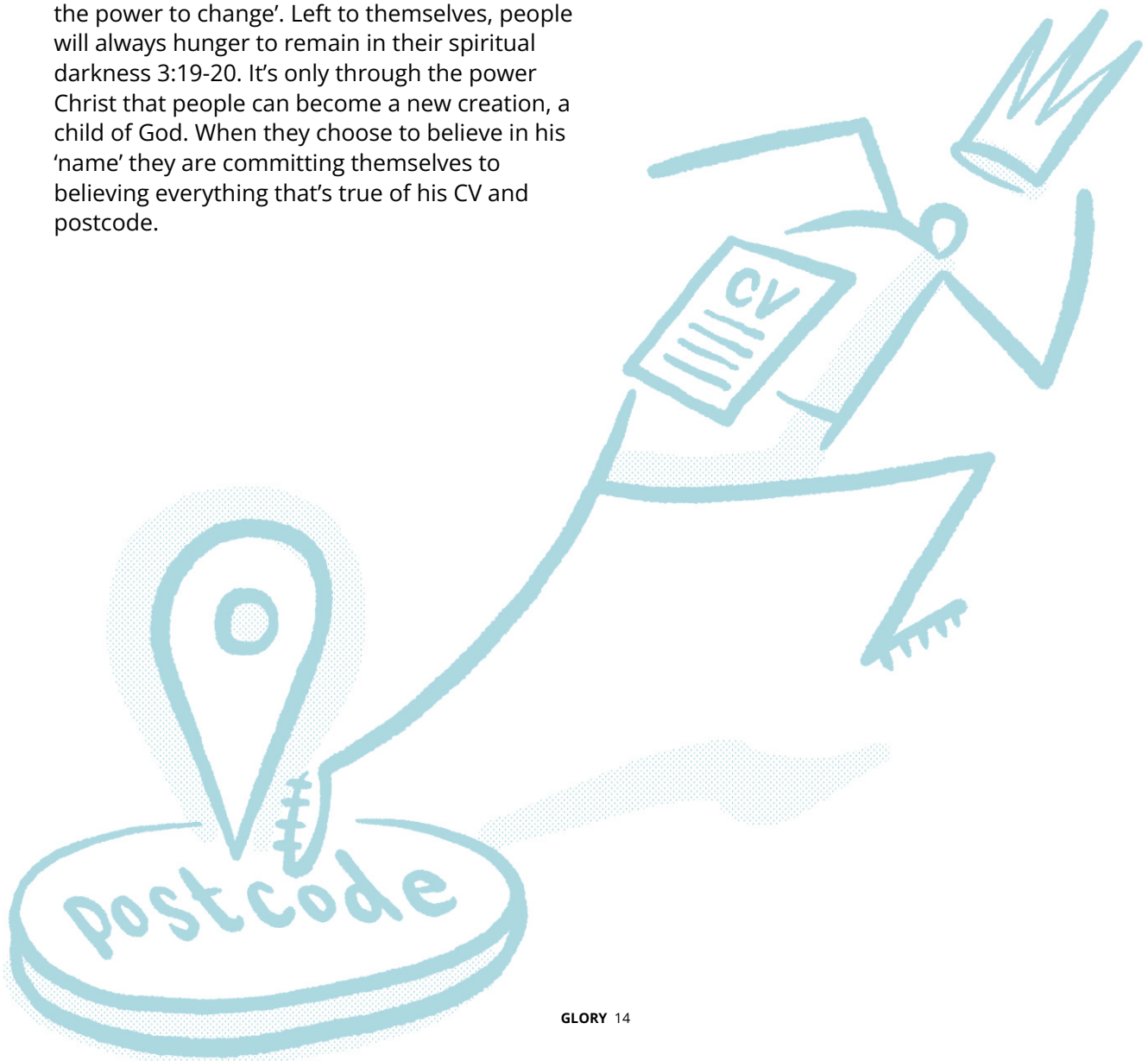
The most vicious and violent rejection of Jesus will come from his own people, the Jews. Their biggest problem is that they think they are already in the light, when, in reality, they are in deep spiritual darkness. The clearer the light shines from the signs and preaching of Jesus, the more vicious and violent the response is.

Right – 1:12-13

When John says, 'gave the right', he means 'gave the power to change'. Left to themselves, people will always hunger to remain in their spiritual darkness 3:19-20. It's only through the power Christ that people can become a new creation, a child of God. When they choose to believe in his 'name' they are committing themselves to believing everything that's true of his CV and postcode.

4. The Way – 1:14

In every interaction with people, whether it be individuals or whole crowds, Jesus' character is always marked by grace and truth. When he speaks to the Samaritan woman and the lady thrown in front of him in John 8 accused of adultery, he's as gentle as a lamb. When he engages with the Jewish leaders, Pharisees and Pilate, he's more like a lion as he preaches his CV and brings attention to his postcode. But whether he resembles a lamb or a lion, he's always full of grace and truth, for that's his character, His way.



Small Group Questions – A Time To Apply (1)

Read John 1:1-18

1. How is the Prologue like Jesus' CV and postcode?

2. How does the author link Jesus' CV and postcode to the Old Testament books of Genesis and Exodus? Fill in the table below.

Gen 1-2	The Origin of Jesus' CV and Postcode	John 1	Jesus' CV and Postcode
1:1		1:1-2	
1:30, 2:7		1:3-4	
1:2-3		1:5	
1:3-6		1:9	
1:26-27		1:12-13	
3:8-10		1:11	
Ex 40		1:14	
Ex 40		1:14	
Ex 20:1, 21:1		1:17	
Ex 33:18-20		1:18	

3. How should this CV give you confidence?

He's eternal – 1:1-2, different to us. Read Isaiah 40:6

He's creator of all – 1:3

He sustains all things

4. How are these three character traits seen in the life of Jesus?

Words – Read 4:41, 50, 5:25, 11:43

Life – Read 4:42 – The one who gave life to the world, now gives spiritual life to the Samaritan village.

Eternal – Read 11:43

5. How does Jesus' CV and postcode help you understand why 1:5 makes complete sense?

6. How does Jesus' CV give you confidence to live for Christ?

Small Group Questions – A Time To Apply (2)

Read John 1:1-18

1. What is John's role?

Read 1:6-8

2. Throughout the gospel, people witness to Jesus' CV and postcode being true. What do they say about him?

Definition of what the passage means by 'witness':

"The term is best understood to carry its primary, legal meaning of testifying or bearing witness to the true state of affairs by one who has full knowledge or superior position."

Bultmann

Txt	The Witness	What they say
4:39	The Samaritan Woman	
5:36, 10:25	Jesus' Works	
8:18	The Father	
12:41	Isaiah	
	Moses	
15:26	The Spirit	

3. How should their witness give you confidence in Jesus?

5. When you think of your life and those you meet, do those responses seem to fit with reality?

4. How will the world respond to Jesus?
Look up 1:9-13 and 3:19-20

6. What will mark all of Jesus' relationships and engagement with people, whether they be powerful or poor, strong or weak?

Session 2 – John 1:19-51

The Last Prophet & First Followers

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

JESUS' CV

In the opening verses, John gives us Jesus' CV.

Jesus is God's eternal Word, the creator, therefore the source of all life and light **1:1-5**.

The great prophets John the Baptist and Moses declare the uniqueness of Jesus **1:6-9, 16-18**.

The glory of God is now flesh and blood **1:14**.

What He's Come To Do

The Word enters this dark world to bring the light and life of God **1:6-9**.

Some will choose to reject the Word **1:10-11**, while others will believe and become children of God **1:12-13**.

Today's passage

Today we hear from John the Baptist and the first followers of Jesus.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

True followers of Jesus come into His light to see and understand that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

When you understand that Jesus is the lamb, you bring people to him.

The Message – The Meat Of The Passage

Here are three images that describe John the Baptist's ministry and message:

Image 1 – A Siren

The siren was switched on yesterday, but today its noise blares even louder. His one message, which he repeats, is that Jesus is the 'lamb of God' **1:29, 36**. This is why John wants the siren blaring loudly **1:23**, and everyone to listen to what he's got to say.



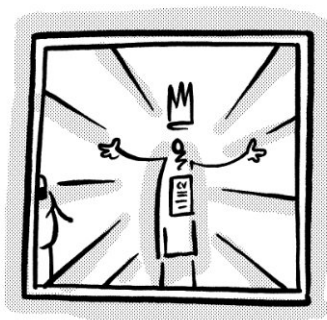
Image 2 – A Best Man

Having got everyone's attention, John the Baptist now wants to point away from himself. Just like a best man, he doesn't want to be in the pictures; instead, he wants the camera to be wholly focused upon Jesus.

What He isn't

The ministry of John the Baptist made such an impression that people thought he was God's anointed **1:20**, or Elijah **1:21**. Both these identities he quickly denies, wanting the focus to be upon Jesus.





What He is

There are two titles John the Baptist is happy to own, and the first one is 'a voice'.

The title highlights the difference between John and

Jesus. One is the message **1:29**, and the other merely the messenger **1:23**.

The second title 'baptiser' again reveals the distinct difference between Jesus and John. The baptism of John made people wet, whereas the baptism of Jesus gives people eternal life **1:32-34**. This is why John wants the camera to be fixed on Jesus, not him **1:27**.

Image 3 - A Lamb

The image of Jesus being the lamb comes directly from the book of Exodus. In the last plague, the people of God are saved through the shed blood of the lamb **Exodus 12**. Later in the chapter, Philip declares Jesus to be the one Moses was pointing to **1:45**. The role of John the Baptist is to point away from himself to Jesus the lamb **1:29**, for he's the one who makes an eternal difference. In fact, Jesus being the lamb of God is what makes him greater than John **1:30-31**.

Application

The humility John the Baptist shows is cemented to his accurate understanding of who Jesus is. He's happy to point away from himself because he's utterly convinced the one he's pointing to is so much greater **1:15**. He's happy to be known as merely a voice, for the one to come is the Lord of Glory **1:23**.

Our young people will only be humble servants like John when they get to grips with the person of Christ.

The story that follows gives us the blueprint of a genuine disciple of Jesus.

They follow - 1:37, 40, 43

Three times the word 'follow' is used.

1:37, 40 - When they hear John the Baptist declare Jesus to be the lamb, they follow.

1:43 - When Jesus finds Philip, he calls him to 'follow'.

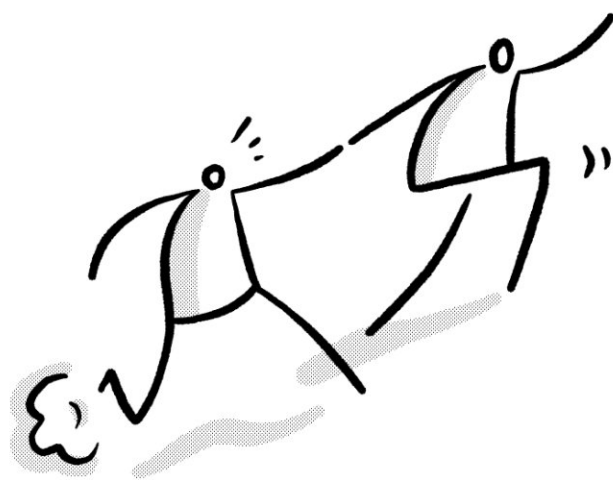
They believe - 1:41, 44-45, 49-50

The light of God invades the world of Andrew, Simon Peter, Phillip and Nathaniel. This leads to them understanding three essential truths about Jesus:

1:41 - He's the Messiah.

1:45 - He's the one Moses and the prophets spoke about.

1:49 - He's the Son of God, the King of Israel.



They bring - 1:42, 46

1:40-42 - Andrew brings his brother.

1:44 - Philip brings Nathanael.

Application

Here we have the three essential marks of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Once you understand, **follow**, **believe**, and **bring**. We should expect to see the same signs in our young people today.

This is an encouragement from John which we must pass onto our young people. The call of Jesus to follow and believe is an encouragement to engage with the evidence. The author has shared with us Jesus' CV in **1:1-18**, making clear that Jesus is God in flesh and bone **1:14**. Now he will show us seven signs, with the aim of proving to us what God in flesh and bone can actually do.

The call to '**come and see**' is twofold. When the unbeliever **comes and sees** the evidence (the seven signs) they will '**believe in the Son**'. When the disciples following Jesus **come and see**, their faith will go deeper, and their love for God grow stronger. Our responsibility as youth leaders is to call both the unbeliever and the disciple to '**come and see**'. When we do that, our prayer must be that they understand the signs and believe **20:30-31**.

Sign	Txt	Come and see what it looks like for the 'Word to become flesh': The Signs
1	2:1-12	Come see the one who: turns water into wine
2	4:43-54	Come see he one who: heals the nobleman's son
3	5:1-15	Come see the one who: heals the paralysed man
4	6:1-35	Come see the one who: feeds the hungry
5	9:1-35	Come see the one who: heals the man born blind
6	11:1-44	Come see the one who: raises Lazarus from the dead
7	18-21	Come and see the one who: dies and rises to being in the new creation.

At the end of the chapter, three people are waiting to have a quick conversation:

John The Baptist

John the Baptist wants to know if we have come to the lamb of God to be forgiven **1:29**.

Moses

Moses wants to know whether you believe that all he wrote pointed forward to Jesus **1:40**.

The Followers

Finally, the first followers want to know whether you believe Jesus to be the Son of God and King of Israel **1:49**.

Application

There are two ways to apply these truths:

Focus upon the young people who already believe, and encourage them to stand side by side with John the Baptist and Moses.

Encourage those who do not believe to 'come and see'.

Study 2 – John 1:19-51

John's Message - Read 1:19-28

1. What titles does he refuse to own?

7. What does Jesus call the disciples to do?

2. What titles is he happy to own?

8. What does it lead to?

3. What titles does he give Jesus?

The First followers - Read 1:43-51

9. What does Jesus call Philip to do?

4. How does all of this lead to 1:27?

10. What is Philip's response?

The First followers - Read 1:35-51

5. What does John call the disciples to believe?

11. What does Philip call Nathaniel to do?

What is Nathaniel's response?

6. What does it lead to?

12. How can we follow Philip's example?

Session 3 – John 2

Old Or New, Water Or Wine

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Water = Old Covenant

We have already been reminded by John the Baptist, God's siren, that something new and greater is about to happen **1:21-23**.

Wine = New Covenant

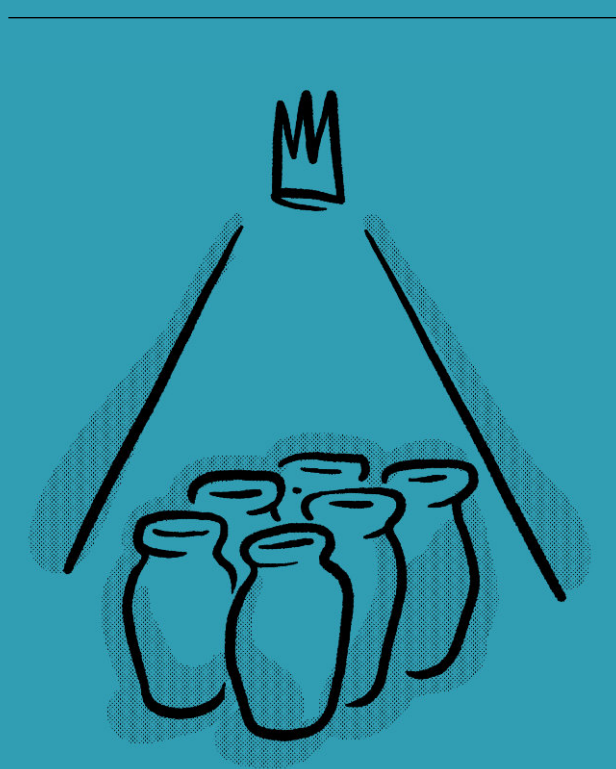
Everything Moses and the prophets wrote about, Jesus fulfils **1:45**.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Jesus is God's Glory, therefore God's very best **2:10**.

To reject Jesus is to stay with water (Old Covenant).

To reject Jesus leads to a graceless religion **2:13-25**.



The Message – The Meat Of The Passage

Introduction

Every story we read in the gospel has been carefully chosen by the author **20:30-31**. As we come to this story, we must ask how it reflects Jesus' CV and Postcode? Many of the stories in John follow the same pattern, which is revealed in the structure below.

Story Structure

The Place = A wedding at Cana, Galilee – **2:1-2**

The Problem – The wine runs out – **2:3**

The Resolution – *Jesus changes water into wine* – **2:4-9**

The Response – The master declares Jesus' wine as the best – **2:9-12**

Jesus Creates Something New - **2:1-9**

When God is faced with a formless, empty, and dark nothingness **Gen 1:2**, he creates a world full of boundless life, light, colour, and order **Gen 1:3**. When Jesus enters a world marked by darkness and rebellion **1:9-11, 3:19-20**, he recreates mankind by making them children of God **1:12-13**.

This story presents us with a similar situation. A time of celebration has been halted, and six stone jars, used to make people clean on the outside, but never on the inside, are the focus **2:6**. In an instant, Jesus changes the colourless water into the most beautiful wine. It's nearly as if the water understands its creator is present, and suddenly 'blushes' with embarrassment.

This story reveals the kind of life Jesus is bringing to his world. The Old Testament Law and system have run their course, and what's needed is the life only Jesus can bring. The best has been saved to last **2:10**.

Application

The best way to apply this story is to focus upon three key words used by John:

OBEY

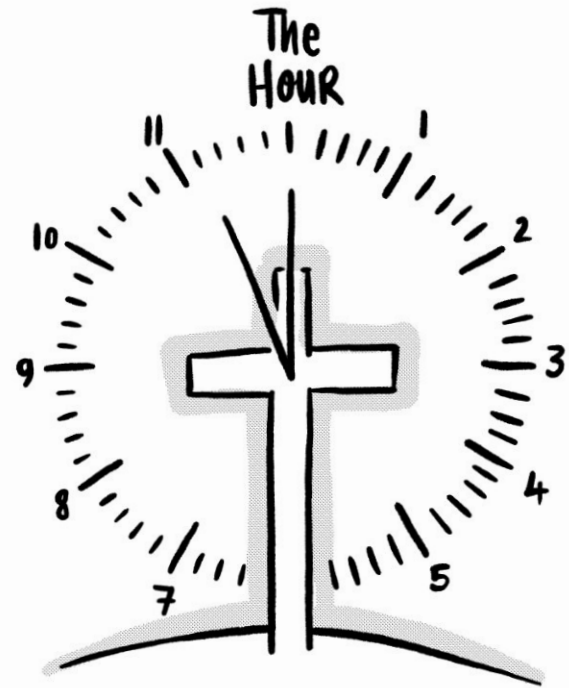
In this story Mary models to us how a disciple responds to Jesus. When faced with a problem that completely overwhelms you, the disciple listens to their master and 'does whatever he tells them' 2:6. As we see the CV of Jesus preached and displayed in many different contexts, the true believer will obey the voice of Jesus.

LIFE

When we hear 'the third' day we are meant to think forward to the resurrection. Here its water that's given life, soon it will be the crucified body of Jesus.

HOOR

This is the first time the phrase 'the hour' is used by Jesus, as he performs the first of His seven signs.



Txt	The Hour When The Son Is Glorified
2:4	The first sign points forward to the ' <i>hour</i> ' when Jesus will be glorified
7:30, 8:20	He alone is in control of the ' <i>hour</i> ' of his death
12:23	His cross is where he will be glorified
12:27	The cross is the <i>hour</i> where he will be glorified
13:1	His death is the <i>hour</i>
17:1	The <i>hour</i> of the cross, glorifies both the Father and the Son

Jesus Challenges Something Old – 2:13-25

Introduction

This story follows the same structure as the previous one

Story Structure

The Place = The Jerusalem Temple – 2:13-14

The Problem – Religion that refuses to embrace the new life Jesus brings – 2:3

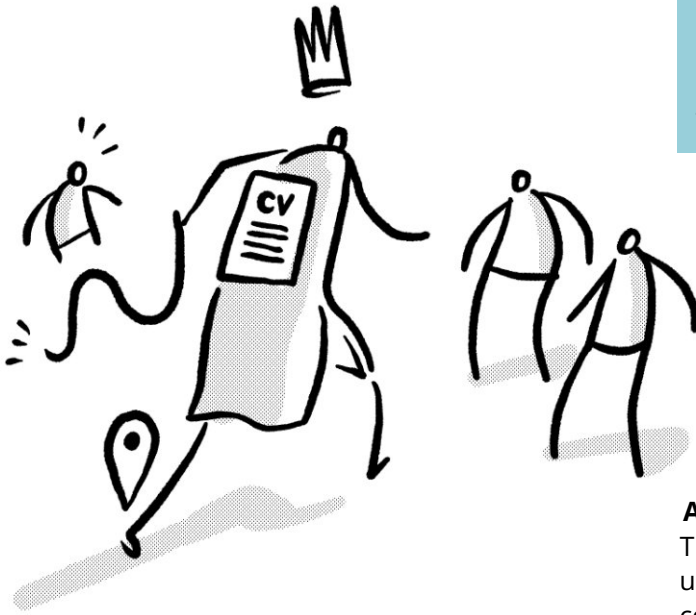
The Resolution – The cross and resurrection of Jesus – 2:15-22

The Response – Rejection by the Jews – 2:18, Belief by some – 2:23, Refusal by Jesus to entrust himself to anyone – 2:23-25

The best way to get to the heart of this story is to focus on three important words.

PASSOVER – 2:13, 23

The ministry of Jesus begins by entering the temple at the time of Passover. If we jump forward to **13:1**, we will see that the climax of his ministry also has the Passover at the centre **13:1, 18:28, 39, 19:14**. The Passover lamb that John so boldly preached about in the previous chapter **1:29, 36** enters the temple, the place of sacrifice for the first time.



TEMPLE – 2:13-22

The fear of being cancelled on social media, is maybe the nearest we will get to understanding what the temple meant to a Jew at the time of Jesus.

“The Temple was the beating heart of Judaism. It wasn’t just, as it were, a church on a street corner. It was the centre of worship and music, of politics and society, of national celebration and mourning.” T. Wright

What Jesus does here is mind-blowing, as he angrily drives out those who are desecrating the place God has ordained for worship and honouring His mighty name **2:13-16**. The anger Jesus shows towards the Jews, is quickly matched by their anger towards him, as they demand what authority he has to do such a thing **2:18**.

The answer Jesus gives points directly to his victorious cross and resurrection **2:19**. When light shines into the dark heart of mankind, they always resist and seek to smother it **3:19-20**. The marker has been firmly laid down by Jesus, as he refuses to walk to “*the rhythmic drumbeat of the status quo*” (*M.L. King*). He comes with a divine CV and Postcode, and fears no one. The only timetable he’s working to, is the one given to him by his Father **2:22**.

“Thus, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate temple cleansing, and the temple of his body is a full replacement of the temple of the Jews.” E.W. Klink

ENTRUST – 2:23-25

The reason Jesus refuses to entrust himself to anyone, is because he knows what’s in the heart of mankind. He knows that when he performs the signs given to him by his Father, people will plot to kill him **11:53**. The only one he entrusts himself to is the Father.

Application

The Word arrives on the scene, and clearly has unflinching confidence? What gives him the confidence to refuse to walk to the rhythmic drumbeat of the status quo? The reason for such confidence, is he finds his ultimate worth and approval from what his Father thinks of him. Every human culture is hard wired to get their worth and approval from other created beings. The Lord Jesus models a completely different approach, as he refuses to base his worth upon human approval **2:24-25**.

What About Us?

As we teach our young people John’s gospel, they will see the brilliance and beauty of the Lord Jesus. We must pray they learn to get their worth and approval from Him and not their peers.

Study 3 – John 2

Story 1

Read John 2:1-12

1. What does it feel like when something you have loved is replaced by something new?

2. What brings about change in this story?

3. In the Bible, the word 'glory' means God's greatness on public display.

4. How is Jesus putting God's greatness on public display?

Story 2

Read John 2:13-25

1. Compare the different emotions in each story.

2. Do you think the sign Jesus performs in **2:1-12** gives him enough authority to call out people's false and graceless religion, **2:13-18**?

3. What is the future sign that Jesus will give that shows his ultimate authority, **2:19? 22?**

4. Where do your peers get their worth and value from?

5. How does Jesus model something different, **2:16, 24?**

6. How can we learn together to get our worth from what Jesus thinks of us, instead of our own performance?

Session 4 – John 3:1-13

Teacher or Humble Student?

Introduction to John 3

Today we begin to explore one of the most famous chapters in the Bible. We will take our time and explore it over three sessions.

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

It should not surprise us that when the eternal Word of God arrives in flesh and blood **1:14**, everything begins to change. The previous chapter left us with three questions:

2:5 – Will you listen and obey Jesus?

2:10 – Do you believe Jesus is God's very best?

2:18 – Will you bow to Jesus' authority?

All of Jesus' claims will be backed up by His actions (signs) **2:11**, and the scriptures. The greatest of all signs will be his death and resurrection **2:20-22**.

The previous chapter finished with Jesus trashing Israel's holy temple **2:13-16**.

Understandably, this led to the Jewish leaders demanding by what authority he'd done it **2:18**. His answer is confusing to them, but clear to us **2:19-22**.

Today we meet one of the religious guys who was probably present at the trashing of the temple. He comes to see Jesus, in the light of all that happened at the temple, with an attitude and an agenda.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

What gives Jesus the authority to trash the temple?

Jesus is sent from heaven, therefore has the authority to determine who enters God's Kingdom.

Are we teachers or humble students?

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

A Dark Start

The author mentions the night, as a picture of Nicodemus' spiritual state **1:12-13**, **3:2**, **19**.

A Bright Finish

Thankfully, Nicodemus changes from a teacher to a humble student, stepping out of the darkness into God's light.

3:1-36 = Darkness meets the light of God.

7:45-52 = His first step into the light is to speak up for Jesus.

19:38-42 = When he embalms the body of Jesus, he uses the number of spices used for a King.

Application

We must allow our young people to study Jesus' words and signs, and be patient enough to let them take a similar path as Nicodemus.



When Light Meets Darkness - 3:1-2

Every encounter Jesus has with people leads to a divide. As the Prologue made clear, the light of Christ exposes darkness **1:9-10**. This truth collides with every culture, including our own secular one, which places mankind's wisdom firmly upon the throne.

What Authority? - 2:18, 25, 3:19

The question of Jesus' authority is something every human being riles against, for our hearts are ruled by darkness **3:19**. When the light of Christ shines and disturbs our lives, we tend to shout, "who on earth do you think you are?" **2:18**.

The visit of Nicodemus is an overflow and response to the final story in chapter 2. The trashing of the temple creates an atmosphere of aggression towards Jesus, but he's unperturbed. He knows the heart of man, so refuses to entrust himself to them **2:25**.

An Attitude and Agenda?

When Nicodemus comes to see Jesus, he views himself very much as the teacher and Jesus as the pupil. As we work through the story, we will see that the title teacher is really important. As Nicodemus comes to see Jesus, the question he wants answering is **2:18**, "who on earth do you think you are?". If you trash the temple, you'd better have some reasons. That's his attitude, and the agenda that rules his heart.

The first thing John gives us is Nicodemus' credentials. The young upstart from Galilee has more than ruffled their feathers, for he's threatened the authority of the ruling class. So, they send one of their very best teachers, who is both wealthy, influential and part of the religious elite **3:1**.

"What was needed was a more direct and formal shaming. For this the Jews selected one of their most prominent ruling officials, a member of one of the most honourable and influential families that enjoyed a long history of "conquering" enemies of Judaism" E.W. Klink

Application

Our young people own the same heart and rebellious nature as Nicodemus and all his friends shared. The question "who on earth do you think you are?" is the springboard for his teaching session with Jesus. As then, so now.

Really? - 3:2

At first reading, Nicodemus' question sounds generous and polite, even complimentary. When he speaks, he uses the term 'we', for he comes representing a whole group of people who openly disagree with Philip's conclusion **1:45**, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth."

A prophet was promised by God, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him" **Dt 18:18**. The question Nicodemus wants answering is, do you really think you're him? The question is served with a smile, but in reality, it's designed to trap and expose Jesus' lack of authority. In reality, it's just another way of saying "who on earth do you think you are?" **3:2**.

Application

Nicodemus thought Jesus was claiming something way out of his league. The same accusation stands today, whether it be a moral issue where people don't want to be told how to live, or a faith issue, where people don't want to be told what to believe. People today are just like Nicodemus; they refuse to be passive towards Jesus, but instead seek to teach him.



Entrance To The Kingdom - 3:3-4

The answer Jesus gives is skilful and aimed at exposing the darkness of Nicodemus' heart. This one-line from Jesus highlights the most provocative thing he will repeat throughout John. If you want to be part of God's Kingdom, what's it dependent upon? If you want to be one of God's children, who sets the rules, and decides the way in? How is someone 'born into God's Kingdom'? Here and throughout the gospel, Jesus puts himself in the unique place of being the only one who can teach us the right answer. The answer Nicodemus gives reveals a mixture of confusion and rebellion **3:4**.

Txt	How you enter the kingdom	Txt	Jesus' CV & Postcode
3:5-8	Spiritual birth is the initiative of the Spirit	1:32-34	Jesus is the one who baptises people with God's Spirit, thus giving them spiritual life
3:12	By listening to the one who comes from heaven	1:1-2, 14, 18	Jesus is the eternal God sent from heaven
3:13	You must recognise Jesus as the Son of Man sent from heaven	1:51	Jesus is the Son of Man who connects heaven and earth
3:16	Belief in the Son guarantees eternal life	1:12-13	You only enter God's family, by believing in the Son



It's the application of Jesus' CV that always causes such sharp division. Skilfully, Jesus turns the tables on Nicodemus by exposing his lack of knowledge **3:10**, and unbelief **3:12**. Jesus leaves Nicodemus with two simple but difficult choices. Do you really believe I am the teacher sent from heaven? Do you believe I have the unique authority to decide how people enter God's Kingdom **3:11-13**?

The biggest decision Nicodemus has to make is about his own heart. *"The teacher of Israel – Nicodemus – is forced to become a student, and the reader participates in a social challenge that forces upon them the choice between evil and truth, darkness and light, and a love of self and the love of God."* (E.W. Klink). The Lord Jesus calls him to move from being a teacher to a humble student. Will he make the move?

Application

Jesus having the authority to be the divine teacher is as offensive today as it was to Nicodemus. When our young people apply Jesus' CV as he did, division will always follow, and so will the question "who on earth do you think you are?" The eternal Son is calling our young people to move from a position of teacher to humble student.

Study 4 – John 3:1-13

Read John 2:13-25

It's All About Authority

1. What generated such deep hostility towards Jesus, leading to the question: *"who on earth do you think you are?"* 2:18.

3. Who did Nicodemus think Jesus was claiming to be, and why was that such a problem? Read *Dt 18:18, Jn 1:45, 3:2*.

He Comes At Night – Read 3:1-13

2. How much does the temple trashing affect Nicodemus' attitude and agenda?

4. How is Jesus claiming a unique authority as a teacher?

Txt	How you enter the kingdom	Txt	Jesus' CV & Postcode
3:5-8		1:32-34	
3:12		1:1-2, 14, 18	
3:13		1:51	
3:16		1:12-13	

5. Is Jesus' claim to be a divine teacher still offensive to people today?

7. What will that look like in your life? In what kind of issues do you find it difficult to allow Jesus to be your teacher?

Why or why not? Read 3:11-13.

6. Are you ready to move from being a teacher to a humble student?

Session 5 – John 3:14-21

Let Me Teach You How To Look & Live

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The big issue in the last session was Jesus' authority **2:18**. Nicodemus comes on behalf of the religious and social elite to teach Jesus a lesson **3:1-2**.

Jesus turns the tables, showing Nicodemus that he is God's teacher sent from heaven **3:3-13**.

Jesus leaves Nicodemus with one question.
"Do you believe I am God's heaven-sent teacher?"

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Look and live, for the cross of Jesus is your only hope.

The Message – The Meat Of The Passage

The divine teacher sent from God is now going to teach Nicodemus. He will focus upon the

three most important things: His mission, His Father, and mankind's greatest need. Everything Jesus says will be full of truth and grace, for that's his character, *"We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* **1:14**.

Important Words

These three words are central to the main things Jesus will teach Nicodemus:

GLORY

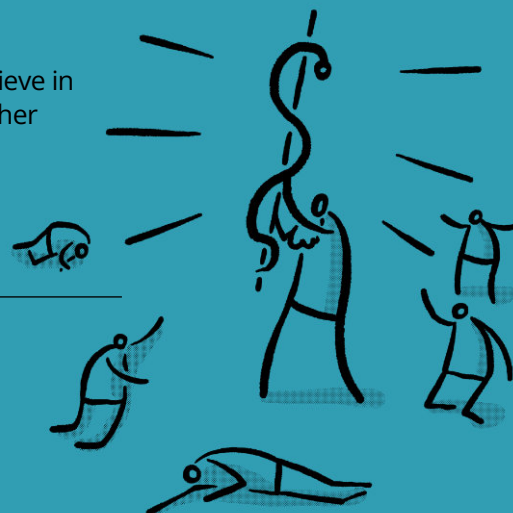
'God's greatness on public display'.

WORLD

'A way of thinking and living that rejects Jesus and the one who sent him'.

SIN

'Refusing to believe in the one the Father has sent'.



Let Me Teach You About My Mission - 3:14-15

Glory - 'God's greatness on public display'.

To illustrate his mission, Jesus chooses a famous story from Numbers **21:4-9**.

Israel's Rebellion

21:4 - They choose to be impatient.

21:5 - They speak against God and doubt his love and salvation.

21:5 - They speak against Moses, God's messenger.

God's Judgement

21:6 - As judgment, God sends snakes that bring death to the people.

Israel's Repentance

21:7 - Israel repents of speaking against God and his messenger.

21:7 - They ask Moses to pray that the judgment would be taken away.

Israel's Salvation

21:8 - God commands Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole.

When the snake is lifted up, the people must look at it.

When they look at the snake, the judgment will be taken away.

21:9 – Moses obeys God and lifts up the snake. When the people look, they live.

The two questions to ask are:
Why does Jesus use this illustration?

What is he seeking to teach Nicodemus?

John presents Moses as the greatest Old Testament witness to Jesus, mentioning him 12 times. *The table below gives five examples of how Moses witnesses to Jesus.*

Txt	Moses witnesses to Jesus
1:17	Law comes through Moses, grace and truth through Jesus
1:45	Jesus is the one that Moses wrote about
3:14	Moses lifts up the snake to save all who look Jesus is lifted up to save all who look
5:45	Moses condemns those who reject Jesus
5:46	The proof a person really believes Moses, is that they believe Jesus

It cannot be overstated how important Moses was to the people of Israel, which is why it's significant this illustration is chosen.

If the people of Israel wanted to swap certain death for life, they must look to the snake. If they refuse to look, then death will follow. Earlier, Nicodemus was troubled with Jesus claiming to be the great prophet Moses spoke about Dt 18:18. Here, Jesus takes things onto a completely different level, claiming to be the unique saviour. If Israel wanted to be saved physically, they looked to the snake. If people want to be saved

spiritually, they must look to Jesus. Later, Jesus will reveal the depths of our rebellion 3:18-21, but for now, he's focusing upon his mission to save.

The mission of Jesus is simple, 'to be lifted up', so people can escape God's judgment and receive eternal life 3:14-15. The cross is the hour for which he's come, the place where he'll be glorified 12:28. When Jesus is lifted up, 'God's greatness will be on public display'.

Application

The cross is the first thing Jesus teaches Nicodemus. The cross must be the centre of all we teach, love and live for. Our young people will forget much of what we teach them, but they will never forget what we get most excited about, so let's make sure it's the cross of Jesus.

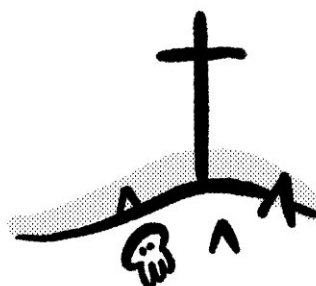
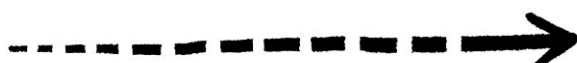
"Leave out the cross, and you have killed off the Gospel of Jesus. Atonement by the blood of Jesus is not an arm of Christian truth; it is the heart of it." C.H. Spurgeon

Let Me Teach You About My Father - 3 :16-18

WORLD 'A way of thinking and living that rejects Jesus and the one who sent him'.

The World

When Jesus teaches Nicodemus about the world, he's speaking about an attitude people own, more than a place where people live. This attitude was owned by the Israelites in the desert, and by Nicodemus and his mates in the temple 2:18, 3:1-2. 'A way of thinking and living that rejects Jesus and the one who sent him'. With every sign Jesus performs, the rejection of him becomes more intense and irrational. Whether he's teaching 7:30, or raising people from the dead, they want to kill him 11:53.



Application

This attitude at first seems a bit extreme, but as we saw in the temple, Jesus only has to question our own self-rule, and quickly people reply, “who on earth do you think you are?”

God’s Love

It’s this kind of a world that God chooses to love and send his Son to die for. As Jesus teaches Nicodemus, his focus is to highlight words which show God’s deep love. He ‘loves, gives, sends, and saves’. As Jesus teaches Nicodemus, he wants him to think about what motivated God to give His Son. Why did God send his son to inhabit a weak human body **1:14**? Why did God send his son to be despised, mocked **1:11**, and then lift him up to die **3:14**? The answer Jesus gives is love **3:16**.

Application

Our young people come from many different backgrounds and circumstances. Some turn up super-confident, others not so. Whatever wrapping they may come in, they need to know God’s deep love. Whatever they’ve done, Jesus teaches them that God has chosen to love them.

The Cross

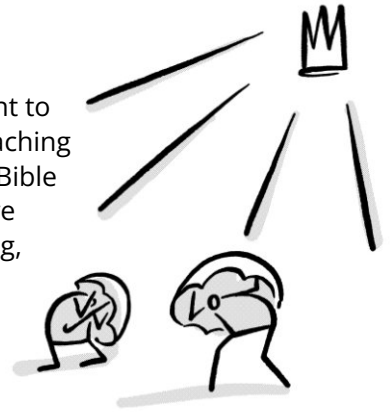
Here Jesus teaches Nicodemus why the Son of Man had to be lifted up. When the Israelites chose an impatient and defiant attitude towards God, they were choosing death. The raising of the snake and their obedience to the command to look, brought salvation. The Lord Jesus teaches Nicodemus: own the same attitude and expect the same judgment. Again, it’s worth focusing upon specific words Jesus uses to describe the judgment we deserve: perish, condemned.

We deserve condemnation and death, but the one who is ‘lifted up’ takes our punishment and death. His death guarantees our eternal life. Just like the Israelites, we only need to look, believe and live.

“But the point of the whole story is that you don’t have to be condemned. You don’t have to let the snake kill you. God’s action in the crucifixion of Jesus has planted a sign in the middle of history. And the sign says: believe, and live.” T. Wright

Application

As youth leaders, we want to root God’s love in the teaching of Jesus. The God of the Bible does not merely say I love you; he proves it by giving, sending, and saving us through His son’s death upon the cross.



Let Me Teach You About Your Greatest Need - 3:18-21

SIN ‘Refusing to believe in the one the Father has sent’.

The last truth Jesus teaches Nicodemus concerns our attitude towards God’s light.

3:19 – We love darkness instead of light.

3:19 – Our deeds are evil.

3:20 – We hate the light.

3:20 – We refuse to come into the light for we fear our deeds will be exposed.

As we journey through John, we will constantly see this attitude exposed.

“The world manifested its darkness by its self-love and selfishness, both of which necessarily excluded God, for God should be loved and obeyed. It was only when the love of God came, when “the light” came “into the world” that the darkness saw itself by means of contrast. It was only in the Light that humanity could see that it was in darkness (1:4-5).” E.W. Klink

When people embrace God’s light and truth (Jesus), everything changes. They once loved darkness, but now delight in God’s light. They once ran from God, but now embrace him, wanting to live in his light **3:21**.

Application

Clearly, Jesus teaches two central truths. Like the Israelites, our young people have attitudes brimming with hatred and rebellion against God. The darkness is deep, but thankfully the light of Christ overcomes it **1:5, 3:21**.

Study 5 – John 3:14-21

Nicodemus, Let Me Teach You About My Mission

Read John 3:14-21

Remember the meaning of 'GLORY' = 'God's greatness on public display'.

1. Read 3:14-15

What is Jesus teaching Nicodemus about the similarities between Israel and people then and now?

2. Read Numbers 21:4-9, Jn 3:14-15

How does the mission of Jesus link with the snake?

3. How radical, controversial is Jesus' statement. "I am God's unique saviour"?

Nicodemus, Let Me Teach You About My Father

Read 3:16-18

Remember the meaning of 'WORLD' = 'A way of thinking and living that rejects Jesus and the one who sent him'.

When Jesus teaches Nicodemus about the world, he's speaking about an attitude people own, more than a place where people live.

4. How do these verses, 1:9-11, reflect what John means by 'world'?

5. How might you see this attitude being played out in school friends, social media, even family?

6. What words are used to describe God's character and actions?

7. How should God's love be affecting your daily life?

8. How you view yourself, your worth, purpose, future?

9. How you view your friends, their worth, purpose, future?

Nicodemus, Let Me Teach You About Your Greatest Need

Read 3:19-21

Remember the meaning of 'SIN' = 'Refusing to believe in the one the Father has sent'.

10. What words are used to describe people's character and actions?

11. How does that make God's love towards you even more amazing?

Session 6 – The Humble Student

John 3:22-36

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Trouble At The Temple

2:13-16 – Jesus has revealed his authority by casting everyone out of the temple (his Father's house).

2:18 – The response of those present was to question Jesus' authority and ask for a sign.

2:16 – His authority is cemented to his relationship with his Father.

2:19 – His authority is cemented to the fact that he is indestructible.

Heaven's Sent Teacher

The meeting Jesus has with Nicodemus is controlled by what happened in the temple. Nicodemus represents both the religious and the social elite. He comes to teach Jesus but ends up being schooled by Jesus. The Lord Jesus teaches him about his mission **3:14-15**, his Father's character, **3:16-18**, and mankind's greatest need **3:18-21**.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

True humility comes from recognising who you are, in comparison to who Jesus is.

When you look to heaven **3:27**, and listen to Jesus' voice **3:29**, you become a humble student.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

The Prophet's Final Word

We have met John the Baptist three times already; today we hear from him for the last time.

The table below reveals what he's said about himself and Jesus.

Txt	What he says about Jesus	Txt	What is said about John
		1:6	Sent from God
		1:7	Witnesses to the light, so all may believe
		1:8	He is not the light, only a witness to it
1:15	Jesus will surpass John, for he was before him		
		1:20	I am not the Messiah
		1:21	Are you the prophet? i.e. Dt 18:18 No, I am not
			A voice which prepares the way for the Lord
			Only baptises with water
1:27	Not worthy to untie Jesus' sandals	1:27	Not worthy to untie Jesus' sandals
1:29	The lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world		
1:30	The one who surpasses me, for he was before me		The one who surpasses me, for he was before me
1:32	The Spirit remains on him		
1:33	Jesus baptises with the Spirit		John baptises with water
1:34	The Chosen One		

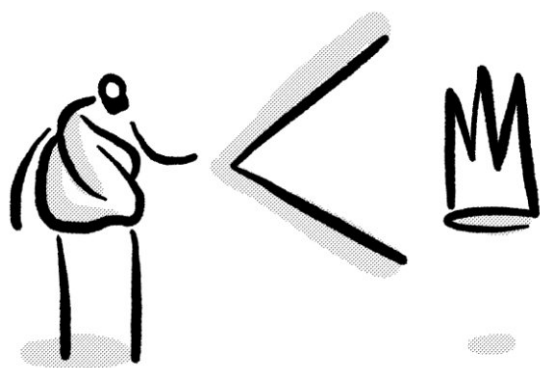
A New Reality - 3:22-26

The two images we used to describe John the Baptist back in session 2, were a siren and best man. His voice was loud in calling people to get ready to meet the lamb of God **1:29**, and chosen one **1:34**. His humility as the best man, was publicly displayed as he repeatedly pointed away from himself to Jesus **1:30**.

Everything John the Baptist said he wanted is now beginning to happen. That reality of Jesus surpassing him is now a full-on reality, as everyone flocks to be baptised by Jesus not John **3:26**. The response John gives will reveal whether or not he meant what he said.

Application

John has resisted certain temptations that the vast majority of people find impossible to resist. Clearly, people rated John very highly for they seek to crown him King **1:20**. Today our young people live in the world of the selfie, where glorifying self is nearly a virtue. How did John the Baptist consistently resist the temptation to promote himself?



A Focused Response - 3:27-30

The Siren - 3:27-28

The first response John gives is to fix his eyes upon heaven and not the multitudes flocking to Jesus. He knows he's been sent from heaven **1:6**, therefore he's content to receive what comes from there **3:27**. The foundation of his humility was always based upon his status compared to Jesus, which he's not slow in reminding his disciples **3:28**.

Application

The first foundation stone of John's humility is to realise what lasts and what doesn't. Human approval will come and go, as Jesus makes clear in **2:24-25**. He looks to heaven for eternal approval, for he knows it's based upon a divine character, not a human one

The second secret to the humility John the Baptist displays is cemented to his view of Jesus. He knows that Jesus is eternal and he's not. He knows that Jesus is the lamb of God, and he's not. He knows that Jesus alone gives the Spirit which leads to eternal life, and he can't.

If our young people are to grow into humble students, then they must follow the same path as John the Baptist. True humility only comes as we look away from ourselves to the beauty and brilliance of the Lord Jesus.

"In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that – and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison – you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people, and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you". C.S. Lewis

These verses show us how John the Baptist learned to look up.

The Best Man - 3:29-30

Here we see the very inner workings of John's heart. His mission from heaven was to be a voice **1:23**, but now a greater voice needs to be heard. As the 'friend', his greatest joy is to listen to the groom's voice **3:29**. All along, John has known the difference between himself and Jesus, which is why he declares "He must become greater; I must become less." **3:30**. "He played the great parts with humility and the small parts without shame", C. S. Lewis.

Application

JOY = Judging reality by the words and promises of Jesus and not your present circumstances

First, John the Baptist refuses to focus upon the crowds, and then trains himself to focus on

Christ. This focus leads to the voice of Christ dominating how he thinks and acts. This spiritual discipline produces gospel joy. In a world that lives for the praise of people, gospel joy offers something very different. Instead of getting our worth from what people think and say, we learn to get our worth from the person and promises of Jesus. His words, like his character, are always full of grace and truth **1:14**. True freedom is to reject 'people praise' and look to heaven for our approval. If our young people learn to listen to the voice of Jesus, instead of their culture, then gospel joy will be theirs. We must pray that, as they listen to the voice of Jesus, their relationship with him will grow and deepen.

The Decision Required - 3:31-36

The chapter finishes with a mini commentary from the author on the difference between John and Jesus. The author once again returns to Jesus' CV **John 1:1-18**.

His Origin

The Lord Jesus' superiority over John the Baptist comes from where he's from. The message John brings is from God **1:6-8**, but his origin is this earth **3:31**. The Lord Jesus is 'above all' because of where he has come from **3:31-32**.

"The point is not to declare the earthly valueless, but to show the subordination to the heavenly, both in origin and in type" E.W. Klink

His Authority

Here the author brings everything to a climax to show the ultimate authority of Jesus.

3:33 = To accept Jesus is to accept God's truth.

3:34 = The Spirit of God is the one who witnesses that Jesus speaks the words of God.

3:35 = The Father's relationship with the Son is eternal.

3:35 = The Father has given all authority to the Son.

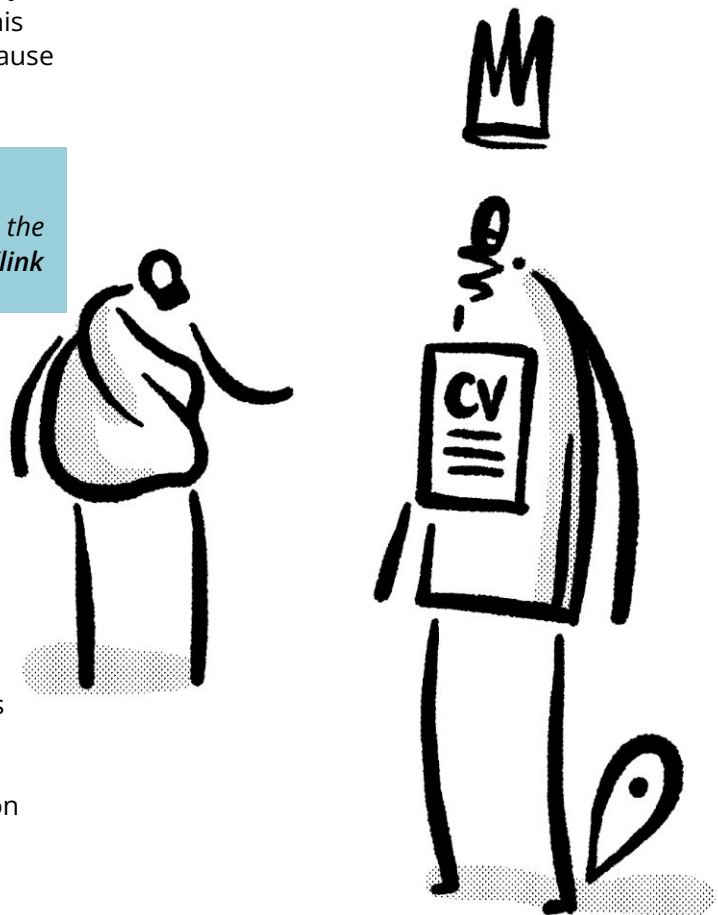
Your Decision

The author wants to finish by pushing us towards a decision. The truths he's explained leave us with the most important of all decisions **3:36**. If we reject the Son, then we're rejecting the eternal life God offers. If we reject the Son, then we're choosing to face the wrath of God.

*"God's wrath is not some impersonal principle of retribution, but the personal response of a holy God who comes to his own world".
D.A. Carson*

Application

This whole chapter points to a decision, and we must teach it as such. We have been taught by our heaven-sent teacher that God's love and salvation is open to all. As youth leaders, we must strongly encourage our young people to accept Jesus, and passionately warn them of the wrath to come.



Study 6 – John 3:22-36

Read 3:22-26

1. What’s your first thought when you hear the word humility?

2. How is the power and influence changing in the story?

3. How might you have felt if you were John?

Read 3:27-30

4. How does John arrive at the reality of living out 3:30?

5. Where does he look?

6. Whose voice does he train himself to listen to?

7. Why do you think looking and listening brings John deep joy?

How does the following C.S. Lewis quote help us to understand how John the Baptist acts?

“In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that—and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison – you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people, and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you”. C.S. Lewis

Read 3:31-36

8. How does the author define the difference between John and Jesus?

9. What decision does the author encourage us to make 3:36?

The table below shows what the meaning of joy is in John’s gospel.

Txt	The meaning of joy in John’s Gospel
3:29	Joy found in listening to Jesus
15:11	Joy found in continuing to obey Jesus and enjoying his love
16:20-24	
17:13	

Session 7 – John 4:1-42

The Saviour Of The World

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The previous session answered two vital questions:

1. How does someone become a child of God?

We become a child of God through God's initiative **1:12-13, 3:3, 3:35**.

2. What is inclusion into God's family based upon?

Jesus teaches Nicodemus three crucial truths:

3:14-15 – Jesus saves the world by being lifted up to die.

3:16-18 – The Father chooses to love a world that rejects his Son.

3:19-21 – Our natures will always choose darkness.

Our only hope is for God to bring us into his light.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Jesus is the saviour of the world, **3:16, 4:22, 42**.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

WORD - When the Glory shines - What do you see?

What The Pharisees See:

A Threat

This story starts like the previous one, in darkness. So far, the Pharisees have seen John the Baptist as their rival and threat **1:19, 24**. Now the focus is Jesus, for he's the person who threatens their power **4:1-3**.

What John Sees:

A Samaritan

At the end of his gospel, John reveals how many stories are in his notebook **21:25**. He's clearly selective in the stories he chooses, so why does he choose the story of the Samaritan woman? When we read John 4, it's clear that the ethnicity of the woman is a big concern to the author, for he mentions it five times **4:7, 9, 22, 39, 40**.

Application

This story speaks straight into the culture that our young people experience. Their world is divided in so many ways: class, race, gender, wealth, sexuality etc. The radical message of John 4 is that Jesus is the only one who can break those divides and bring people together **John 1:13, 3:16**.

What The Woman Sees - 4:7-15:

A Jew

When the woman meets Jesus, the first thing she sees is a Jew **4:9**. She quickly follows this observation by reminding him about the greatness of Jacob, **4:11-12**. Even though the woman does not fully understand Jesus, she still desires the water he's offering her **4:11, 15**.

What The Disciples See - 4:27-38:

What They See

Like the woman, the disciples' sight reflects their heart. The first thing they see is a person Jesus shouldn't be speaking to. "Samaritan woman" was considered in rabbinic tradition to be the lowest of the low. Their response is full of prejudice towards her gender and race **4:27**. The second thing they see is a hungry Jesus, which they quickly try and remedy **4:31**.



What They Don't See:

What they don't see is a mission field. They don't see a spiritually thirsty woman who desperately needs living water only Jesus can give. Instead, all they see is a physically hungry Jesus **4:33**.

Application

If we are anyone in the story it's the Samaritan woman, the disciples, or possibly both. We are spiritually hungry without realising it, foolishly thinking our physical needs are the biggest problem we have. The culture our young people are immersed in passionately rejects our spiritual need and proceeds to fill the void with our physical needs.

What Jesus Sees:

The Woman - 4:4-18

Throughout the gospel we repeatedly witness Jesus showing grace and truth **1:14** to those he meets. Just like Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman is living in spiritual darkness **3:19**.

To expose her darkness, Jesus initiates a conversation by asking her for water **4:7**. Her reply predictably focuses upon their racial differences **4:9**, drawing attention to the huge wall that stands between them. The response Jesus gives draws attention to his person and purpose for coming to earth **4:10**. The Samaritan woman is first surprised by what Jesus offers, but then quickly reverts back to what separates them **4:11-12**.

Once again, Jesus returns to his person and purpose. The key words are 'everyone' and 'never thirst'. Whatever background people come from, they can receive the 'living water' which quenches their eternal thirst **4:13-14**.

"The Samaritan woman is a timeless figure – not only a typical Samaritan but a typical human being." R.V.G. Tasker

The Samaritan woman is still not fully understanding Jesus, for her focus is only this world **4:15**. To help her see both his person and purpose he asks her a personal question **4:16**. If the woman is to feel her deep thirst, then her sin must be exposed.



"The exact sin of the woman must be extracted carefully. The verse says nothing about her being a prostitute, as is commonly assumed. If anything, the opposite is implied; she is a victim of an abusive system where husbands can freely divorce their wives, leaving a woman used and helpless so that even her most recent 'man' will not marry her. Others argue that nothing in the narrative suggests that the woman's sin is being exposed, only the omniscience of Jesus. While it's true that the narrative is not showing a narrow interest in the sin of the woman, the reader of John would be mistaken to claim it is absent. The Fourth Gospel has been quite keen to expose the sin of its characters, and Jesus himself is also shown to be aware of 'what is in humanity'." 2:25 E.W. Klink

Application

There are two possible applications:

1. We must follow the author's lead and focus upon Jesus' person and purpose. He's the only one who can provide the eternal water that satisfies the thirst caused by our alienation from God.
2. We must seek to understand the culture and lives of our young people so we also can expose their sin and awaken their spiritual thirst.

The Harvest Field - 4:7, 34-38

When Jesus looks at the woman, he sees someone needing the living water only he can give. When he looks down the road, he sees a Samaritan village that desperately needs the same living water. Both the woman and her village are ripe for harvest, and Jesus wants to bring it in **4:34-35**.

Application

This is the worldview we pray our young people will own and live for. We long for them to see their friends through the eyes of the Lord Jesus.

Where Jesus Stands

The Lord Jesus is full of grace and truth, for he's the only one who exposes a person's thirst while at the same time offering them living water. The woman's life resembles a stagnant lake **4:17-18**, and the Lord Jesus wants to replace the stagnant water with fresh living water.

The desire of the Lord Jesus is for every Samaritan present to recognise his person and purpose for coming to earth. This desire is wonderfully fulfilled as both the woman and the village believe he's the Messiah and saviour of the world **4:39, 41-42**.

When we read of the belief of the Samaritan woman and her village, the author wants us to focus upon whose 'word' is supreme. For the Samaritan woman, it's clearly the words of Jesus that bring her to believe **4:29, 39**. At first glance, it can seem that it's primarily the woman's words that bring belief to her community **4:40**. Yet a closer look will reveal that it's Jesus' words once again that are the living water that brings eternal life **4:41**.

Application

This story should be a huge encouragement of God's power in bringing people out of spiritual darkness **3:19**. The power of a secular culture is to shape us into thinking God cannot work in people's lives in a miraculous way. This story probably involves more people following Jesus than any other story in the whole of John's gospel. It doesn't involve one of his miraculous signs, but instead, just one short conversation. We must train our young people to share the words of Jesus, for they are the living water.

True Salvation

The woman moves from a position of utter alienation to salvation. Her opinion of Jesus moves from being lower than Jacob **4:12**, to a prophet **4:19**, to the saviour of the world **4:42**.

The story is full to overflowing with the truth and grace of the Lord Jesus. *"She knew her life was in a mess, and she knew that Jesus knew," (Tom Wright).* Yet this reality does not bring condemnation, but instead the freedom of forgiveness as she exclaims to all her neighbours *'Come and see the man who told me everything I've ever done'* **4:29**.

As soon as the woman tastes the living water Jesus offers, it wells up inside her **4:14**. She chooses to leave the water jar she came with, **4:28** and runs to tell her community about the living water she's just tasted **4:29-30**.

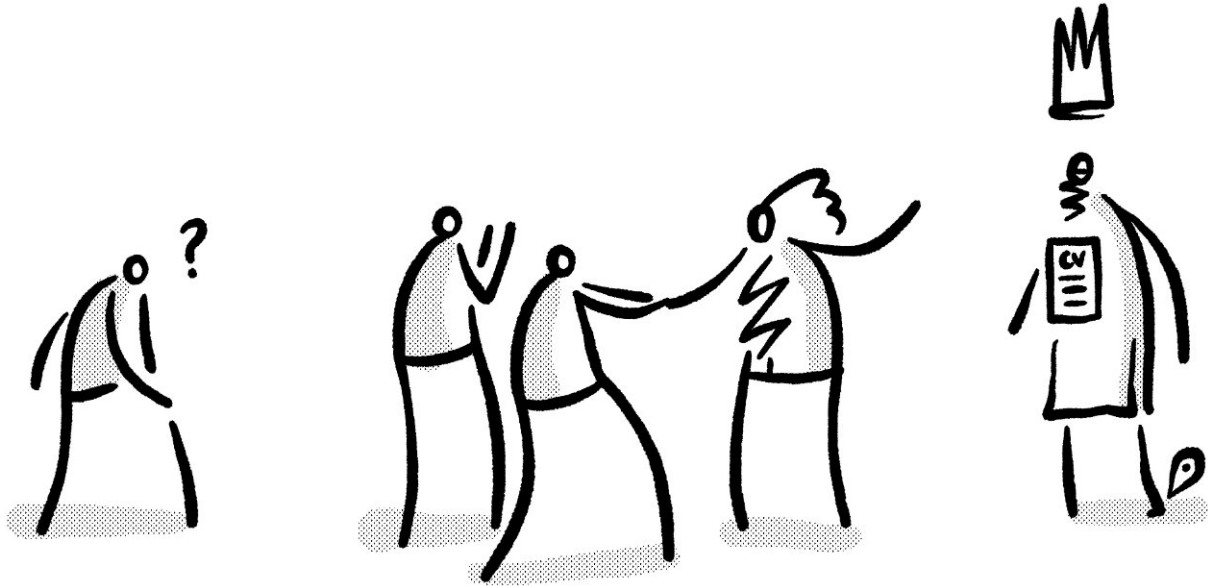
True Worship

If we are to worship God in truth, then we must follow the Samaritan woman's example. Having understood her need of 'living water' she humbly comes, accepting him as King **4:26** and saviour **4:42**. Her salvation comes from the Jewish nation **4:22**, but it's a salvation for all **4:13**.

"True worship is paternal in focus (Father), personal in origin (the Son), and Spirit filled in character (Spirit). Worship is only "true" when it is correctly directed at the Father. And the more the Father is made central, the more Jesus becomes central. Such are the unifying distinctions of the Trinitarian God" E.W. Klink

Application

In the multi-faith culture, our young people are growing up in, it's so easy for them to lose the cutting edge that Jesus displays. Because of his person and purpose, he's the only one worthy of our worship.



Two Witnesses

There are two witnesses in the story: the one who gives the living water, and the one who drinks it. The Samaritan woman follows the pattern of the first disciples, for she follows, believes, and brings people to Jesus **1:35-51**.

She's pursued by God – Her salvation is down to Jesus' initiative – **4:7**.

She believes in the Son – She listens to Jesus and trusts him as God's King – **4:29**.

She brings her friends – She brings people to Jesus – **4:30, 39-42**.

The flesh and blood Jesus **1:14**, began the story feeling tired and hungry **4:6**, and finishes it hanging out in a Samaritan village for two days **4:40-42**. His personal presence and gracious words bring many to believe and worship him as saviour of the world.

Application

As we teach our young people, we must allow the human side of Jesus to be seen. The tired and worn-out saviour of the world rests his weary body in a Samaritan village.

Study 7 – John 4:7-42

Read John 4:1-42

1. If you could ask Jesus one question, what would it be?

6. Where do you see similar division today?

2. If Jesus asked you one question, what do you think it would be?

7. What's the link between living water and the question Jesus asks the woman?

Look up 4:7-18.

3. The big threat to the Pharisees' power was John the Baptist, but how is that changing?
Look up 4:1-3.

8. Considering the Samaritan woman's life experience, why is her statement in 4:29, 39 so surprising?

4. What does the author consistently bring our attention to concerning the woman?

9. How might her words reflect the living water she's just received from Jesus?

5. Why do you think he does that; what point is he trying to make?
Look up 4:7, 9, 22, 39, 40.

10. What does the woman and her community believe that makes them true worshippers?
Look up 4:25-26, 39-42.

Session 8 – One Word

John 4:43-54

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The CV

We have previously seen how every story returns to Jesus' CV in **1:1-18**.

Today's story is no different.

When The Word Speaks

One of the major themes of chapters 1-4 has been the relationship between the word of Jesus and true belief.

When the Word speaks, his disciples believe, John **1:43**.

When the Word speaks, water is changed into wine, and his disciples believe, **2:7, 11**.

When the Word speaks, people receive eternal life, **3:34-36**.

When the Word speaks, the Samaritan woman and her village believe, **4:39-42**.

The Story Structure

This story follows the same pattern as the events in John 2 and 4.

We will see this structure repeated throughout John.

	Txt	2:1-12	Txt	4:4-42	Txt	4:43-54
The Place	2:1	The wedding in Cana, Galilee	4:4	Samaria	4:44	Cana in Galilee
The Problem	2:3	Wine runs out	4:9	Deep racial division	4:49	Royal official's son faces death
The Resolution	2:5-8	Jesus speaks and water becomes wine	4:42 4:39-42	Saviour of the world Jesus' words	4:50	Jesus speaks and the boy is healed
The Response	2:9-11	The disciples believe	4:41	Many become believers	4:53	The whole household believes



The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

- True belief is to follow the signs that point to Jesus.
- True belief is to listen and obey the word of Jesus.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

Bogus Belief - 4:43-48

Here we find Jesus back at home, the place of the first sign 4:46. On the surface he seems to get a good welcome, but that's a little misleading. 'Welcome' is a far cry from the term for 'acceptance' John normally uses when designating genuine reception 1:12, 5:43. What's clear from the previous story is that the Samaritans wanted Jesus for what he had to say 4:39-42. Here the tone and motivation are very different, for the people want Jesus for his miracles, not his message 4:44, 48.

"They are wanting a Messiah who will perform miracles to order, rather than moving onto real faith which will grasp Jesus' hidden identity, the Word dwelling in the flesh"
T. Wright.

Application

The application is more for youth leaders than young people. As we teach our young people, we need to regularly ask ourselves, "what Jesus are we calling our young people to believe in?" Is it a saviour who's come to be 'lifted up' 3:14-15, or a Jesus who is impressive to the world? Are we

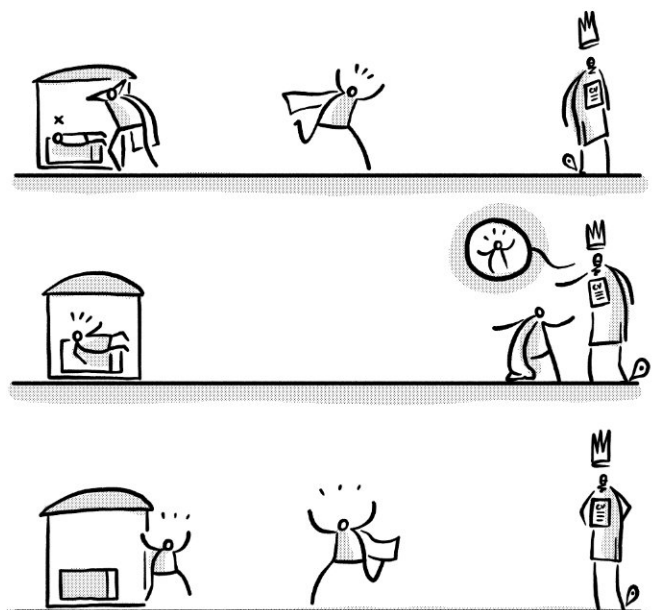
allowing the signs to point to his person and purpose, or merely focusing upon the signs themselves?

Bona fide Belief - 4:49-54

The royal official's hunger to reach Jesus is real, for he's walked twenty-five miles 4:46-48. His manner is one of desperation as he begs Jesus to consider his plea 4:49. Like the people of Cana, he desires a miracle, but his motives are very different. The difference is revealed by the royal official's response to Jesus' word of command 4:50. When Jesus says 'Go' he instantly obeys, and returns home. Just like the Samaritans in the previous story, their trust is resting upon the word of Jesus alone. They don't need a miraculous sign, for they have the word of Jesus. He may be a royal official, but when the King of creation speaks 1:3, he knows his place. As with the previous stories, when people properly follow the signs, they are led to bona fide belief 1:43, 2:11, 4:39-42.

Application

How we respond to the word of Jesus reveals the nature of our faith. The author chooses to compare the royal official to the people of Galilee, so we understand the nature of true belief. If we follow Jesus for our own personal gain, then it's unbelief. Instead, we are to follow the signs and rejoice in the one they lead us to.



Study 8 – John 4:43-54

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

- *True belief is to follow the signs that point to Jesus.*
- *True belief is to listen and obey the word of Jesus.*

Read John 4:43-54

1. Think of times or examples of when you have felt a bit used. People wanted what you had and not really you. What did that feel like, how did you respond?

2. Think back to the previous story. Why did the Samaritans want Jesus to stay with them? What was it that led them to believe in Jesus?

Read 4:39-42.

3. What's wrong with the people's motivation for following Jesus?

Read 4:44, 48.

4. How is the royal official's belief the same as the Samaritans'?

Read 4:49-54.

5. What do you think the relationship is between belief and obedience?

6. Can you have one without the other?

7. In what areas of your life are you struggling to believe and obey?

Session 9 – John 5

Sabbath, Son, Saviour

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

So far, the ministry of Jesus has been focused upon individuals, but now we see a change, as everything now is done in public.

This story reflects the same pattern as the previous ones.

- *Opposition intensifies as Jesus continues to focus upon his relationship with the Father.*

	Txt	5:1-47
The Place	5:1-4	Jerusalem at the time of the Jewish festival
The Problem	5:6-23	Lame man healed on the Sabbath, Jesus calls God his Father
The Resolution	5:24-30	Understand who Jesus is. Accept what belongs to Him
The Response	5:31-47	Will you believe the testimonies?

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

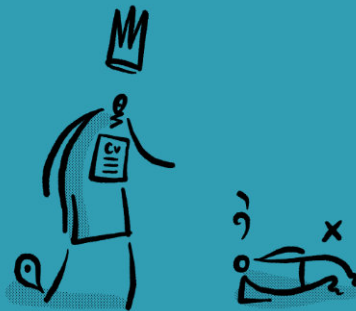
Jesus purposely moves the argument from the sabbath to his relationship with the Father, thus making himself equal with God.

Accepting or rejecting what Jesus says about his person and purpose, reveals the deep darkness of your heart, and the eternal destiny you are heading for.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage: What Jesus Sees

The first thing Jesus sees is the lame man, and responds in two ways:

- *He asks him a question – 5:6.*
- *He gives him two commands – 5:8-9, 14-15.*



The words 'Get Up' are the same words used in the New Testament for the resurrection. This might be placed skilfully by John to remind us of the signs. Every time Jesus performs a sign, it's saying something about his person and his purpose, for He's sent from the Father to make things new.

The second command follows on from the previous story. Just as he called the Samaritan woman to repent, so he calls the lame man **5:14-15**.



What the Jewish Leaders See

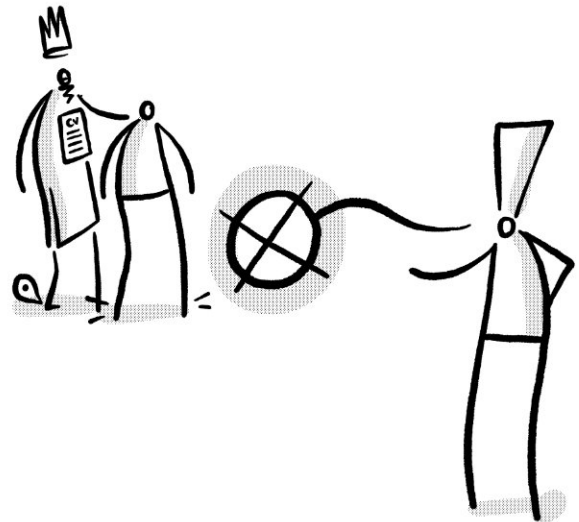
The Jewish leaders see only one thing, a rule breaker **5:9-13**. *"The Jews see a violation, not a miracle."* E.W. Klink

What the Lame Man Sees

The lame man sees a miracle man who's made him walk **5:11-13**.

Application

One of the popular narratives of our culture is to see Christianity as oppressive. Here Jesus is the one whose breaking all the cultural rules, so he can set the lame man free from his suffering. Today's story gives us a great opportunity to present the real Jesus.



The primary reason for nearly all the arguments Jesus has with the religious leaders, centres around his relationship with the Father. The table below shows how it intensifies as the gospel develops.

Txt	The Jews & Religious Leaders
5:16-18	When Jesus says that the Father is always at work in him, they try and kill him
6:37-43	When Jesus says the Father's sent him, the people grumble
6:65	People only come to Jesus when the Father draws them. This leads to many people turning their backs on Jesus
7:1	...And then wanting to kill him
7:16-20	When Jesus claims his teaching is from the Father, they try and kill him
7:28-31	When Jesus declares that he comes with the Father's authority, people try and seize him, and the Pharisees try and arrest him
8:27-30	The Pharisees misunderstand what Jesus is saying about his Father
8:51-59	Jesus' relationship to the Father is the dominant theme of chapter 8. Here it reaches its climax as the people seek to stone him
10:14-21	When Jesus teaches about his relationship to the Father, the crowd is divided. Some claim he's demon possessed and raving mad, while others believe in him.
10:29-33	When Jesus says he's one with the Father, the Jews try and stone him
10:37-39	When Jesus says his works are the same as the Father, they try and seize him

Where The Jewish Leaders Stand

Initially the problem for the religious leaders concerns the Sabbath **5:16**. This is no small matter, for it causes them to persecute him. The response Jesus gives concerning the sabbath, moves them from persecuting to wanting to murder him **5:18**. *"The Jews rightly see that by this assertion Jesus is claiming equality with God, and it rouses in them a murderous hatred". R.V.G.Tasker*. Tragically the Jewish leaders are fulfilling **1:11**.

Application

If you look through the table above, you will see the opposition becomes more violent and more irrational. As our young people follow Jesus, they must expect irrational opposition.

Where Jesus Stands

From The Sabbath To The Son

The argument begins with a dispute about the sabbath **5:16**, which Jesus skilfully moves to a debate about his relationship to his Father. This switch from the sabbath to the son, intensifies the Jewish leaders' hatred **5:17**. Clearly Jesus knows that by moving the debate, their hatred towards him will increase **5:18**. So how will Jesus answer the accusation that he's claiming to be equal with God? He does this in two ways.

Understand Who Jesus Is - 5:19-24

Jesus is instantly on the front foot and answers the accusation by telling the Jewish leader who he is.

Shared Works - 5:19-20

We learnt from Jesus' CV, that he's the only one who's seen the Father **1:18**. It's therefore logical that only he could do the same works as the Father. His future and greatest work, his death and resurrection, will bring him most glory **17:1**.

Shared Life - 5:21

The consistent message throughout the whole Bible is that God alone is the source of all life, **Dt 32:39, 1 Sam 2:6, 2 King 5:7**. The miracle the Jewish leaders have just seen is a small example, for the legs which were once lifeless, now have life. The raising of Lazarus is a brilliant example of how the Father and Son work together to bring life **John 11:43-44**.

Shared Judgment - 5:22

If the Son has the power to give life, then it's logical he will be the judge. Just as he raised Lazarus, so he will raise all people on the day of judgement **5:25**.

Shared Honour - 5:23

The honour that's due to God the Father is also due to God the Son. Therefore, to reject Jesus **5:18**, is to reject God.

Your Eternity - 5:24

He does the same works, has the same life, and therefore deserves the same honour as the Father. Our view of him decides our eternal future.

Understand What Belongs To Jesus - 5:25-29

My Voice - 5:25

The Word that created all things in Genesis 1 and 2 is the one that now gives spiritual life. Here Jesus claims that he is that Word.

My Life - 5:26

We have seen in **5:21** that God alone is the source of all life **Job 33:4**. Here Jesus claims that life is his.

My Judgement - 5:27-29

Here Jesus combines the power of God's voice to the greatest title in the Old Testament which

speaks of God as judge. He is the Son of Man, who owns God's glory, sovereign power, and the worship of all nations **Daniel 7:13-14**. This title belongs to Jesus.

My Glory - 5:30

In light of who he is, no wonder Jesus seeks glory only from His Father, and not created beings.

Application

Many of our young people will have Muslim friends. This is a brilliant passage to teach our young people how they share their faith with them.

This awesome Jesus should lead us to worship.

Witness: When the big guys speak – do I believe them?

We are to imagine the final few verses as a courtroom scene, with witnesses waiting to give their verdict **5:31-32**. The Lord Jesus' aim is to help them see who he is, so they accept him as saviour **5:34**.

Witness 1 - John The Baptist - 5:33-35

We know that John was a siren and a best man. Here, he's presented as the light which reveals Jesus' person and purpose. The Jewish leaders have enjoyed the light, but has it led them out of darkness?

Witness 2 - The Father - 5:36-44

Once again, Jesus brings the focus back to his relationship with the Father. The Father's witness to Jesus is greater than that of John. *To reject the Father's witness is devastating for it reveals six things:*

5:36 - Jesus does the 'works of the Father'.

5:37 - They have never truly heard God's voice

5:38 - His word does not dwell in them

5:39-40 - They do not have eternal life

5:41 - They do not have the love of God in their hearts

5:43-44 - They prefer the glory of man to the glory of God

Witness 3 - Moses - 5:45-47

The last witness to appear was probably the least expected. The Jewish leaders' passion was to be students of Moses, for he brought God's holy law to them **5:45**. Moses stands in the dock to witness to Jesus' person and purpose.

Jesus' message is clear

5:46 - If you believed Moses, then you would believe in me.

5:46 - He wrote about me.

5:47 - The proof that you don't believe Moses, is that you reject me.

Application

The evidence has been presented showing that Jesus is equal to the father in all aspects of his deity. The story started with the healing of a paralysed man, but finishes with a decision to be made by all watching on. Our young people face the same decision as the people Jesus spoke to. Will they bow the knee to the Son? Will they believe the witnesses?



Study 9 – John 5

1. Why are the religious leaders upset with Jesus, and how do they respond?

Read 5:1-16

4. How do these truths about Jesus help you share your faith with your friend's?

2. What makes them move from a desire to persecute, to a passion to murder?

Read 5:16-18

5. Who are the witnesses who call us to decide whether we agree that Jesus is equal with the Father?

Read 5:31-47

3. What does Jesus say about himself to prove that he is equal with the Father?

Read 5:19-30

6. What does Jesus say rejection of him points to for those he is speaking to?

Read 5:36-44.

Session 10 – John 6:1-25

The Works Of God (1)

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The story begins with the same structure as the previous one.



The previous story in John 5 focused upon the implications of how Jesus sees his relationship with his Father. Correctly, the Jewish leaders understand the huge implications of what Jesus is saying **5:18**. Far from backing away from the Jewish leaders' accusation of being '*equal with God*', Jesus hammers home the reality of his claim, as he draws attention to four crucial truths about his person.

5:18 - Jesus' claim to be equal with God
Equal in their *works* – **5:19-20**

Equal as the source of all *life* – **5:21, 26**

Equal as the judge of all the earth – **5:22, 27-29**

Equal in honour / glory – **5:23, 30**.

The next two sessions will show us how Jesus applies these truths further.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Jesus shows his equality with the Father by doing the same works.

	Txt	John 6:1-15
The Place	6:1-4	Jesus is by the Sea of Galilee with his disciples, at the time of Passover
The Problem	6:5-9	Huge crowd and no food
The Resolution	6:10-13	Jesus feeds the crowds with one boy's packed lunch
The Response	6:14-15	The crowd wants to crown him King, but Jesus refuses

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

Introduction

The author gives us the key to the passage in **6:4**, where he reminds us it's Passover time. As we approach this passage, we are to have in mind the '*works of God*' that accompanied the Passover. If Jesus is equal with the Father, then you would expect him to do the same '*works*' as his Father.

So, the three questions we must ask as we study this passage are:

1. In what way is *Jesus* greater than Moses?
2. What are the '*works of God*' that Jesus performs?
3. Do these '*works of God*' make him equal with the Father?

The Son Who Feeds - 6:1-15

The motivation for the crowds to follow Jesus are the signs they have seen him perform **6:1-2**. With the length of time that they have been following Jesus, hunger is now the major problem, which Jesus seems to want to highlight to his disciples **6:5-9**.

The purpose of this story is to take us back to when Israel was in the desert, having just been saved from slavery in Egypt. Even though God miraculously saved them, they still chose to grumble and doubt his goodness **Ex 16:2-3**. In his mercy, God feeds them with manna from heaven **Ex 16:4-5**, thus sustaining them.

Here in John 6, the people of God are once again utterly dependent. This results in Jesus

taking one lad's packed lunch and feeding the masses. The Word of God has become flesh **1:14**, and graciously meets the people's need. We saw him meet the needs of the people at the wedding **2:10**, then at the well **4:42**, and now the mountainside **6:12-13**.

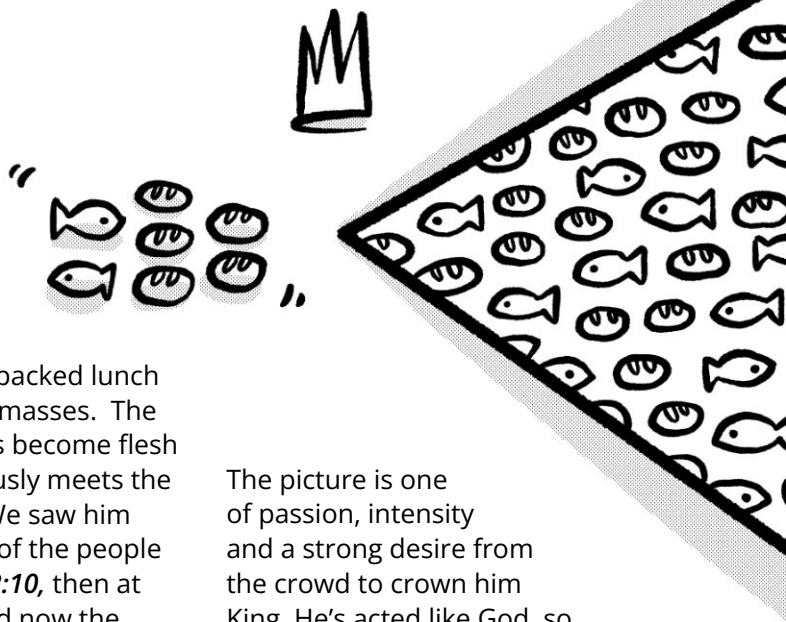
Prophet and King

Familiarity with this story can be the enemy to understanding its true impact. When the crowds see Jesus perform 'the works of God' it's no wonder they think he's the great prophet Moses spoke about **Dt 18:17-18**.

The picture is one of passion, intensity and a strong desire from the crowd to crown him King. He's acted like God, so they want him treated like God **6:15**. Not only is he the mouthpiece of God, but also the anointed King.

Application

The temptation this session is to go to the application too quickly, but we must focus on the 'works of God' that prove Jesus to be God in the flesh **1:14**.



The Son Who Saves - 6:16-24

Let's remind ourselves of the questions the author wants us to ask.

1. In what way is **Jesus** greater than Moses?
2. What are the '**works of God**' that Jesus performs?
3. Do these '**works of God**' make him equal with the Father?

This story again takes us back to the Exodus where the people of God were fearful and vulnerable **Ex 14:10-12**. The role of Moses was to point away from himself to the '**works and**

promise of God to save'
Ex 14:13-14.

Here in John 6, we have the same pattern, as the disciples face a storm they cannot control **6:16-17**. When Jesus appears, he acts **6:19**, and speaks **6:20** like God.

"Standing where only God can stand, Jesus declares what only he can claim: 'I AM.' The one of the unconsumed burning bush Ex 3, who alone can walk on the waves of the sea Job 9:8".
E.W. Klink

This important title "I AM" is used by Jesus three more times

to declare his deity **4:26, 6:35, 8:58**. In the previous debate, Jesus turned to Moses as his witness, claiming that what he wrote was about him **5:45-47**. These two miracles are evidence of that.

Application

These two stories leave our young people with one question to ask. "Do the works of Jesus prove that He's equal with the Father?" Understanding these great miracles gives us the foundation and context of all the application Jesus gives next session.



Study 10 – John 6:1-25

Read John 6:1-15

1. Brainstorm all you can remember of the book of Exodus and the amazing things God did.

5. How do these miracles show that Jesus is greater than Moses?

2. The author wants us to see these two miracles in the light of the Exodus.

Read 6:1-4.

6. Do you think that these miracles / signs show that Jesus did the same works as the Father, thus making him equal? Why or why not?

3. What story in the book of Exodus does the first miracle remind you of?

Read 6:5-15.

7. Can you understand why people think he's the promised prophet and King?

Read Dt 18:17-18.

4. What are the similarities?

Read Ex 16:1-8.

8. How do you think you might have responded if you had seen these 'works of God'?

Session 11 – John 6:26-71

The Works Of God (2)

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

In *John 5*, Jesus continued to preach his *CV 1:1-18*. He skilfully moved the debate from the sabbath to his relationship with his Father. When he did this, people quickly realised he was claiming equality with the Father *5:18*.

Equal in their *works* – *5:19-20*

Equal as the source of all *life* – *5:21, 26*

Equal as the judge of all the earth – *5:22, 27-29*

Equal in *honour / glory* – *5:23, 30*

In the first part of the chapter, *6:1-24*, John chose two miracles to prove Jesus could do the works of the Father. Just as the Father fed and saved God's

people at the Exodus, so Jesus feeds the crowd and saves the disciples. In giving us these two examples, John reveals how Moses wrote about him *5:45-47*.

Today, John wants us to stay with the same theme: the '*works of God*'. Having established Jesus' equality with the Father, he now wants to apply exactly what that means for those who follow Jesus.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Jesus proves that he is equal to the Father by doing the same works.

The Message

- The Meat Of The Passage

The story develops with a tennis-like conversation, as questions and answers are exchanged between Jesus, the crowd and his disciples. As we study these verses, it's worth focusing upon two questions:

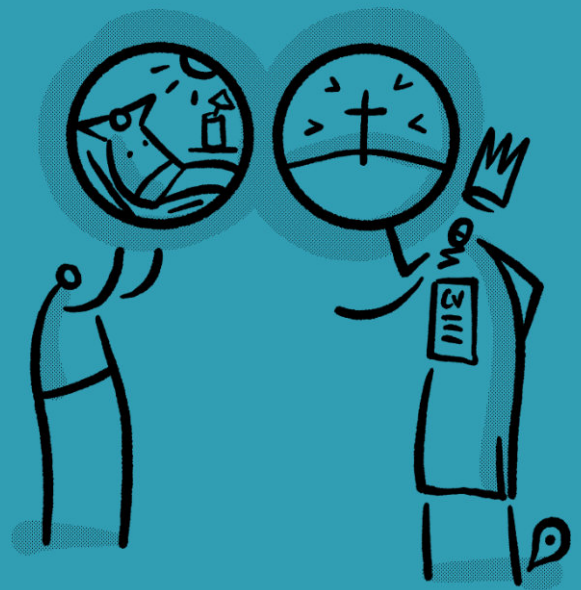
1. What is the people's *attitude* towards Jesus?
2. How does Jesus *respond* to their attitude and questions?

Look For The Eternal - 6:25-27

These few verses highlight the central themes within this chapter. On the surface it looks a positive start, but Jesus knows what's driving their desires, and controlling their attitude. The reason they're pursuing him is to have their immediate needs met. They've seen Jesus feed the multitude, so they want more *6:25-26*.

All the way through this chapter, Jesus is quick to correct people's wrong attitudes towards him. They are seeking him for the wrong reasons, and Jesus wants them to see that and change. The people hunger to have their immediate physical needs met, but Jesus wants them to focus upon their eternal needs *6:27*.

Finally, Jesus makes it clear why he's got the right to correct them. He's the Son of Man, with God's seal of approval.



"The verb implies that Jesus has been marked with a seal, a means of identification, suggesting not only that the one sealed is endowed with the authority of the one who sent him, but also the sender (the Father) is directly connected with the one sealed (the Son)." E.W. Klink

Application

The culture our young people are growing up in is identical to Jesus'. Our culture is devoted to working to meet the now and not the eternal. The message of Jesus is incredibly radical, for it calls our young people to develop an attitude which lives life now in the light of eternity.

Believe The Works - 6:28-29

The challenge Jesus gives produces an instant response from people, as they fire back a question "What must we do to do the works God

requires?" 6:28. The answer Jesus gives couldn't be clearer or more straightforward. The greatest, and deepest work a human can ever do, is to believe in the one the Father's sent.

Application

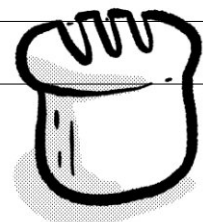
This challenge from Jesus must be seen in the light of the previous two miracles. He's got the power and authority to sustain and save God's people, therefore the seal of the Father is upon him.

Eat The Bread - 6:30-59

The question the people ask reveals further the attitude of their hearts 6:30-31. *"Their questions are not symptoms of interest but the jabs of a challenge."* (Klink). He's just performed two amazing miracles, yet they still ask for a sign.

The answer Jesus gives begins to open up exactly where he wants the conversation to go: the meaning of life-giving, eternal bread 6:36-34. This passage is crammed full of truth, so the best thing to do is to focus upon the claims Jesus makes about himself and His Father, remembering the work of God is to believe these claims 6:28-29.

Txt	Claims About Himself	Txt	Claims About The Father
6:35	I am that bread. Come to me and you will never be hungry or thirsty	6:39	The Father's will is that none will be lost, but instead raised on the last day
6:37	Those the Father gives me, I will never drive away	6:40	The Father's will is that people look to the Son and gain eternal life
6:38	I always do the will of the one who sent me	6:44	You can only come to the Father if He draws you
6:41	I am the bread that came down from heaven		
6:45	If you learn from the Father, then you will come to me		
6:46	Only the Son has seen the Father		
6:47	Believing in me brings eternal life		
6:48	I am the bread of heaven		
6:49-51	I am the living bread who guarantees eternal life		
6:53-57	You have to accept, gnaw on Jesus		
6:58	I am the bread of heaven		



The defining image Jesus uses to describe his person and purpose is bread, **6:33, 35, 41, 48, 50, 51, 58**. The way Jesus applies this image is so offensive that many refuse to believe **6:36** and end up walking away from him **6:66**. So, what is so offensive about this image? There are three truths the people find offensive about what Jesus says about himself.

Sent From God - 6:33, 41, 50, 51, 58

Five times Jesus refers to himself as the **'bread that came down from heaven'**, which is another way of saying He's been sent by the Father. Just as the manna was sent from God in the wilderness, so Jesus has been sent from the Father to feed the people of God.

Life Now - 6:26-27, 33, 35

Every time Jesus uses the image of bread, it's positive, for it revolutionises your life now and for eternity. When Israel was in the desert, they faced starvation, for without the bread from heaven they would perish. Exactly the same applies today, for we are created to get our meaning and worth from our creator. As rebels we seek to fill our spiritual stomachs with the food that spoils, ignoring the spiritual feast that Jesus offers **6:26-27**.

Application

Our culture is hell-bent on living for **'the food that spoils'**. As youth leaders, we need to work hard at understanding and then applying two important things:

- *What are the alternatives our young people are filling their spiritual stomachs with?*

- *What does it look like for a young person to be fed and filled with Jesus?*

The people understood what Jesus was saying and found it incredibly offensive, for they saw him as just the local lad **6:41-42**. To believe we've been made by Jesus and for Jesus, is as offensive now as it was back then.

Life Eternally - 6:47-48, 50, 51, 58

The repeated promise in these verses is eternal life. When we metaphorically eat Jesus, the bread of life, we are doing the works of God, for we are believing in the one the Father sent. If we reject Jesus, the 'bread of life', we will spiritually starve now, and then for all eternity.

Application

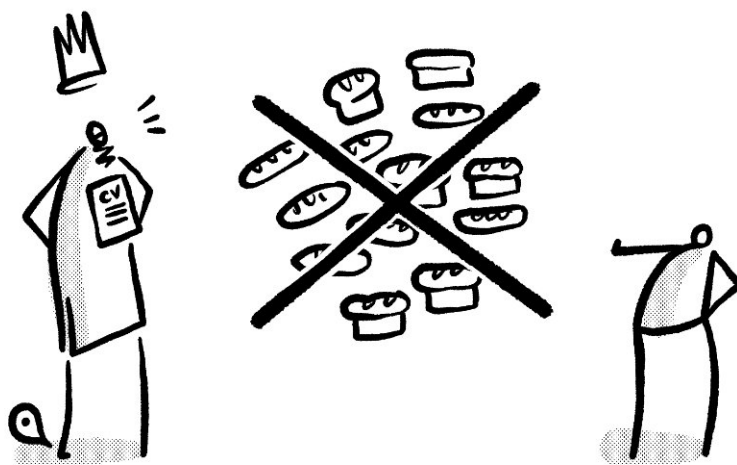
We need to feel the weight of what Jesus is saying here. In our multi-faith culture, where all claims to absolute truth are avoided, Jesus weighs in with a very different message. We must help our young people to see that following Jesus is incredibly radical.

"Our claim, then, is not just that Jesus was one of the great spiritual leaders of the world. It would be hopelessly incongruous to refer to him as 'Jesus the Great', comparable to Alexander the Great, Charles the Great or Napoleon the Great. Jesus is not 'the Great': he is the only. He has no peers, no rivals and no successor." C. Simpson

Grumbling or Grace - 6:60-71

Grumbling Darkness - 6:36, 6:41-43, 61

The two miracles Jesus performed are the clear evidence he can do the **'works of God'**. Yet, instead of leading to belief, it's led to unbelief **6:36**. He's explained clearly and simply that he alone can satisfy their deepest needs, but they refuse to believe him.



Having chosen to reject Jesus as the bread of life, they now grumble against all he says. *"By their grumbling against Jesus they preserve the genuine succession of unbelief" (Hoskyns)*. Just like Israel, they have seen incredible works of God but allow their unbelief to morph into grumbling.

Application

If we needed any evidence that Jesus' words to Nicodemus were true **3:19**, we have it here. Through the two miracles, the light of God has shone brightly, but people have preferred to grumble in the darkness **3:20**. Understanding this reaction will help our young people understand the hearts of their friends. As we will see shortly, only the Father can draw people out of their own spiritual darkness. *"To grumble against God is to place oneself at the centre."* (E.W. Klink).

The Father Sends - The Son Keeps - 6:37-40, 44

It's worth pondering the words that are used to describe the actions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

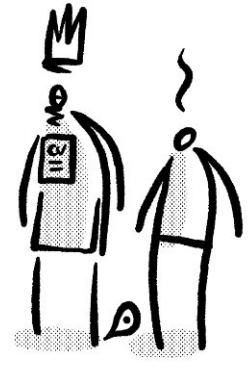
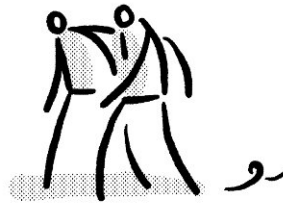
Txt	The Father	Txt	The Son	Txt	The Spirit
6:37	He gives those who come to the Son	6:37	Always welcomes those the Father gives to him		
6:38-39	He sends the Son to earth	6:38	Came down from heaven		
6:44	Only the Father can draw people out of their grumbling darkness	6:39	He will not lose any of those the Father has given to him		
		6:39, 44	He will raise them up on the last day		
				6:63	The Spirit gives life

Here we get a direct window into the salvation plan of the Trinity. The Father sends the Son to reclaim those He's chosen to save. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life, so people desire to move out of the darkness. Once saved, the Son keeps them until the last day.

Application

The doctrine of God's Sovereignty in salvation has been debated for many years. Yet a right understanding brings great comfort and assurance. The plan of God to save us from our grumbling in the darkness is centred upon his unchangeable will and almighty power **6:38-40**.

"God's sovereign control is not impersonal or mechanical but is the loving and gracious oversight of the king of creation and redemption." C.H. Spurgeon



Should I Stay Or Shall I Go? - 6:60-71

Those That Go

The words and actions of Jesus always bring people to a point of decision. Clearly, many of the disciples are struggling to accept the difficulty of his teaching **6:60**, so grumble once again **6:61**. All through the chapter, Jesus has modelled what it means to be full of grace and truth **1:14**. When the people refuse to believe him, he calls them out **6:36**. Later, when they grumble, he commands them to stop **6:43**. And, finally, when they struggle to accept his teaching, he asks *"Does this offend you?"*

It's crystal clear that Jesus refuses to compromise his teaching, however hard the disciples might find it. He's the living bread that brings eternal life, so to compromise would leave them spiritually starving. Many of the disciples choose to turn their back on Jesus **6:66** and return to the 'food that spoils' **6:27**.

Those That Stayed

The chapter finishes with a final question: *"You do not want to leave too, do you?"* Jesus asked the Twelve **6:67**. The answer Peter gives sums up what it means to believe that Jesus is the living eternal bread **6:68-70**.

Application

If as youth leaders we truly believe that Jesus is the living bread, then we won't compromise his message. The best thing we can give our young people is the person of Jesus, who will never leave them spiritually thirsty or hungry. He alone has the 'words of eternal life' **6:68**.

Study 11 – John 6:26-71

1. What were some of the huge claims Jesus made in John 5:18, and how did the miracles in John 6:1-24 begin to prove that claim?

5. What does Jesus call people to believe about him? *Read 6:30-59.*

2. What problem does Jesus highlight in the people's attitude towards him?

6. How do people respond to what he calls them to believe? *Read 6:36, 41-43, 60-66.*

3. Read John 6:25-27.

Do you think people have the same attitude today? Why or why not?

7. Why do you think people find what Jesus says so offensive?

8. Do you think people do today? Why or why not?

4. What are the 'works of God' according to Jesus? *Read 6:28-29.*

9. How are Peter's words the sign of true belief? *Read 6:67-69.*

Session 12 – John 7:1-13

The Nature of Faith

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The primary focus of the previous two chapters has been the nature of the 'works of God'.

The Works of God

5:20 = The Father shows the Son all his works

5:36 = The Son does the works of the Father, proving he's been sent by him.

6:27-29 = The work of God is to believe in the one he sent

People's Response

5:16 = The religious leaders persecute him

5:18 = The religious leaders seek to kill him

5:43 = They refuse to accept him

6:14-15 = The people seek to make him King by force

6:41-42 = They grumble against him

6:61 = Many are offended by his words

6:66 = Many turn back and refuse to follow him

6:68-69 = The twelve acknowledge he's the 'Holy one of God' and continue to follow him.

It's with this backdrop that we seek to understand John 7

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

The work of God is to **accept** Jesus

The nature of evil is to **reject** Jesus

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

Introduction

Each story has returned consistently to Jesus' CV **John 1:1-18**, and the themes contained within it. Today's story focuses upon two of those themes.

1:5, 10 = He's God's light that people choose to reject

1:11 = He's rejected by his own people

This whole chapter is marked by a gritty, in-your-face misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus. The darkness which dominates begins with the Jewish leaders' hunger to kill him, which affects his movement **7:1-2**. The festival is happening in Jerusalem, which is key to the developing plot.

"In this gospel, Jerusalem is the storm centre of the Messiah's ministry, where He vindicates His claims before consummating his work by suffering outside its walls." R.V.G. Tasker

The Nature of Belief - 7:1-5

The festival being enjoyed is harvest, a celebration of God's goodness in providing food for all his people **Lv 23:39-43, Dt 16:13-15**. Later in the chapter when Jesus preaches, the significance of the festival will be clear.

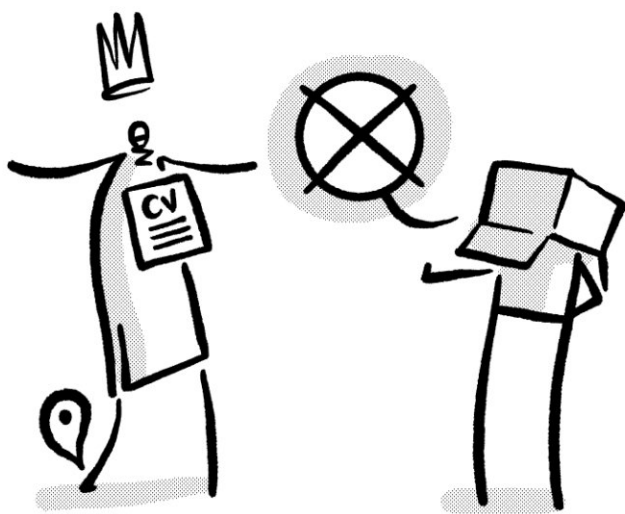
When we read Jesus' CV **1:1-18**, we are meant to be shocked by the fact that his own people will reject him **1:11**. Yet the reality of these verses goes even deeper, as John puts the spotlight upon Jesus' brothers, focusing upon the 'works of God' he's performing. At first glance, it looks

like the brothers have understood Jesus, for they're impressed by his miracles and want everyone else to witness them **7:3-4**. Yet it's clear from John's account that their belief is still not genuine **7:5**. So what's the missing piece of the jigsaw? They're impressed by the miracles their brother is doing but still don't believe.

Application

This story gives us a direct window into the closest human relationships Jesus had. His brothers shared a bunk bed, and ate with him every day for thirty years, yet still don't believe. Their hearts are no different to anyone else's, for they always love darkness more than light **3:19**. *"They shared the same biological mother, but they were not children of the same Father."* (E.W. Klink).

This harsh reality is understandably difficult for our young people to see and accept. The miracles alone do not lead to genuine faith; something more is needed.



The Nature of Evil - 7:6-10

When we hear the word evil, especially when it comes from the lips of Jesus, we need to sit up and take notice. So, what does Jesus mean when he says to his brothers, *"The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil"*? **7:7**.

These verses explain what's missing in the brothers' faith. As we saw in the last session, the works of God are more than just being impressed with the signs and miracles Jesus is performing **6:26-29**. A genuine trust in Jesus

always leads to believing that he's been sent by the Father, therefore the Messiah and Son of God **20:30-31**. To reject him is to commit evil, for you are rejecting everything God holds most precious.

"The brothers of Jesus are still part of this evil world, which organises itself without any reference to God's purposes. They can therefore move about freely within it, at any time, without any risk or danger." **R.V. Tasker**

The primary reason people hate Jesus in John's gospel is because he claims to be sent by the Father. When people refuse to believe in him, he exposes their behaviour as evil, for they have rejected God's Son **7:7**. All the signs and miracles are cemented to his person, so to merely be impressed with the sign, but reject what they're pointing to is evil. This attitude is revealed in how John uses the word 'world'.

"At one level, it means the whole created universe, including all the people of the earth. But at another level it means the deep-seated attitude that turns away from the loving creator and tries to lead its life independently of him." **T. Wright**

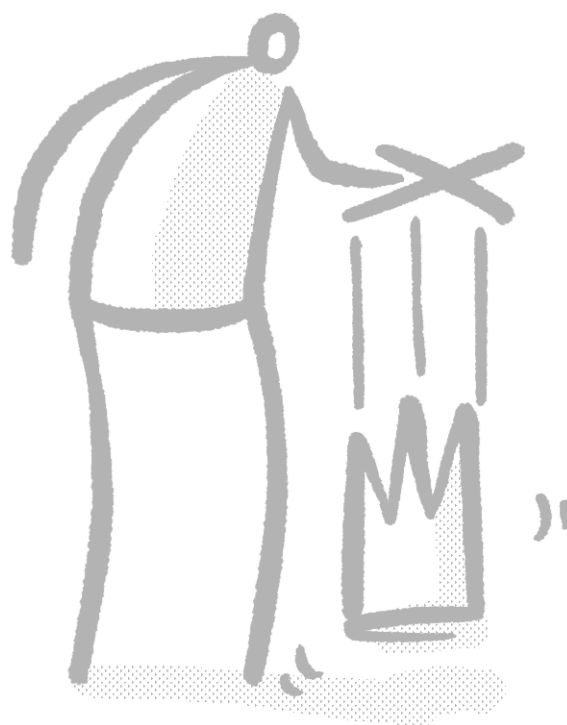
Application

In youth culture, many words change their meaning and end up meaning the complete opposite to their original meaning, like 'sick' and 'wicked'. In our culture today, the word 'evil' still carries the meaning of acts, words, and ideas that cause people great harm. The Lord Jesus is as bold as a lion in continuing to expose people's rejection of him, in the hope it will lead to genuine repentance and true belief.

Our young people are growing up in this world, where everything is designed around a world view which has no time for its almighty creator. If they are to read the world they are living in correctly, they must learn to read it through Jesus' eyes. If they are to understand the true nature of 'evil', then they must understand it as Jesus does.

As we teach these truths, it's worth reminding ourselves and the young people the nature of Jesus' CV, for this is who is being rejected.

Txt	Jesus CV
1:1	God
1:2	Eternal
1:3	Creator
1:4	Life
1:5	Light
1:13	Power to make people children of God
1:14	God made flesh
1:14	Displays God's glory
1:14	He is God's Son
1:14	Comes from the Father
1:14	Is full of grace and truth
1:17	Grace and truth come through Him
1:18	One and only Son
1:18	Who is himself God
1:18	Has the closest relationship to God



The Nature of Sovereignty - 7:10-13

The story finishes like it began, with people seeking to control Jesus **7:1**. In the previous chapters, some people wanted to kill **5:18**, while others wanted to make him King **6:15**. Here, the brothers want him to seek stardom and fame **7:3-4**. The Jewish leaders are continuing to hunt for him, fearing his influence and power **7:11**, while the crowds remain confused **7:12**. The agendas for Jesus are many, but none of them affect him, for he will go to the festival when he chooses, to declare the message His Father's given him.

Application

In a secular world where mankind's wisdom and agenda rules, our young people must embrace the truth that God's mission is the biggest thing on the planet. The whispering, hatred, opposition and confusion may rule **7:12-13**, but the mission the Father gives the Son will be completed in his time and no one else's **7:6**. A popular phrase in today's culture is 'make sure you are on the right side of history'. This story shows that Jesus has a different timetable and different programme to a world that's rejected him. He calls people to choose, and so must we.

Study 12 – John 7:1-13

Read John 7:1-13

1. Which words can you think of that have changed their meaning?

2. How would you use the word 'evil'?

3. What kind of opposition is Jesus facing?

4. What do Jesus' brothers want him to do and why? *Read 7:2-5*

5. What does that show about their understanding of Jesus so far?

6. What relationship is there between what his brothers want and how Jesus uses the word 'evil'? *Read 7:6-9*

7. How are people seeking to control Jesus? *Read 7:10-13*

8. How is that similar to our day?

9. Why is it impossible for anyone to control Jesus?

Session 13 – John 7:14-53

Divided By The Postcode

The Link – Connecting The Jigsaw

The nature of Belief so far in John

Before we continue in today's story, it's worth looking back over the last seven chapters to see how the theme of genuine '*belief in Jesus*' is developed. How does believing in Jesus relate to the signs he performs and the words he says.

JOHN 1

The first chapter of John introduces us to a cluster of people who believe and follow Jesus. In each case, their belief is based upon the 'words' of Jesus **1:37, 43, 47-49**.

JOHN 2

Here we have two examples of belief. The first is based upon what the disciples see and taste **2:11**, and the second upon Jesus' works and words, and how scripture interprets them **2:20-23**.

JOHN 3

After the long discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus, the chapter finishes with the challenge to believe the words of the one the Father's sent **3:31-36**.

JOHN 4:1-42

The first story describes a whole town believing Jesus to be the saviour of the world. We have no sign or miracle, only his words **4:28-30, 39, 42**.

JOHN 4:43-54

Here we have the second sign, where Jesus heals the official's son. As far as Jesus is concerned, the people are following him for the wrong reasons. They desperately want to see and experience another miracle **4:48**. The father in the story is different, for he takes Jesus at his word, without needing any visible evidence **4:50-53**. The result is the same as the first story: everyone believing **4:54**.

JOHN 5

The third sign concerns Jesus healing the lame man. The purpose of the sign is to lead people to believe the 'words of Jesus', so they have eternal life **5:24**.

JOHN 6

The feeding of the five thousand is the fourth sign and comes with another warning from Jesus. If the crowds are following him only to have their stomachs filled, then they've misunderstood the reason the Father's sent him **6:26-27**.

JOHN 7

The brothers want Jesus to seek fame and fortune, and the path to fulfilling that is more miracles **7:4**. This attitude is the mark of unbelief, for they've refused to listen to the words of Jesus concerning the signs **7:6-9**.

Wonders Cemented To Words

The purpose of the signs and miracles is to give people evidence so they believe Jesus to be the Son of God, the Messiah **20:30-31**. *"The miracles are 'signs' revealing who Jesus was and what he had come into the world to do". (R.V.G Tasker)*. Tragically, the people are consistently taken up with the miracles, whilst showing no interest in what he's come to do, or who he claims to be.

The Truth – The Seat Belt Test

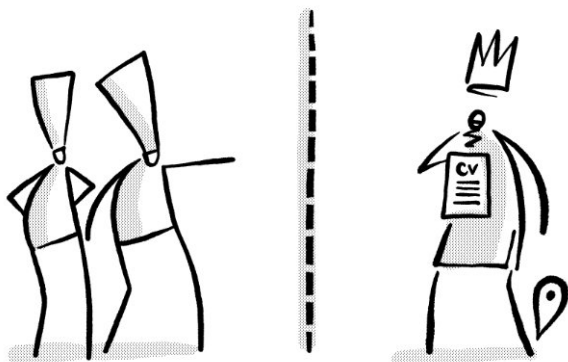
- True belief is to accept that Jesus' postcode is from heaven.
- Believing leads to obeying

The Message – The Meat Of The Passage

Introduction

Throughout the gospel, Jesus claims heaven as his postcode. It's this claim that most upsets his opponents and causes them to hate him. *The table below reveals how this theme started in John 5 and follows right through to John 10.*

Txt	Divided By The Postcode
5:16-18	When Jesus says the Father is always at work in him, they try and kill him
5:23-24	His words have eternal weight for he's sent from the Father
5:43	He comes in the Father's name
6:37-43	When Jesus says the Father's sent him, the people grumble
6:44	You can only come to the Father though the one the Father sent
7:16-20	When Jesus claims his teaching is from the Father, they try and kill him
7:28-31	When Jesus claims his authority comes from his postcode, the people try and seize him, and the Pharisees try and arrest him
8:27-30	The Pharisees misunderstand what Jesus is saying about his Father
8:51-59	Jesus' relationship to the Father is the dominant theme of chapter 8. Here it reaches its climax as the people seek to stone him
10:14-21	When Jesus teaches about his relationship to the Father, the crowd is divided. Some claim he's demon possessed and raving mad, while others believe
10:29-33	When Jesus says he's one with the Father, the Jews try and stone him
10:37-39	When Jesus says his works are the same as the Father, they try and seize him



Postcode Wars – 7:14-24

We already know that the religious leaders are out to kill Jesus **7:1**. The atmosphere that awaits him in Jerusalem will be full of aggression, spiteful hatred, and confusion. Yet the aggression and spiteful hatred will not stop him from preaching his Father's message **5:23-24**.

The first response to Jesus' teaching seems to be positive, as the crowds marvel at his teaching **7:14**. His brothers encouraged him to revel in mankind's praise **7:4**, but he chooses instead to shine the light of God into the dark hearts of those present **1:9-11**.

In response, Jesus draws people's attention to his postcode **7:16**. If they choose to obey what he says, they will quickly realise his postcode claim is true **7:17**, and the Father's glory his aim **7:18**. *"The Jews challenge the ability of Jesus to teach; Jesus challenges the ability of the Jews to hear."* (E.W. Klink). Up to now, most of the Jews have rejected what the miracles and signs pointed to. To wake them up, Jesus throws in a provocative statement about Moses, the law, and their desire to murder him **7:19**.

The provocative statements open the lid to what people really think, as they call him a demon, and then deny the obvious spiteful hatred **7:20**. The response of Jesus is masterful, as he draws their attention back to the healing of the lame man in **John 5**. *"What was the purpose of the law, he asks. Was it to stop people doing things, or to enable people to do and be what God meant them to do and be? How can something which enhances human life and brings dignity and hope to someone who hadn't got much of either be against the good purposes of God and his good law?"* T. Wright.

They might claim to be the followers of Moses, but if they reject Jesus' postcode, they clearly aren't **7:24**.

Application

People will often accept Jesus as a good teacher but run a mile from the postcode challenge. As we teach this passage, we need to help our young people learn how to ask 'Jesus-like questions'. By doing so, they will help their friends navigate where they are, and where they need to be concerning Jesus.

"You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to".
C. S. Lewis.

Postcode Aggression - 7:25-36

The response from the people is instant and clear, as they deny He's been sent from the Father, and then focus on the failings of the authorities to get him in hand **7:25-27**.

So, how will Jesus answer them?

The answer Jesus gives increases the temperature considerably, as he doubles down on His postcode claim. If they carry on rejecting His claim to be sent by the Father, they've no chance of understanding God's character **7:28-29**. *"It is not just that they do not know God but that without Jesus they cannot know God."* E.W. Klink

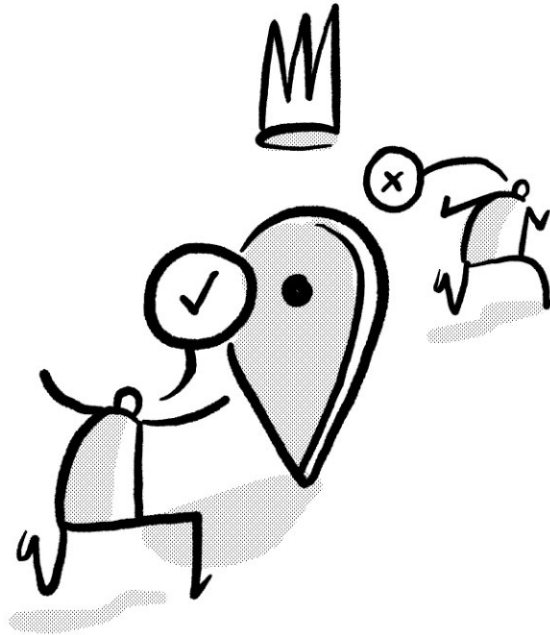
The words quickly draw out the aggression and confusion people feel towards Jesus. Some want to seize him, others are impressed with his miracles, while the Pharisees want him to be arrested quickly **7:30-32**. All the angst has no room for manoeuvre, for Jesus is sovereign and remains in control **7:30**.

Application

In a multi-faith society, we can be conned into thinking our young people live in unfamiliar days. The claim that Jesus makes is offensive to every generation and culture, for it highlights people's ignorance and rebellion against God's truth. The only way people can understand God's nature and salvation is through Jesus. If people reject him, they will always stay in darkness concerning who God is.

"But the Christian message insists that people must learn afresh who God is, what the world is, and who we are, by looking at Jesus."
T. Wright





Postcode Division - 7:37-44

Jesus chooses to preach when the festival reaches its climax. As the Priests pray for rain, and pour water around the Temple altar, so Jesus preaches *Isaiah 55:1*. His message is a bold one, that he alone can quench their spiritual thirst.

It's only when people choose to believe that Jesus' postcode is from heaven that they find true meaning, just as God promised **7:37-39**. The Holy Spirit, as we will see in chapters **16-17**, delights to reveal the glory of Christ, so his followers understand the forgiveness that comes through the cross.

The message Jesus gives forces people to make a decision about his postcode. Some say he's a prophet or Messiah, while others refuse to believe **7:40-42**. The people are divided, some wanting to seize him, but scared to do so **7:43**.

Application

When we are faithful to Jesus, we must expect division. We must train our young people to expect the same response when they evangelise their friends.

The second application concerns the claim of Jesus to quench our thirst. We must never promise something to our young people that Jesus never guaranteed. He's not promising his followers that they will never be lonely, dejected or sorrowful. Instead, he's claiming to be the only one who can spiritually help them when they feel lonely, dejected and sorrowful. Through

the cross we gain forgiveness and a restored relationship with God. Through the resurrection we're given an eternal hope, where loneliness, dejection and sorrow will be a thing of the past, for Christ rules supreme.

The Postcode Belief? - 7:45-52

The story finishes with a cameo of what genuine belief in Jesus looks like. The Pharisees are spitting blood because of the actions of the guards **7:45**. The guards were sent to arrest Jesus but come back believing his 'words' **7:46**. They haven't seen one miracle, yet believe what Jesus says, unlike the majority of people in *John 7*.

The retort from the Pharisees is that the guards are an ignorant mob who know nothing of God's law. The problem with that approach is Nicodemus, the Pharisee, is beginning to believe Jesus' words **7:50-52**.

Application

Genuine belief has nothing to do with academic intelligence or cultural background. Instead, it's merely looking at the signs and believing what Jesus says about them. We have to decide for ourselves whether or not his postcode is from heaven.

Study 13 – John 7:14-53

1. When you think of someone believing in Jesus, what thoughts come into your mind?

6. **Read 7:37-44**

What are some of the false promises our world makes today?

2. **Read 7:14-24**

How does Jesus respond when people marvel at his teaching? **Read 7:16-19**

7. What does Jesus promise? **Read 7:37-39**

8.

3. What is so provocative about Jesus' response? **Read 7:19**

9. **Read 7:45-52**

What is the faith of the guards and Nicodemus built upon?

4. **Read 7:25-36**

How does Jesus' answer raise the temperature? **Read 7:28-29**

10. Think back to question 1: has your answer changed in any way after today's small group?

5. How does this quote help in understanding what Jesus is saying?

"But the Christian message insists that people must learn afresh who God is, what the world is, and who we are, by looking at Jesus." T. Wright

Session 14 – John 7:53-8:11

Full Of Grace And Truth

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

A great summing up of Jesus' CV is found in *John 1:14*. As we read the gospel, we should constantly ask ourselves: "how is Jesus reflecting God's grace and truth?" *The table below shows some examples.*

Txt	Full of Grace and Truth
2:16-17	Jesus speaks truth to the moneychangers demanding they get out of his Father's house. They respond by demanding a sign from him.
3:12-14	Nicodemus comes in response to Jesus clearing the temple, to school Jesus about his actions. Jesus responds by sharing His message of grace and truth.
4:13-18, 26-30	The Samaritan woman comes broken, and finds a saviour full of grace and truth.
4:50-54	The official comes to Jesus downcast but goes away trusting the gracious words of Jesus.
5:8-9	Jesus shows his grace in healing the lame man.
5:14-15	He speaks truth in calling him to repentance.
6:29	Jesus speaks truth in declaring that he alone can do the works of God.
6:30	The people respond by demanding a sign.
7:37	Jesus calls people to drink from him.
7:44	They respond by wanting to seize him.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Nothing will stop Jesus revealing grace and truth

Self-righteous haters won't, and neither will vulnerable adulterers

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

Introduction

The attitude which desires Jesus' murder *7:1*, still dominates. The aim of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, is to hound Jesus into a corner, leaving him two options. Keep the law, and approve of her stoning. Refuse to stone her, and be accused of breaking it.

Application

The issue of justice is vitally important to young people today. This story will leave them with questions like this:

Will Jesus speak truth to power?

How will Jesus respond to their understanding of the law?

How will Jesus relate to the vulnerable woman?

These questions are right and real, and will help us understand the story's purpose.

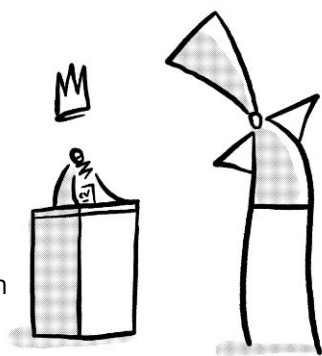
The Trial - 8:1-6

The scene is set for another confrontation between Jesus and his enemies. In an instant, the scene changes from Jesus' teaching in the temple to a courtroom scene, where his opponents thrust him in the dock. The woman is merely the pawn in the power game the Pharisees are playing. She's got no name; instead, the woman is defined only by her actions.

The person in the dock seems to be Jesus, as the opponents base their argument upon the law. Their desire is to leave Jesus as exposed as the naked woman. So how will Jesus respond to this aggressive and spiteful behaviour?

Application

This scene is ugly, as the enemies seek to shame the woman and humiliate Jesus. The secular world enjoys spinning the lie that the Bible has zero to say about real life. But let's stop and ponder how Jesus uses God's truth to expose hypocrisy and give hope to the vulnerable.



in two ways: first he speaks and then he writes some more. Surprisingly, Jesus gives them permission to throw stones at the naked woman. He just gives them one simple challenge, *"you must be without sin yourself"*.

Skilfully, Jesus keeps the argument based 100% on the law.

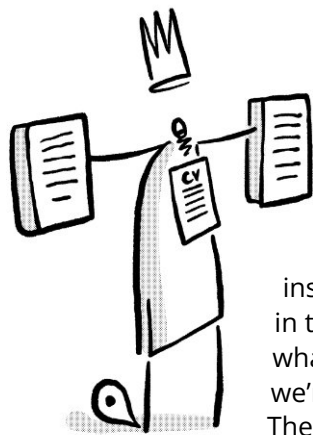
"In light of the allusion to the finger/writing of the Ten Commandments by God, the Old Testament, the symbolic significance of the action of Jesus, then, is that he himself is the author of the law, and his finger is the very 'finger of God'. When the scribes and Pharisees challenge Jesus with the legality of the law of God, they are speaking directly to its author."
E.W. Klink

The opponents came dragging a woman whose only identity was her sin. They arrived thinking they could expose Jesus, leaving him justifiably condemned. Yet the one who wrote the law now leaves them exposed and condemned.

"His words, instead of being a sentence upon the woman, are like a sword driven deep into the hearts of the hypocritical accusers."
R.G.V. Tasker

The Law - Ex 8:19

The Lord Jesus is very happy for the argument to be based upon a right understanding of God's Law. At first, Jesus remains completely silent, choosing instead to write with his finger in the sand **8:6**. We don't know what he was writing, but I think we're meant to look for clues. The only time God's finger is mentioned in scripture regards judgment and the law of God.



Ex 8:19 – It was the 'finger of God' that brought the plagues to judge Pharaoh

Ex 31:18 – It was the 'finger of God' that wrote the Ten Commandments

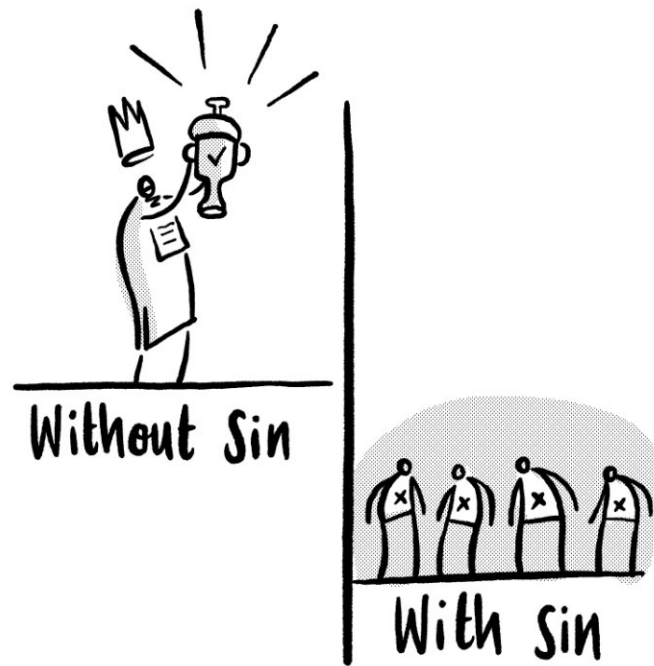
Their first response to Jesus' writing in the sand is to throw questions at him **8:6-7**. He responds

Application

The atmosphere in the temple must have been electric as Jesus spoke truth to power. Teaching our young people, we must be careful to help them stay as close to the words of Jesus as possible. We must only use his words, and not our own when speaking truth to power, therefore exposing sin accurately. The ability to act in a self-righteous way is ingrained within every one of us, young or old.

The Sentence

Those who came as both judge and jury now slowly leave, the oldest first **8:9**. For a second time he stands, this time to speak to the woman.



Words of Grace - 8:10-11

The very fact that Jesus is there alone with the woman reveals a deep and wonderful truth. *"Jesus is described as 'alone' to emphasise the fact that only he met his own qualifications; only he was without sin"* **E.W. Klink**. He's the only one present 'without sin' yet instead of throwing stones, he chooses to expose the crowd's hypocrisy **8:10**. Once that truth is firmly in place, the woman has the freedom to speak: "no one sir" **8:11**.

We already know that Jesus is the only judge who ultimately matters **John 5:22**. Her sense of relief and joy must have been unbelievable when she heard the beautiful words "then neither do I condemn you".

Words of Truth - 8:10-11

Yet grace never comes without truth, for forgiveness never comes without repentance, which is why Jesus calls the woman to "leave her life of sin".

Application

This story begins to answer the questions young people ask. How did Jesus speak truth to power and protect the vulnerable. Here we see Jesus refusing to flinch from the challenge of his spiteful opponents. His words of truth and grace expose hypocrisy and offer forgiveness to those broken by their own sin, or others towards them.

Study 14 – John 7:53-8:11

1. What do you think is driving the actions of the Pharisees and teachers of the law?
2. For clues as to why Jesus wrote in the sand and what he might have written, look up *Exodus 8:19*, and *Ex 31:8*
3. What is surprising about what Jesus says in 8:7?
4. Why do you think the people walked away, and the oldest first?
5. What's special about Jesus being the only one left?
6. How is it linked to 8:7?
7. How does 8:11 reveal the uniqueness of Jesus, and the message he's come to bring?
8. How does this story challenge you?
9. ...Your approach to the vulnerable?
10. ...Your attitude to hypocrisy, in others and yourself?
11. ...Jesus?

Session 15 – John 8:12-30

Public Warning / I Am Not Alone

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

We have seen that Jesus has been preaching his CV and Postcode throughout John. *The table below shows how John 1:1-14 dominates all he says today.*

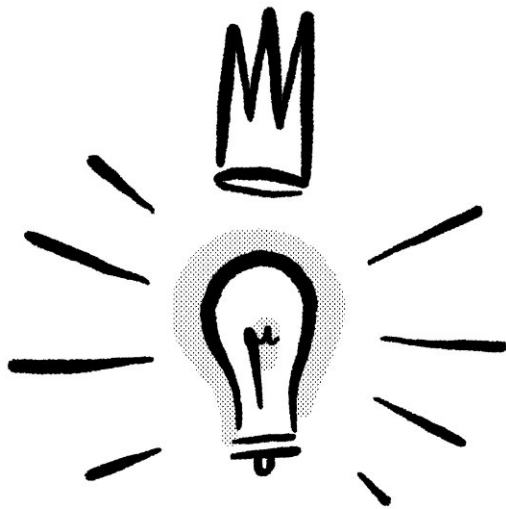
Txt	1:1-18 - Jesus' CV and postcode	Txt	8:13-59 - Jesus' CV and postcode
1:1-2	God & eternal	8:14 8:21 8:23 8:39-41 8:56	Heaven is his postcode He will return to heaven I am from above, you are from below You are of this world, I am from above Abraham listened to Jesus Abraham rejoiced at Jesus' mission to earth
1:4	He is the indestructible life	8:34	Rejection of him is to stay a slave to sin
1:5	He is the indestructible light	8:12	The light of the world
1:10-11	His own people reject the light he brings	8:19 8:21, 23 8:34 8:39 8:40-41 8:48 8:59	They choose not to know him, therefore don't know the father Their rejection of him means they will die in their sins Rejection of him is to stay a slave to sin Abraham listened to Jesus but they don't Instead, they try and kill him They call him a Samaritan and a demon They seek to stone him
1:12-13	Makes people children of God	8:30	Many believe in him
1:14	Sent from the Father	8:14 8:16-18 8:19 8:26 8:26, 29 8:42 8:42 8:43-47 8:49 8:54	Heaven is his postcode Sent by the Father Rejection of Jesus proves that God is not their Father He speaks only what the Father says God sent me The proof that God is your Father is that you love me God sent me Your refusal to listen to me shows your father is the devil To honour Jesus is to honour the Father The Father glorifies the Son
1:14, 17	Full of grace and truth	8:26, 28 8:29 8:31-32 8:35 8:45 8:46 8:54 8:55	Speaks only what the father says and taught him Always pleases the Father His teaching is the truth, which sets you free Only His truth will set you free Jesus tells God's truth Jesus challenges his enemies to show him his sin The Father glorifies the Son To reject His truth is to be a liar

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

The only way out of spiritual darkness and death is to come into the light that Jesus brings.

The Message - The Meat of the Passage

If this chapter was put into a documentary or film, it would come with a warning: 'this contains strong and offensive language'. We will cover the argument / debate over two sessions: round one looking at **8:13-30** and round two looking at **8:14-59**.



8:13-20: Round 1

The Light - 8:12

Again, we see Jesus on the front foot declaring to the crowds "I am the light of the world". The statement by itself is bold enough, but Jesus wants those present to understand the implication of what he's saying. He's not claiming to be one religious leader among many who bring spiritual light to whoever chooses to live within its influence. His claim is absolute, for he is **the** light. When a person ignores or rejects him, they are choosing to remain in spiritual darkness. He's not a light, or even the best light available, but the only light who leads you to God.

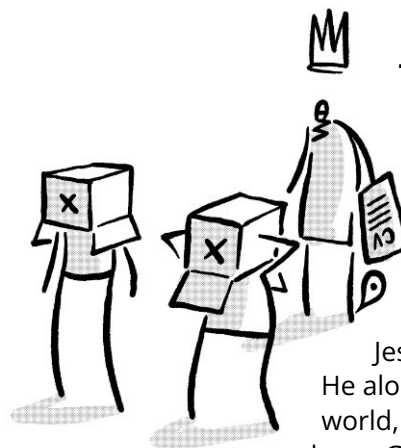
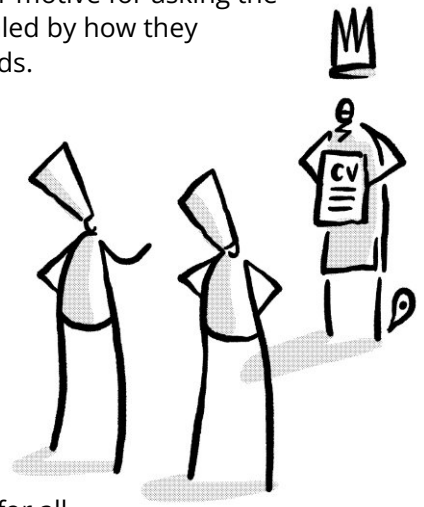
Application

This chapter reveals just how radical and deeply offensive people find Jesus' claim. The culture our young people are growing up in will be different, but the response will be the same. We know from **3:19-21** that when the light of Christ shines, people hate their darkness being exposed.

The Witness - 8:13-20

The response from the Pharisees is both right, understandable, and in accordance with the law **Dt 17:6, 19:5**. Their motive for asking the question will be revealed by how they respond to Jesus' words.

The key phrase Jesus uses is "**I am not alone**". If he made the claim by himself, then they would be justified in opposing him, shutting him up, and getting rid of him for good. But the witness Jesus calls is His Father who has stood by his side for all eternity and has now sent him **8:16**. Once again, Jesus chooses to put his postcode and CV at the centre of his argument. His authority to make such a claim derives from his postcode and the one who has sent him **8:18**.



The Challenge

The question from the Pharisees, "who is your father" moves the discussion to exactly where Jesus wants it to be.

He alone is the light of the world, so if you want to know God you must come

to his light. So far, the Pharisees have purposely resisted his light, thus fulfilling the CV **1:10-11**. *"The people called to bring God's light to the world were instead sharing in the darkness."* **T. Wright**. If they choose to remain there, they will never understand who God is **8:19**.

Application

As we teach our young people to live for Christ, it's vital that we train them to argue like Jesus. Every argument and debate in John's gospel seem to be focused upon the relationship Jesus has with his Father. If you reject what he's saying about his CV and the relationship with his Father, then there are huge consequences. So, what are those consequences?

8:21-30: Round 2

Dead - 8:21-22

The huge consequence of rejecting the light Jesus brings leaves the people *'dead in their sins'* 8:21. The purpose of the light is always to achieve two things: to reveal people's darkness so as to then bring them into the light of God's forgiveness. All the time they choose to remain in darkness, they will never be able to follow him to glory 8:22.

"He and his Father are giving evidence that he is the Messiah; if this is so, he is bringing the light that they cannot escape." T. Wright

Different - 8:23-26

Their first step towards the light is for the people to recognise that their postcode is different from Jesus', for he's from heaven 1:14, and they're from this world 8:23. A refusal to acknowledge this difference is to remain in sin and unbelief. *"The Jews, moreover, are as ignorant of the destination of Jesus as they are of his origin." R.V. Tasker*

Lifted Up - 8:28-29

The final question asked gives Jesus the opportunity to proclaim the cross. Here, Jesus uses the same sermon notes he used when meeting Nicodemus for his 1-2-1. The way Jesus explained his future death to Nicodemus as being 'lifted up' 3:14, he repeats here 8:28. When that happens, three things will be revealed to be true:

8:28 = All the words of Jesus are owned by the Father

8:29 = The cross proves the Son was never alone in all the claims he made

8:29 = All the works of Jesus please the Father

"While the world intends the cross to be the world's final word against Jesus, in reality it will be God's final word about Jesus, the coronation of Jesus as the divine authority and judge". E.W. Klink

Application

Here in these few verses, we have the very heart of the gospel, preached from the lips of Jesus. His light reveals both the sinfulness of mankind 8:24, 34, and its only hope 8:28. This is the message we take to our young people, and the one we desire they take to their friends.

"The cross is the throne from which He reigns, and His continued influence after His resurrection." R.V.G. Tasker

Red Flag - The Nature of Faith

In session twelve, we thought about how John explores the nature of true belief. When we read that 'many believed' 8:30, we are meant to ask, is it genuine or bogus? Is it genuine like the Samaritans 4:42, and royal official 4:48-50, or like the crowd who followed just to have their stomachs filled? 6:26 The next session will answer that question.

Study 15 – John 8:12-30

Read John 8:12-30

1. Why is darkness dangerous and light good?
2. The Old Testament law always required two witnesses *Dt 17:6, 19:5*, which is the point the Pharisees make. According to Jesus, who are the two witnesses to prove he is the light of the world?
3. Why is this claim so radical then and now?
4. According to Jesus, what are some of the consequences if we refuse to acknowledge him as the light of the world. *Look up 8:21-26*
5. What does Jesus mean by the phrase 'being lifted up'? *Look up John 3:14, 8:28.*
6. What will the cross prove to all people? *Look up 8:28-29.*

Read John 8:12-30

3. Why is this claim so radical then and now?
6. What will the cross prove to all people? *Look up 8:28-29.*

Session 16 – John 8:31-59

Sin Not Seed

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Every story, sign, and conversation has been pointing to the main theme of the gospel: the nature of true belief **20:31**.

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

Introduction

We left the last session with the statement 'many believed in him'. We know from chapters 1-7 that people have followed Jesus for wrong reasons and confused motives **6:26**. In the fiery conversation that follows, Jesus will shine definitive light on what it means to follow him. I will seek to follow the conversation, looking at the questions asked, and answers given.

Truth and Freedom - 8:31-32

The first step towards a genuine belief is to trust in Jesus' teaching. When Jesus talks about his teaching, he means all the truth that's contained within his CV **1:1-18**. True belief is only arrived at when someone trusts the teaching that Jesus is the Son of God **20:31**. Only when that happens is someone set free to enjoy a living relationship with God. As we listen to this fiery conversation, we're meant to ask the question, 'have the people Jesus is speaking to, believed his teaching'?

Application

Here, Jesus starts the conversation by unashamedly putting himself at the heart of the debate. The heated dispute gives us another opportunity to teach our young people how to reach their friends. When talking about their faith they must always seek to put Jesus and his teaching at the centre of all they say.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Jesus shines definitive light on what it looks like to believe in him.

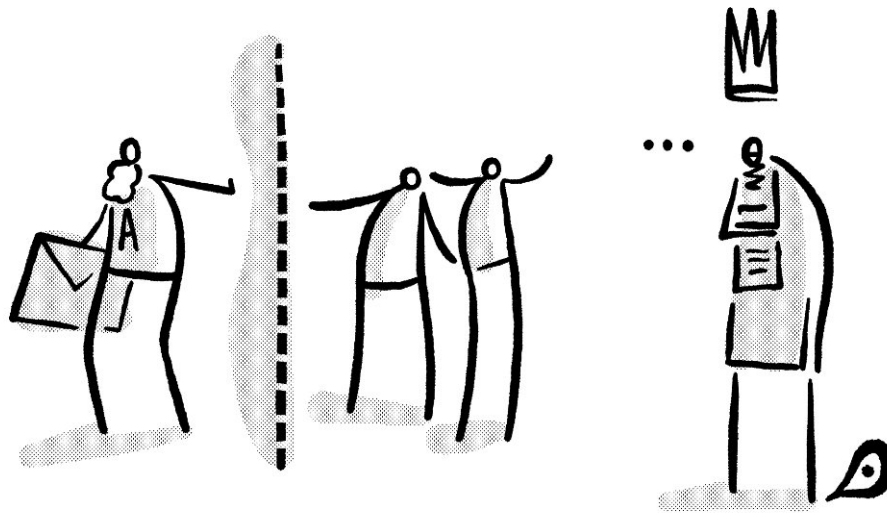


Sin Not Seed - 8:33-38

Their instant response is a demand for Jesus to recognise their spiritual heritage, 'we are Abraham's children'. The thought of them being slaves is a total denial of their privileged history. The temperature begins to rise, so how will Jesus answer their first passionate response?

The answer Jesus gives shifts the focus from their origin 'seed' (children of Abraham), to 'sin' (what their nature is) **8:34**. It's because of their sin that they are presently outside a relationship with God **8:35**. Their original 'seed' makes no difference to their sinful nature, which enslaves them **8:36**. The proof of their enslavement is their hatred and rejection of Jesus. The 'word' or what Jesus called 'my teaching' **8:31**, has no room in their lives **8:37**. He finishes this part of the debate with a line that makes them even more mad, for he calls into question whether Abraham really is their spiritual Father **8:38**.

"Jesus demands his opponents define 'freedom' not only by means of their relationship to God but also by means of their relationship to sin." E.W. Klink



Application

If a person's privileged upbringing doesn't lead them to a belief in Jesus' teaching, then it's a curse and not a blessing. Many of our young people will come from similar backgrounds to those Jesus spoke to. With the privilege of a Christian home, they may think it guarantees them a pass into a relationship with God. We must point them to Jesus' words showing sin always triumphing seed.

8:39-41

Having declared 'we are not slaves' they now respond by pronouncing 'Abraham as their Father' 8:39. Jesus shines the light upon their sinful natures in two ways. If Abraham really was your

Father, then you would not be trying to kill me. Secondly, if Abraham was your Father, you would listen to me, just like Abraham listened to God 8:40. Again, Jesus finishes with something that increases their understanding of true belief, but also their anger 8:41.

8:41-47

The skilful words Jesus uses get right under their skin as they cry, "We are not illegitimate children. The only Father we have is God himself." 8:41.

The response He gives is utterly stunning, revealing that every child reflects the father they belong to.

Txt	When God Is Your Father	Txt	Satan Is Your Father
		8:42	You do not love me
		8:43	You refuse to listen to Jesus
		8:44	The devil is your Father
		8:44	So you reflect his nature
		8:44	He murders; you want to
		8:44	He's a liar and so are you
8:45	You believe the truth Jesus tells you	8:45	You refuse to believe my truth
8:46	You believe that Jesus is sinless	8:46	They reject the sinless one
8:47	Those who belong to God listen to what he says	8:47	Refuse to listen to what God says

Another really important truth Jesus draws their attention to is his sinlessness. This is the second time in the chapter the author wants us to see this vital truth 8:7, 9, 45.

Application

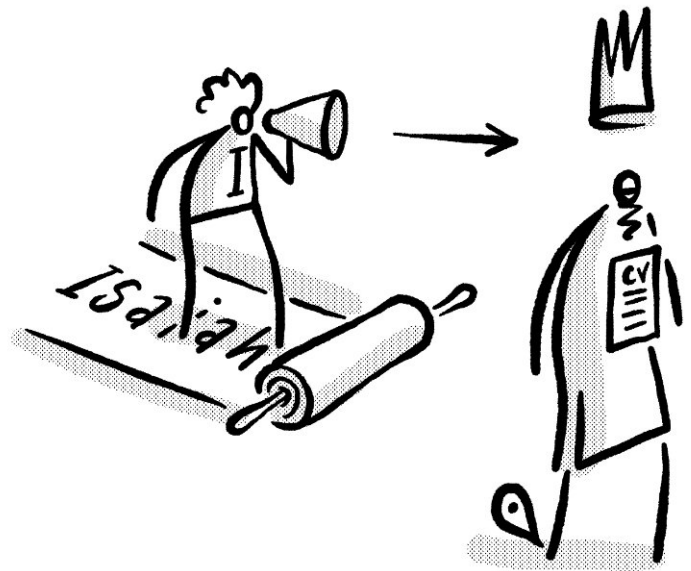
Everything Jesus says in these verses is relational, as they are refusing to love, listen and accept He's been sent from the Father. That being the case, their character reflects the father they belong to. When a person rejects the essence of God's truth **1:14,8**, they remain captive to the one they belong to **8:32, 40**.

It might be worth posing the young people a challenge. *"If you think you're not a slave to sin, just try for a day or a week not to be selfish."*

Life Or Death - 8:48-59

The crowd's response to Jesus exposes exactly where their hearts are, as they spit out a torrent of racial and spiritual slurs against Jesus **8:48**. His response is skilfully pointed, as he draws the argument back to the day Abraham looked forward to **8:56**.

"My day' refers to the present moment, the moment when the Word became flesh. Abraham knew that he was not himself the fulfilment of the saving will of God, not the yardstick for judging the greatness of divine revelation; he looked forward to the fulfilment in the Messiah and welcomed the day when he himself would be judged by one greater than himself." E.W. Klink



Txt	The Day, Abraham looked forward to
8:51	When people enjoy the eternal life Jesus has secured
8:50, 54	The day the Father glorifies the Son
8:53	When people acknowledge Jesus as greater than Abraham
8:55	When all people see Jesus as the truth
8:58	When all people acknowledge Jesus as the great I am

Application

This is the nature of genuine belief, which seems not to be lacking in those who said they believed **8:31**. For those who genuinely believe, it's eternal life, but for those who pick up stones, it's eternal death **8:51, 59**.

Once again, Jesus' teaching has caused a sharp division. We must pray that the young people see the beauty of the light Jesus shines and desire to step into it.

Study 16 – John 8:31-59

1. When you think of freedom, what thoughts come into your mind?

5. Why are the people so angry with Jesus?

Read John 8:31-32

2. What does Jesus say is the first essential step to believing in him?

Read John 8:39-47

6. According to Jesus, what is the evidence that Abraham is not their Father?

Read John 8:33-38

3. What are the Jews refusing to accept about themselves?

Read John 8:41-47

7. According to Jesus, what did Abraham look forward to?

4. How does Jesus answer them?

8. How do the people respond to what Jesus says?

Session 17 – John 9

Isn't It Blindingly Obvious?

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The story's focus is the same as the previous chapter: the claim that Jesus is the light of the world **8:12, 9:5**. The more clearly Jesus revealed His light, the more spiteful and irrational their hatred of him became. This was shown in three ways in the previous chapter.

FREE – 8:31-38

- Every human being is a slave to sin
- Freedom from sin only comes through obeying the words of the one the Father's sent
- People reject his words and refuse to come into the light

FAMILY – 8:39-47

- A person's spiritual heritage (seed) cannot save them from being a slave to sin
- Your character and behaviour are dictated by the spiritual Father you belong to
- Only through Jesus can you be adopted into God's family

- People reject his words and refuse to come into the light

FOREVER – 8:48-58

- Obeying the words of Jesus leads to eternal life.
- People reject his words, his light, and then seek to stone him

Today's chapter illustrates the same truths through the story of a blind man being healed. The story neatly fits into four parts, each following the same pattern.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

- Even though the light of Jesus is blindingly obvious, it still can be rejected.
- A true believer obeys the word of Jesus and worships the person of Jesus.

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

The Neighbours - Isn't It Blindingly Obvious? - 9:1-12

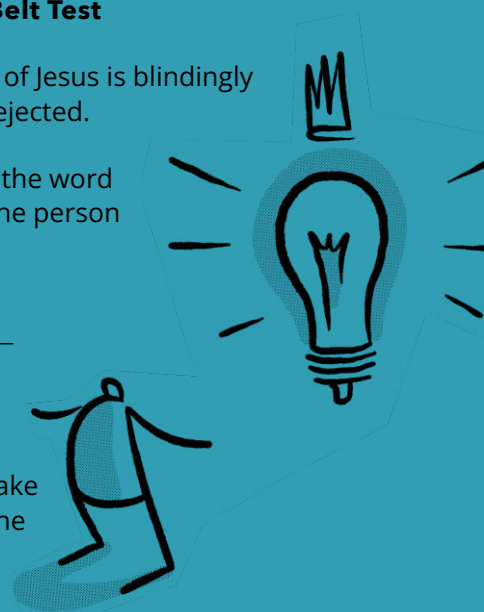
The Light Shines - 9:1-7

Whatever the situation, Jesus' presence has made a radical difference, which is basically the answer he gives to the disciples' question concerning the beggar's blindness. The blindness isn't down to an individual's sin, but watch me, and I will make a radical difference **9:1-4**.

For a second time, Jesus proclaims that He's *'the light of the world'*. This claim and miracle set the agenda for all that follows, as Jesus moves off the scene, to reappear at the end **9:35-41**.

Are You In or Out? - 9:8-12

The first people who make a decision concerning the light Jesus has brought to the beggar's eyes are his neighbours. We should have sympathy for the confusion the miracle brings to the neighbours, for miracles don't happen **9:8-9**. A man they've seen begging in the same place all their lives, vulnerable and helpless, is now walking around just like everyone else. The sympathy is deserved, until the man speaks, and then the confusion disappears *'But he himself insisted, "I am the man."* **9:9**. Now the neighbours have a choice, to accept the light Jesus brings, or irrationally reject it. Will they step into the light, or choose to remain in the darkness?



Application

The secular culture our young people are growing up in seeks to constrain them to think that Christianity is a jump into the dark. It's about believing things you wished were true, when really, deep down, you know they're not. The stories in John help us move from a place of darkness to light, through hearing eyewitness accounts of what really happened **20:30-31**.



The Parents - Isn't It Blindingly Obvious? - 9:13-23

The Light Shines - 9:13-16

The spotlight moves from the neighbours to the only people who knew the beggar more intimately than them, his parents. As we progress in the story, we must understand that the Pharisees' influence and power dominates every situation. The consequences for anyone who acknowledges Jesus to be the Messiah are massive, which is why the neighbours bring the beggar to the Pharisees **9:13**.

Most of the time, when the Pharisees raise the issue of the Sabbath there's something deeper going on. We know from the last three chapters that they desperately want to

get rid of Jesus **7:1**, which motivates their return to the topic of the Sabbath **9:16**. The response of some of the crowd is to ask, *'how can a sinful person do miracles?* Once again, Jesus divides the crowd by his words and actions **9:16**.

Are You In or Out? - 9:17-23

The Pharisees switch their questions to the beggar, who confidently proclaims Jesus a prophet **9:17**. With half the crowd against them, and the beggar standing before them, they fire their next questions at the beggar's mum and dad. Every question that's asked, the parents give back a true answer, leaving the Pharisees

exposed **9:19-20**. The fear of being thrown out of the temple causes the parents to thrust their son into the Pharisees' firing line **9:18-23**.

Application

The truth of what's really happened dominates this part of the story. Half the crowd know what's true, as do his parents. Yet, fear drives the parents' actions. Later on, we'll have the cost of following Jesus clearly explained, but for now we get a marker of what's to come. Acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah will divide people and often lead to rejection. This is key for our young people to recognise and understand.

The Religious Leaders - Isn't It Blindingly Obvious? - 9:24-34

The Light Shines - 9:24-29

The questions from the Pharisees are now directed only at the beggar, although the beggar refuses to back down and fires a few back. Their first question is accompanied with a plea to honour God, as they call on the beggar to admit that Jesus is a sinner **9:24**. The beggar's answer is brilliantly blunt, as he first states what he and everyone else knows is blindingly obvious **9:25**.

The Pharisees repeat the same question, just dressed up slightly differently. This time the beggar calls them out for not listening, and then enquires if they want to be Jesus' disciples **9:27**.

The Pharisees spit out their response with their usual ploy of standing behind Moses and refusing to admit that Jesus is sent from heaven **9:28-29**. The beggar's response focuses once again upon the evidence. The beggar's theology is that God doesn't listen to sinners, yet he's clearly listening and working through Jesus **9:30-33**.

Are You In or Out? - 9:34

The response of the Pharisees is full of irrational, spiteful aggression. They cannot argue with the evidence that the beggar presents, so they revert to verbally abusing him and then chucking him out of the temple. The light has shone, and they have quickly run as fast as they could back into the darkness **3:19-20**.

Application

It's really important for our young people to understand that when people reject Jesus, it's often irrational, like the Pharisees in today's story. Clearly, evidence is not the problem, for the blind man is standing right before them. The problem is their rebellious hearts, which refuse point blank to come into the light that Jesus has brought.

"By being content with the law that came by Moses and by shutting their eyes to the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, the Pharisees are being plunged into the darkness of unbelief as surely as the once-blind beggar is walking more and more towards the illumination of faith." R.V.G. Tasker

The Blind Man - Isn't It Blindingly Obvious? - 9:35-41

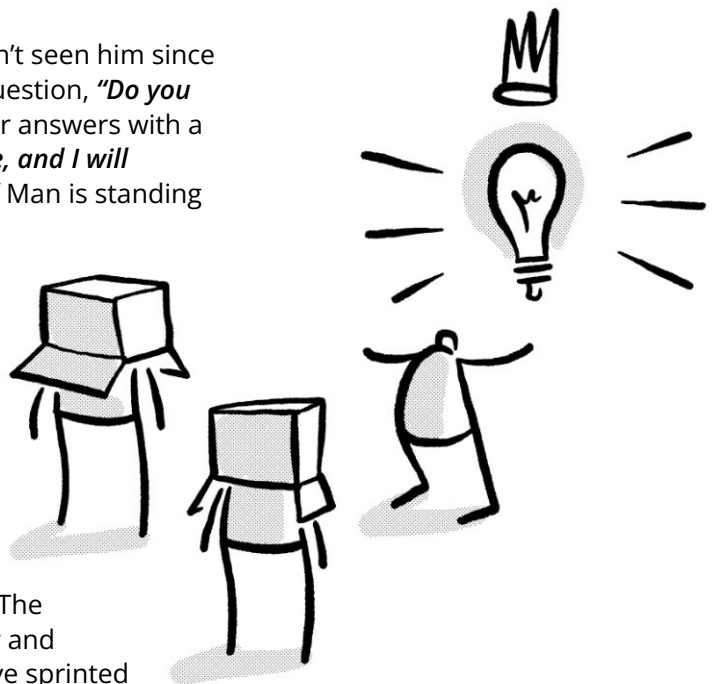
The Light Shines - 9:35-36

Suddenly, Jesus is back on the scene, as we haven't seen him since **9:7**. Having found the beggar, he asks him one question, *"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"* **9:35**. Again, the beggar answers with a refreshing bluntness, *"Who is he? Please show me, and I will believe"* **9:36**. To the beggar's surprise, the Son of Man is standing right before him **9:37**.

Are You In or Out? - 9:38-41

The response of the beggar is a model of genuine belief. He's experienced Jesus changing him, and now the Son of Man stands before him. That being the case, the only thing he can do is believe and worship **9:38**. The light Jesus has brought, he now desires to live within.

The opposite to genuine faith is also given to us. The light of Jesus has been shown with a clear beauty and brilliance, but they've not only rejected it, but have sprinted back to their rebellious darkness **9:39-41**.



"Not only are they wrong, but they have constructed a system within which they will never see that they are wrong. It is one thing to be genuinely mistaken, and to be open to the new evidence, new arguments, new insights. It is another to create a closed world, like a sealed room, into which no light, no fresh air, can come from the outside. They have turned away from the life-giving God and locked themselves into a way of thinking and living which systematically excluded him – and, with him, the prospect and possibility of rescue."

T. Wright

Application

Having observed so many negative examples of bogus belief, we finally have a genuine example of true belief. The beggar has experienced the reality of the power of Jesus changing him, and then boldly wants all people to know that, despite the obvious cost to him. He sees Jesus for who he truly is and therefore worships him.

Study 17 – John 9

Read 9:1-7

1. *What's the response?*

2. *What's the evidence?*

3. *What do you think?*

Read 9:24-34

7. *What's the response?*

8. *What's the evidence?*

9. *What do you think?*

Read 9:13-23

4. *What's the response?*

5. *What's the evidence?*

6. *What do you think?*

Read 9:35-41

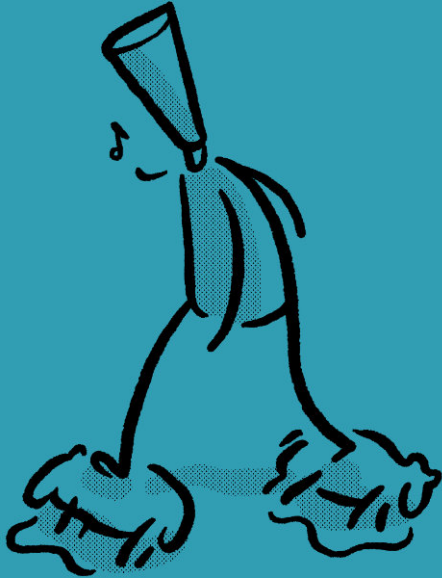
10. *What's the response?*

11. *What's the evidence?*

12. *What do you think?*

Session 18 – John 10:1-21

Jesus And The Selfish Shepherds



The Link -

Connecting The Jigsaw

To get to the heart of this passage, we have to spend more time understanding the sermon notes Jesus is using. As he prepares to speak to the Pharisees and the crowd, Jesus bases everything he says upon two things: Ezekiel's message to the selfish shepherds of Israel, and the story of the blind beggar in *John 9*.

Ezekiel and The Selfish Shepherds

The passage in Ezekiel 34 explains the toxic nature of Israel's leaders. They are completely taken up with self, and have no concern for their vulnerable people (the sheep). They are false shepherds and face God's wrath and anger.

THEIR CHARACTER

34:2 - They only take care of themselves

34:3 - They do not take care of their flock

34:7 - They never look for the lost sheep.

THEIR LEADERSHIP

34:4 - They have no care for the vulnerable

34:5-6 - Their selfish leadership leaves God's people scattered, alone, and utterly vulnerable.



GOD'S RESPONSE

34:7 - He calls His sheep to listen to His voice

34:8 - He acknowledged their vulnerability

34:9 - Their safety is cemented to listening to His word.

34:10 - He's against the selfish shepherds, and will bring them to justice

34:10 - He will remove the false shepherds

34:10, 12 - He will rescue his people

34:11-15 - He will search for them and lead them

34:16 - He will heal the injured and strengthen the weak

34:16 - He will destroy the selfish shepherds.

Jesus And The Selfish Shepherds

The author skilfully places the healing of the blind beggar next to Jesus' preaching of *Ezekiel 34*. The story in John 9 is a living example of how the Pharisees reflect *Ezekiel 34*. *The table below shows how Jesus reflects the character of God, and the Pharisees the selfish shepherds of Ezekiel 34.*

Text	The Good Shepherd	Txt	The Selfish Shepherds
9:25, 27, 33, 35-38 10:5, 8, 27	The beggar listens and follows the voice of Jesus His sheep listen to his voice	9:24-28, 30-33	The beggar runs from the Pharisees, and does not recognise their voice
9:24, 29, 40 10:11, 31, 39	Healing the blind beggar increases their hatred of Jesus. Yet he's prepared to lay down his life. The shepherd lays down his life for the sheep	9:16-17, 18-23, 34	The Pharisees have no concern for the beggar's welfare whatsoever
9:7, 35-38 10:10, 28	Jesus seeks the vulnerable beggar, bringing him physical and spiritual healing The shepherd gives spiritual life	9:34	The Pharisees are the liars, thieves and bringers of death
9:35-38 10:11-13	Jesus pursues the man The Shepherd pursues the sheep	9:34	The Pharisees abandon the man
9:16 10:19	Jesus' healing divides Jesus' teaching divides	9:16, 18, 24, 28-29, 40 10:31	The Pharisees reject Jesus The Pharisees seek to stone Jesus

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep

The selfish shepherds have no care for their people, leaving them utterly vulnerable

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

Introduction

Many things in life leave us vulnerable. When we feel vulnerable, our greatest need is a person who is both all-powerful and completely good. Today's passage exposes our vulnerability and the character of the Good Shepherd.

The Gate - 10:1-2

The callous treatment of the vulnerable beggar in the previous chapter revealed the attitude that the Pharisees possess. This chapter begins with Jesus using an illustration to reflect that attitude.

The claim Jesus makes is to be the gate, the only entrance to knowing and experiencing God 10:1. The claim is quickly followed by the clear implications that anyone who claims to offer an alternative to Jesus is a thief **10:1**.

Application

Our young people face huge pressure to remain silent concerning the implications of Jesus' claims. The fact that Jesus is 'the gate' cancels out any other option. Consistently through the gospel, Jesus follows His claims with the consequence. We must seek to teach our young people that claim and consequence always go together.

The Voice - 10:3-6

The illustration Jesus gives has people as sheep, himself as the shepherd, and the Pharisees as the thieves and robbers. Many of our young people may be familiar with these images, yet the reaction of those who first heard was confusion **10:6**, division, rejection **10:19**, and finally intense hatred **10:31, 39**. Why does Jesus' illustration generate such a violent response? **10:1-2** Having claimed to be 'the gate', Jesus now focuses upon how people enter that gate.

The only way a person enters the sheep pen is through listening to the voice of the shepherd.

10:3 – The sheep listen to his voice as he calls them by name

10:4 – The sheep follow the shepherd, for they know his voice

10:5 – The sheep reject the voice of the stranger, for they do not recognise his voice.

We saw in The Link that Jesus' teaching must be seen alongside the healing of the blind beggar. The beggar heard both voices, yet listened to the Good Shepherd **9:35-38**, and not the stranger **9:24-29**.

Application

The question we need to help our young people consider is, 'what caused the blind beggar to listen to Jesus and reject the Pharisees'?

The Character - 10:7-13

Here Jesus changes the focus from the voice to the character of those who speak.

Text	The Shepherd	Txt	The Stranger
10:9	Saviour	10:8	Thief and a robber
10:9	Feeds and nourishes		
10:10	Gives life to the full	10:10	Steals, kills and destroys
10:11	He's good		
10:11	He lays down his life	10:12	Leaves the sheep when they are most vulnerable
		10:13	Cares nothing for the sheep

The key to understanding the character of Jesus is his title 'the Good Shepherd'. Our culture has many meanings for the word 'good' but none get close to what Jesus means. When Jesus calls himself the 'Good Shepherd', he's calling people to consider the brilliance and beauty of his character.

"This doesn't refer to what Jesus looked like. It's about the sheer attractiveness of what, as the shepherd, he was doing. When he calls people, they want to come." T. Wright.

The Good Shepherd's nature and character is to lay down his life for the most vulnerable. In John 4 and 8 it's women; in chapters 5, 6, and 9, it's the lame, hungry and blind. The acts which lead to life also cause people to despise and hate him **4:9, 6:41, 7:1, 30, 44, 8:20, 9:24**. Yet those who truly hear his voice will see the beauty and brilliance of his character and enjoy the life he brings **10:10**. The character of the Good Shepherd is now compared to the character of the selfish shepherds. Their desire is to use their power and influence to turn people against Jesus. This was seen in John 9, where the people were fearful of acknowledging Jesus as God's King **9:22**. The Pharisees have created a culture where Jesus has been cancelled from the life and experience of the people **10:10**, which has left them utterly vulnerable **10:12-13**.

Application

The challenge for youth leaders is twofold:

- To help the young people see and understand the character of the Good Shepherd.
- To help the young people see and understand how their culture is proactively and subtly cancelling Jesus.

The Good Shepherd

As we teach Christ, we must pray that our young people see his good character and hunger to follow him. *"The point of calling Jesus 'the good shepherd' is to emphasise the strange, compelling power of his love."* T. Wright

The Selfish Shepherds

A good definition of a selfish shepherd is someone who **'uses their power and influence to cancel Jesus'**. Who does this and how is it done in our culture today?

Thumbs Up - Thumbs Down

Thumbs Up - 10:14-18

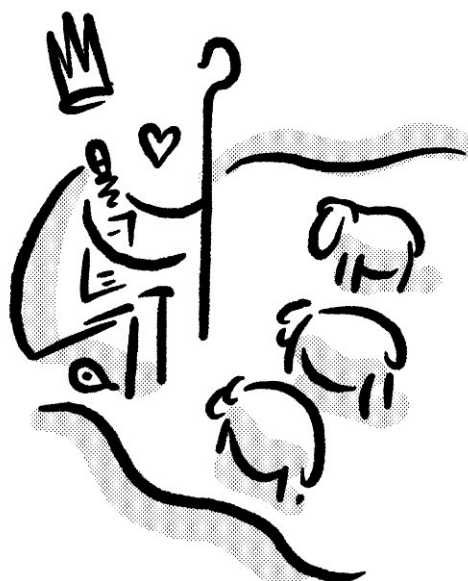
Here Jesus returns to his favourite topic: the relationship between himself and his Father. The question Jesus poses, and then quickly answers, is **'why does the Father love me?'** The reason the Father loves the Son is because he reflects the sacrificial love of the Triune God **10:17**. His death upon the cross is no mistake, but, instead, the eternal plan of God to save a rebellious world **10:18**.

Thumbs Down - 10:19-21

The passage finishes by leaving us with a decision to make. Are we those who belong to the Good Shepherd, or those who want to **cancel** Jesus? The statements from the Jews may seem a little extreme to our 21st Century ear, but the phrase that applies to every generation is, **'Why listen to him?'** The passage finishes with answering the question. "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Application

If we teach this passage properly, we will be calling our young people to a decision. To listen and follow the Good Shepherd, or to remain under the influence of those who want to cancel him.



Study 18 – John 10:1-21

Read 10:1-6

1. What claims to titles does Jesus make?
2. What's the first response from people?
Look up 10:6
3. What is the mark of a follower of Jesus? *10:3-5*
4. What would it look like for you?
7. What's the mark of a false shepherd?
Look up 10:10-13
8. Where do you experience people seeking to cancel Jesus today?
9. Why does the Father love the Son?
Look up 10:14-18
10. Why should that give you great security?

Read 10:7-13

5. What's the character of Jesus as the Good Shepherd? *Read 10:9-13*
6. Can you think of examples in John's gospel where Jesus has revealed this kind of character?
11. Why should that make you praise God?
12. What decision does the story leave us with?
Look up 10:19-21

Session 19 – John 10:22-42

The Last Dance

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Last session, two questions were asked:

- Are we listening to the shepherd's voice, or to those who want to cancel Jesus? **10:1-5, 7, 10**
- Is Jesus the Good Shepherd or full of demons? **10:21**

Today, two more questions are asked:

- Is Jesus equal with the Father? **10:30**
- Or is he a blasphemer? **10:33**

The Last Dance

Since John 5, the Pharisees have been Jesus' primary dance partners. The debates have been fierce and often resulted in the Pharisees wanting to kill him. Throughout the arguments, Jesus has always been on the front foot, being clear about his CV and the postcode he's from. His one desire is to bring all people, whether Pharisee or Roman official, to repent and believe. Today is the last dance Jesus has with the Pharisees, as he gives them His final call to repent and believe. Sadly, they reject his offer and remain in the darkness **3:19-21**.

The Seat Belt Test

- Israel's leaders reject the pleas of Jesus to repent and believe.
- The leaders of Israel choose to reject God's light, thus remaining in darkness.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

The Sharks - 10:22-24

The author is wanting to draw us into the atmosphere that accompanies Jesus' last dance with the Pharisees. When John says they 'gathered around him', it means they encircled him with hostile intent. We know from the previous chapters that they want him dead **7:1, 8:20, 59**, so now they circle him like hungry sharks wanting to devour their prey.

Their tactic is to try and trap him with a question that will give them the opportunity to condemn him **10:24**. So how will Jesus answer?



Application

Setting the context for this story is essential if we're going to teach it with clarity. He could have left the Pharisees and onlookers with the observations we finished with last week **10:21**. But Jesus is not content to have people wondering who he is, so he enters the temple courts to engage with people once again. The Pharisees' question gives Jesus yet another great opportunity to declare to people his CV and postcode.

The Stones - 10:25-33

Happy NOT To Listen

The answer Jesus gives cuts open the Pharisees' heart and reveals the real reason for rejecting him. The answer mirrors exactly what the blind beggar said in the previous chapter: "He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again?'" **9:27**. Just as it was blindingly obvious the beggar was healed, so it's blindingly obvious Jesus is the Messiah. For the past nine chapters we have seen Jesus perform 'the works of the Father' **10:25**. If the works are so blindingly obvious, why haven't the Pharisees believed and followed?



The response Jesus gives is devastating for the Pharisees. The reason they don't recognise him as the Messiah is because they're not his sheep **10:26**. Their constant attitude has been a refusal to listen to his voice **10:19**, and become his followers **10:3, 4**. Yet their real problem is not their ears, but their hearts.

"Not only are the Jewish authorities declared incompetent as shepherds 10:1-21, but they are now no longer even able to call themselves sheep!" E.W. Klink

Application

The evidence proving Jesus to be the Messiah is overwhelming, which is a wonderful reminder to the young people that our faith is built upon overwhelming historical evidence.

Happy To Belong

The benefits of belonging to the Good Shepherd are eternal security. Not only does the Good Shepherd promise eternal life **10:28**, but he also delivers it. The authority of the Shepherd and the Father is total, and those who listen and follow will be secure now and for all eternity **10:28-29**.

The Shepherd's Logic

- a. I have the authority to protect the sheep
- b. The authority I have is given to me by my Father
- c. The Father and I are doing the same work – **10:30**.

"The work of the Father and Son are so intertwined that it can only be one work. In the same way, the identity of the Father and Son are so intertwined that they must be described as one God, without denying their relationship as persons." E.W. Klink

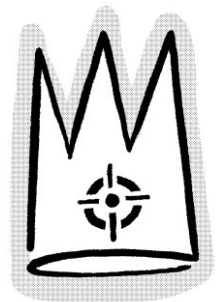
Application

Our young people's spiritual security belongs to the Trinity and not themselves. The focus here is Father and Son; later in **John 14-17** it will be the Holy Spirit. The vulnerable sheep are held within the hands of the almighty Father and Good Shepherd.

Happy To Throw Stones

The Jews hate what Jesus says, so they pick up stones to kill him **10:31**. Consistent with the other debates, the relationship with his Father is his main defence **10:32**.

Suddenly the Jews change their narrative and bypass the 'works of God' and instead focus only upon the claims he's making **10:33**. The reply Jesus gives is both logical and practical. 'My works and claims go together, so be wise, and put your stones down and listen to me.' The Lord Jesus calls them to consider 'his works', and whether they justify stoning **10:32**. You can imagine him listing all the works he's done in the last nine chapters. 'Was it for my care and love for the vulnerable and the women in chapters 4 and 8 that you want to stone me? Or maybe the

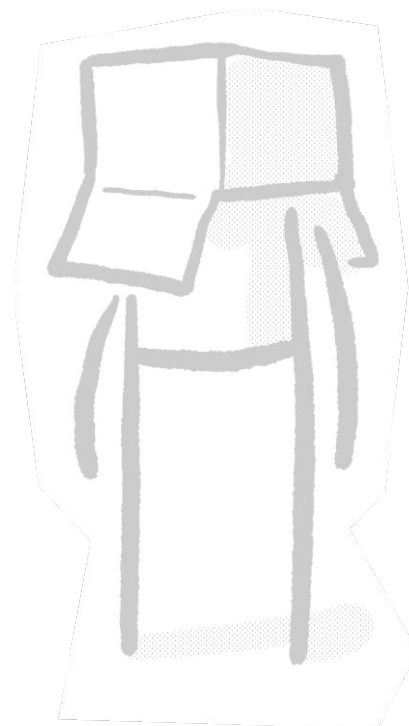


healing of the official's son and blind beggar in chapters 4 and 9. If these are not enough, maybe the feeding of the starving crowd in chapter 5. If any of these warrant a stoning, please explain why?' He calls their bluff and again exposes their evil and skewed motives. *"They are by their own self-incriminating 'works' being declared deaf to God himself. By this Jesus reverses the accusation and places it back upon the Jews."* E.W. Klink

Application

The words and works of Jesus cause a division and therefore a choice, as he's either the Messiah or a blasphemer. *The table below shows how the word division has been used in John.*

Txt	Jesus Brings Division
7:43	They are divided over who he is
9:16	They are divided over whether or not he's from God
10:19-21	They are divided over his claim to be the Good Shepherd



The Son - 10:34-42

The answer Jesus gives here is a quote from *Psalms 82*, which needs careful explaining. Whenever Jesus quotes a part of Old Testament scripture, it's vital to seek to understand it in the original context.

The Failed gods - Psalm 82

This great Psalm follows exactly the same themes as *Ezekiel 34*, which last week's passage focused upon *10:1-21*. The term 'gods' refers to the leaders of Israel whom God had given the responsibility to rule, judge and lead God's people. They are like God in the sense that they've been given a 'godlike' responsibility. Tragically, just like the selfish shepherds in *Ezekiel 34*, they have used their power to oppress instead of protect, and dominate instead of defend *Ps 82 2-4*. They chose to consistently walk in darkness, instead of the beautiful light that God provided *82:5*. They have acted like mere mortals, instead of reflecting the character of God, so face judgement *82:6-8*. This is the last call for them to see the position they're in and seek repentance.

The Successful Son

Having exposed them as selfish shepherds for the second time, he returns to his favourite topic: his CV and postcode.

CV and Postcode

Having revealed with devastating clarity their mortality and failure, he now wants them to front up to his deity and success. He again invites them to consider his works and whether they justify the accusation of 'blasphemy' *10:36?*

His call is passionate and final. He's calling them for the very last time to believe his CV and that his postcode is from heaven. Tragically, they choose to remain in darkness *Jn 3:19-21, Ps 86:5*.

The story finishes with a shaft of divine light and genuine belief. The people who seek him out, do so for all the right reasons. They are the ones who listened to John the Baptist and now realise what he said about Jesus was true. The words of John the Baptist have opened their eyes so they can see that the signs point to the fact that Jesus is God's Son *10:40-42*.

Study 19 – John 10:22-42

Read 10:22-24

1. Do you think there might be an end to God's patience? Why or why not?
6. What leads to the crowd being divided and wanting to stone Jesus?

Read John 10:25-33

2. What kind of attitude do you think the people have when they ask Jesus the question?
7. *Read quickly Ps 82.* How does this relate to the people Jesus is speaking to?

Read John 10:25-33

3. How is Jesus' answer similar to what the blind beggar said? *Look up 9:27 and 10:25.*
8. How would you sum up Jesus' last words to the Pharisees and Jews?

4. According to Jesus, why don't they believe in him? *10:26*
- Look up 10:36-39.* How does it link to his postcode and CV?

5. What's the sign someone is a true follower of Jesus? *Look up 10:3, 4, 19*
9. How are the last verses an example of genuine belief? Read John *10:40-42*

Session 20 – John 11

‘Let Him Go’

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The story of the blind beggar influences the tone of both *John 10* and *11*. Some people accuse Jesus of being mad and demon possessed, while others reply, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” *10:19-21*. When the crowd observes Mary and Martha’s grief, the focus is again the blind beggar. “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” *11:37*. Why does John take us back to this story in both these chapters?

Through the stories, the author seeks to remind us why people consistently reject Jesus. The evidence proving his CV and postcode *1:1-18* is there for all to see, yet people keep aggressively rejecting him. The author wants to remind us that people are in spiritual darkness *3:19-21*, and therefor stumble when facing death *11:9-10*, a theme that continues into the next chapter *12:35-36, 46*. Here we see Jesus coming face to face with death, his most abhorrent enemy. How will the eternal Son of God, who has power to give eternal life *10:27-29*, deal with it? That’s the question today’s story explores.

Txt	The Light - Its Purpose	Txt	The Light - The Response
1:4	Jesus is the light for all mankind	1:4	
1:5	It will always expose darkness	1:5	Its influence can never be overcome
1:7	It shines to bring people to true belief in the Son	1:7	
1:8		1:8	Not even the greatest compare
1:9	To give light to everyone	1:9	
3:19	God’s light shines into the darkness	3:19	People reject the light because they love darkness
3:21		3:21	True believers live in the light
5:35	John the Baptist was a lamp that pointed to Jesus	5:35	For a time, people enjoyed the light
8:12	To be the light of the world	8:12	Those who follow Jesus never walk in darkness, but instead always walk in the light
9:5	He is the light of the world	9:45	Some choose the light; others choose to continue to stumble
11:9-10	To stop you from stumbling	11:45	Some choose the light; others choose to continue to stumble
12:35	To help you know where you are going	12:35	If you live in darkness, you don’t know where you are going.
12:36	Believe and become children of the light	12:36	
12:46	He’s the light of the world	12:46	Those who believe are never in darkness

The Seat Belt Test

- The Word of Life defeats sin and death

The Meat Of The Passage

Introduction

There are many ways we could approach the story; I will focus upon four key phrases which enable us to get to its heart.

'The One You Love' - 11:1-16

The story begins by focusing on the relationship between Jesus and Lazarus's family. The author wants to give us a window into the deep bond of love that exists between Jesus, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. The next chapter reveals this further **12:1-11**, with the beautiful story of Mary which is mentioned here **11:2**. We know God loves the world **3:16**, but for the first time we hear God's love for an individual person **11:3, 5**.

Application

It's so important to stop and focus upon the humanity of Jesus. As youth workers, a question we should regularly ask ourselves is, "how do our young people view Jesus"? Some will see him as irrelevant, and others as so mighty He's impossible to relate to. Both these ideas are false, as today's story reveals. The eternal Son chooses to become 'flesh and blood' **1:14**, and live within relationships full of joy and sorrow in equal measure.

The conversation which follows between Jesus and his disciples gives us the map for what will follow.

Light and Glory - 11:4-5, 9-10

These verses pose a legitimate question. How can Jesus' love Martha and Mary and then choose to wait? Clearly, it's not a lack of love for the family, for we know he loves them **11:5**. The answer Jesus gives focuses more on the purpose of the illness than where it's heading. The purpose of the illness and subsequent death is for everyone (including Jesus) to feel the deep darkness and sorrow death brings. When people stumble over death, the glory and light of Christ is revealed.

Darkness - 11:7-10

Here Jesus reminds the disciples that he alone is the light of the world **8:12**. He's with them now, but will soon be gone. Without his light, all people stumble when facing the enemy of death.

Death - 11:11-16

Clearly, the disciples are left confused by Jesus' language, but that will soon change when he reverses the evils of death **11:14**. "The love of Christ (v.5) is not to be defined by our location in regard to danger and death but by our location in regard to Christ, befitting his purpose and glory (v.4)". E.W. Klink

Application

This story refuses to soften the pain and anguish of death. It offers great comfort to those trusting Jesus, but a deep threat to those who don't.

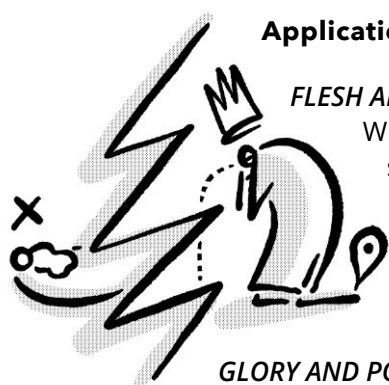


If Only - 11:17-37

The key word that describes Mary and Martha's emotions is the small word 'if'. When they meet Jesus, both say the same thing, "if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." **11:21, 32**. So how does Jesus respond to their 'if only'?

In many ways, Mary and Martha are correct. If Jesus had been there, he could have healed their brother. So, what's Jesus teaching them? They believe that Jesus will raise their brother **11:24**, for he is the Messiah and Son of God **11:27**. Yet the true reality of these truths has not yet sunk in, which is why they use the word 'if'. "He is challenging her, urging her, to exchange her 'if only ... for an 'if Jesus ...'" **Tom Wright**.

Gently, the Lord Jesus tells Mary and Martha the implications of Him being the eternal Son. One day he will speak, and all people will rise to meet him **11:25**. For those who believe it will be eternal joy; for those who reject, an eternal pain.



Application

FLESH AND BLOOD

When Jesus sees the sisters' tears, and the tomb of his friend, his compassion is again revealed as he weeps 11:33, 35.

GLORY AND POWER

The humanity of Jesus is cemented to his divinity as he boldly claims to be the resurrection and the life 11:25. He's the one that stands at the centre of history, ready to call it to account 5:26-27.

Let Him Go - 11:39-46

Twice we are told that Jesus was 'deeply moved and troubled in spirit' 11:33, 38. The way the NIV translates the emotion of Jesus doesn't express the strength of his feelings.

"It is death that is the object of his wrath, and behind death him who has the power of death, and whom he has come into the world to destroy. Tears of sympathy may fill his eyes, but this is incidental. His soul is held by rage and he advances to the tomb, in Calvin's words, 'as a champion who prepares for conflict'."

R.V.G. Tasker

Here we see 'God's Glory', as the eternal Son strides towards the tomb like a lion attacking its vulnerable prey. It's his word that gave life to all things 1:1, so raising Lazarus will be easy 11:43. The prayer of Jesus confirms his oneness with the Father 10:30, his message from the start.

"Jesus is able to be the resurrection, the vanquisher of sin and death, because the union between Himself and His Father is so close and indestructible that the life of God is His life. Faith in Jesus is, in fact, faith in God." **R.V.G. Tasker**

The final words of Jesus, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go" point to the last day of history. On that day, his people will hear his voice, and be set free to enjoy the new creation 11:43.

"Not in cold unconcern, but in flaming wrath against the foe, Jesus smites on our behalf. He has not only saved us from the evils which oppress us, he has felt for and with us in our oppressions, and under the impulse of these feelings has wrought our redemption".

R.V.G. Tasker

Not surprisingly, the shaft of light brings people to a decision. The choice is clear: to stay in the darkness, or to run to the light 11:45-46.

Application

Our culture is dedicated to making Jesus look small, yet here we see him in all his glory. He weeps at the effect of death upon his loved ones, and then rises like a lion to destroy the his prey.

From That Day On - 11:47-57

The final verses reveal how much Israel's leaders love darkness. In the previous chapter, Jesus exposed how Israel's leaders were selfish shepherds, who refused to listen to his voice 10:26. Here they hate people believing 11:45, 48, and despise the hope he's brought to a grieving family 11:53. His power over death is obvious, yet still they try and control him 11:55-57.

Application

Just like the story of the blind beggar, rejecting Jesus' CV and postcode is never down to lack of evidence. The enemies don't deny the miracle, they just try and strangle its life-giving influence. We must prepare our young people to enjoy the glory and be ready for rejection.



Study 20 – John 11

Read 11:1-16

1. How does the first part of the story reveal:

a. The relationship between Jesus and Lazarus's family?

b. The humanity of Jesus?

c. Why is that important?

d. How might it help you relate to Jesus?

2. Why does Jesus wait? Look up 11:4-5

3. Do you think death brings darkness and causes people to stumble? *Look up 11:11-16*

Read John 11:17-37

4. Can you understand Mary and Martha's frustration? And are the sisters right?

5. What do they say they believe about Jesus? *Look up 11:24, 27*

6. How will Jesus show this to be absolutely true? *Look up 11:25*

Read John 11:39-46

7. How does Jesus' response reveal what he thinks of death? *Look up 11:33, 38*

8. How does Jesus reveal his complete mastery over death? *Look up 11:43-44*

9. How does this story bring comfort? How might it bring us future fear? *Look up 11:25*

Session 21 – John 12:1-19

‘The World’s Gone After Him’

The Link

The author begins by reminding us that we are six days away from the Passover **12:1**. The Passover was Israel’s celebration of the great deliverance and victory over the King of Egypt. The oppressor was dethroned by the mighty acts of God **Ex 15:6**, thus declaring Israel’s God, the King who reigned **Ex 15:18**.

In the last eleven chapters we have seen Jesus perform ‘signs’, revealing him to be Israel’s King. He’s turned water into wine, three times healed the incurable, fed the hungry, and raised Lazarus. These signs are the evidence God’s King is among them **1:49, 6:15**, the theme of these two stories. The first story moves us from a

grieving wake to a celebration of Lazarus’ resurrection **12:2**. *As we reflect upon the incredible story in John 11, we are meant to ask two questions:*

1. *How did it reflect his CV?*
2. *How should we respond?*

The Seat Belt Test

When you understand that Jesus is God’s King, you either worship him or reject him.

God’s King has come to destroy his enemies, and no one can stop him.

The Meat of The Passage

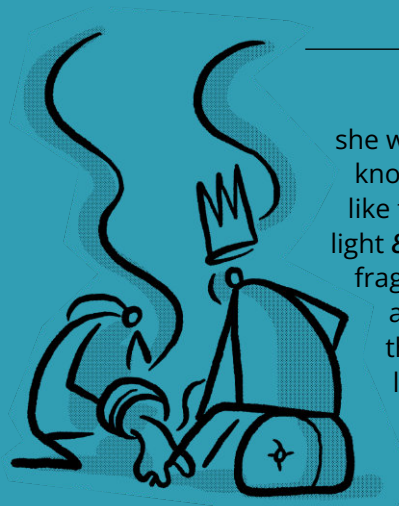
Story 1 – A Private Coronation

Devotion – 12:1-3

Throughout the Old Testament, only kings, prophets and priests are anointed. When this happens, the message given is that this person’s different, set apart, special. The beauty of this story is Mary unashamedly using the most expensive thing she possesses to anoint Jesus’ feet. She’s not only proclaiming him God’s King but also declaring him to be worthy of her complete and total adoration and worship.

“She, like Caiaphas, may be saying (in her action) more than she knows. Her act of love is a prophetic statement about the fact that before too long Jesus is going to be buried – and buried so hastily that there might not be time for proper anointing, so he’d better have it right away.” T. Wright

Her act of devotion towards God’s King is a shining example of what it means to believe and follow Jesus. The light of Christ has shone, and



she wants everyone to know what it looks like to walk in that light **8:12**. Like the fragrance, her love and devotion fills the whole room, letting everyone know how much she loves God’s King **12:3**.

Application

Our prayer is that our young people follow Jesus with the same unashamed devotion as Mary. For this to happen, we must remember true worship comes from knowing and experiencing the Lord Jesus. Mary experienced the great signs performed by Jesus and heard the teaching that went alongside them. Our role as youth leaders is to faithfully teach the amazing signs of God, and the teaching that accompanies them. Only a true understanding of Jesus will lead to a passionate devotion of Jesus.

The most important and expensive thing Mary owns is the perfume, yet she passionately uses it to honour and worship her King. We need to



think what's most precious to our young people, and ask them if Jesus deserves it, owns it, is worthy of it?

Darkness - 12:4-8

Once again, Jesus divides people. The light that creates Mary's beautiful devotion also exposes the bitterness and greed in Judas **12:4-6**. We can only imagine the tone with which Jesus said, "Leave her alone". Clearly, Jesus approves of her anointing and is happy to defend her as she prepares him for his death **12:7**.

"This king's throne is a cross and his castle is a tomb. And when the coronation is over, it will be not one pound but one hundred pounds of perfume – a hundredfold (19:13) – with which this king will be anointed. Jesus is the Son of Man and the Suffering Servant, the Sovereign Lord and the slain Lamb (Rev 5:6); he is both the King and the corpse." E.W. Klink

The statement Jesus makes in **12:10** is not meant to demean the poor. Throughout the Bible, God's love for the poor is clear. "Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God" **Prov 14:31**. Here, Jesus is highlighting the imminence of his death. The poor will always be there to receive their love and but their saviour will not

Application

The light Jesus brings has been experienced by Judas, yet still he remains in darkness. Until our young people's spiritual eyes are opened, they will never see the beauty and brilliance of Jesus. This reality should control how we pray for our young people.

Decision - 12:9-11

The story leaves us with a clear decision: are we standing with the Pharisees, or are we going over to Jesus? Are we living in the darkness like Judas, or enjoying the light like Mary?

Story 2 - A Public Coronation

Praise - 12:12-15

If there's one word to describe Jesus' actions and words, it's 'authority'. All the way through the gospel, he's been drawing attention to his CV **1:1-18**, and postcode **5:23**, the two things which give him authority to rule as God's King. As he enters Jerusalem, he's declared to be the King who sets people free **Ps 118:25-26**, **Zech 9:9**. They shout 'Hosannah', for he's the King who's come to save **12:13-14**. They need not fear, because he's the King who's come to defeat their enemies **12:15**.

The people are mistaken if they think he's a political leader who's come to deliver them from their enemies, the Romans. Yet, make no mistake, he's come to defeat His people's enemies, as we saw last session when he raised Lazarus. His entry into Jerusalem is a march towards the enemies of sin and death which will be conquered at the cross. *"Jesus has not rejected the crowd's royal greeting but embraced it"* **E.W. Klink**.

Application

The image our young people have been brought up with of Palm Sunday has been far too passive. The pictures in children's Bibles of a cute little donkey are very misleading. The one who has authority to raise the dead and call people out of spiritual blindness has arrived to conquer and reign, and nothing and no one will stop him.

Panic - 12:16-19

It's this authority that's causing the Pharisees to panic. They know they can't stop people talking about Lazarus, for he's standing right there in front of them **12:17-18**. Their only answer is to murder both Lazarus and Jesus **12:10, 17**, as the 'whole world' is flocking to him **12:19**.

Application

A recurring theme throughout John has been the response people give to Jesus' authority. It always divides, as we see once again here. For some, it's a haven to hide in, and for others a threat to rebel against. As we teach this story today, expect to see the response of a Mary or a Judas, a believer or a Pharisee.

Study 21 – John 12:1-19

Read 12:1-3

1. Why is Mary's love and devotion towards Jesus so deep and sacrificial?

Think back to John 11 and the other signs, miracles and teaching Jesus has given. She would have seen or at least heard of many of the miracles and listened to much of his teaching. Which of those things would have led to this complete devotion?

2. In what way is Mary preparing Jesus for his burial? How does this quote help you understand that?

"This king's throne is a cross and his castle is a tomb. And when the coronation is over, it will be not one pound but one hundred pounds of perfume – a hundredfold (19:13) – with which this king will be anointed. Jesus is the Son of Man and the Suffering Servant, the Sovereign Lord and the slain Lamb (Rev 5:6); he is both the King and the corpse." E.W. Klink

Read 12:4-11

3. How are the responses of Mary, Judas and the Pharisees a reflection of John 3:19-21?

Read 12:12-15

4. These are quotes from the Old Testament about Israel's King. What are they saying about Jesus' purpose for coming to Jerusalem?

5. Think back to examples of Jesus' authority. How might they give reason for us to believe that Jesus will save His people from their enemies and destroy their fear?

6. Think back to examples of Jesus' authority. How might they give reason for us to believe that Jesus will save His people from their enemies and destroy their fear?

Read 12:17-19

7. What is the Pharisees' fear?

Session 22 – John 12:20-50

"We Would Like To See Jesus"

The Link

Attitudes towards Jesus have been clearly portrayed in every story the author has presented us with. Last session he was anointed by Mary, celebrated by the people, and then rejected by Judas. His words today are the last ones he will speak in public. He's had the last dance with Israel's leaders; now it's his last dance with the people. This is their final opportunity to hear him preach his CV and declare his postcode. Will they worship like Mary, or remain in darkness like Judas?

The Seat Belt Test

- Glory is God's greatness on public display.
- The cross is where God's glory is seen most clearly.

The Meat of The Passage

Introduction - 12:20-22

The greatest fear the Pharisees have is beginning to be realised, "Look how the whole world has gone after him!" **12:19**. The beginning of today's story adds further to their fears, as the Greeks arrive at the festival looking for Jesus **12:21-22**.

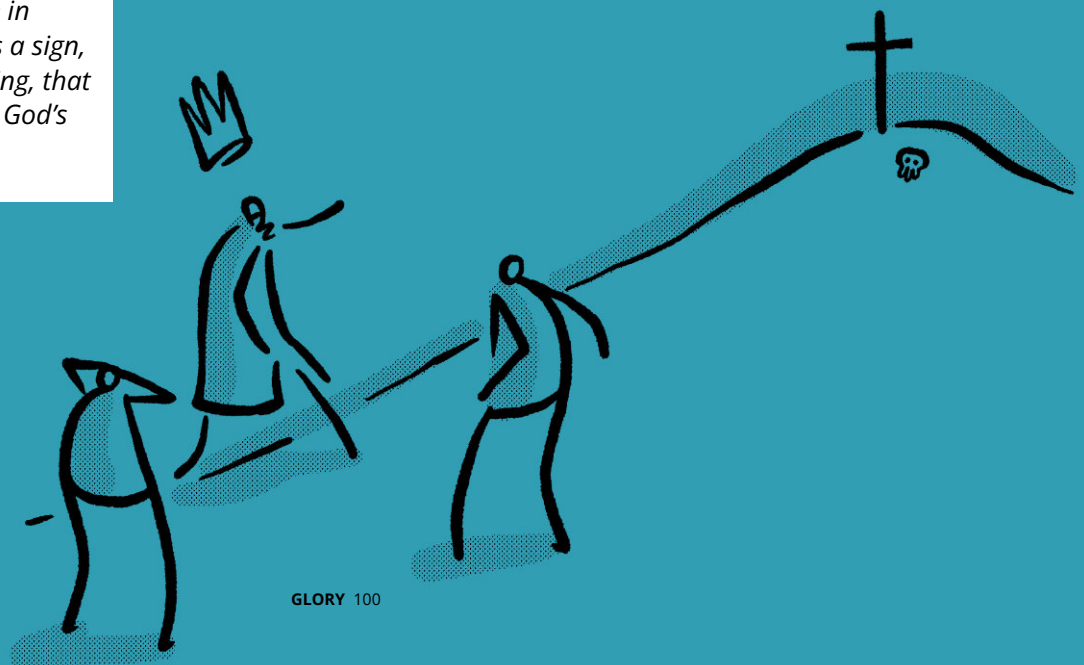
"The fact that foreigners are asking to see him, here in Jerusalem, functions as a sign, like the first leaf of spring, that shows where we are in God's plans" T. Wright

So, what's he got to say to those who are looking for him? What truths will his words contain as he speaks to the crowd for the final time?

A Crushed Son - 12:23-26

A popular phrase Jesus uses to describe his cross is *"the hour"*. *The table below gives a short overview of how his cross is his glory.*

Txt	The Hour When The Son Is Glorified
2:4	The first sign points forward to the <i>'hour'</i> when Jesus will be glorified
7:30, 8:20	He alone is in control of the <i>'hour'</i> of his death
12:23	His cross is where he will be glorified
12:27	The cross is the hour where he will be glorified
13:1	His death is the hour
17:1	The hour of the cross, glorifies both the Father and the Son



Here, Jesus ties two things together that seem to be complete opposites: suffering and the Son of Man **12:23**. The character of the Son of Man is explained in Daniel **7:13-14**, where we see a man who owns all the attributes of God, for he's the eternal, all-powerful, sovereign judge who's worshipped by all the nations. The description should not surprise us, for it's merely an Old Testament description of Jesus' CV and postcode **1:1-18**. The signs he's performed, and the teaching he's given, all point to the reality that he's God's eternal King, the judge and ruler of all.

The illustration Jesus uses turns the world's value system upside down. His primary glory is not seen in the signs of power, important though they are, but instead by being crushed like a seed. If the Greeks (world) want a clear view of Jesus, then it's a man who is 100% committed to giving his life so that others may live **12:23-24**.

"And the same providential law is applicable to each individual believer. He must disown the imperious authority of his selfish ego if he is to live the life of an integrated person; he must abandon ruthlessly a self-centred existence living in conformity to the standards of the world, if the higher element in him is to be preserved unto life eternal. This he cannot do by himself. He must have an example to follow. Jesus is that example." R.V.G. Tasker

If people want to see Jesus, then this is how he wants to be known.

Application

Having shown the world his value system, Jesus calls them to follow. *"The Christian is the one who knows his or her true value and purpose and lives accordingly by following and serving the son. The fruit (Christian) is so organically joined to the seed (Christ) that its very existence is directed by the interrelationship. Hating life – which means to love it rightly (25) – is to live according to the sequence death–life–obedience."* (Hoskyns)

A young person will only be ready to die to self if they've properly understood the death–life–obedience pattern. The proof that we're following Jesus is that we embrace this pattern of living. Like our master, we are ready to die to self so that others gain life. Christian living

"cannot be acts of mere self-abnegation. Self must be displaced by another; the endless, shameless focus on self must be displaced by focus upon Jesus Christ" (Carson). It's only when we live like this that we're honoured by our Father.

A Glorified Son - 12:27-36

How suffering and glory come together is understood through Jesus explaining the cross.

The Hour - 12:27-29

Here we see the sharp reality of the Word becoming flesh **1:14**. The all-powerful Son of Man will face the cross, a reality his humanity retreats from. Yet his passion to honour the Father is all-consuming as he cries, "Father, glorify your name".

The voice from heaven confirms that the life, teaching, signs, death and resurrection of the Son is God's greatness on public display **12:28**. The Father's voice defies the haters and glorifies in the Son. If people want to see Jesus, then this is how the Father wants him to be known.

Application

These verses should be a huge encouragement to our young people, for even the Lord Jesus, when faced with suffering, shudders. The way he deals with his fear is the way we need to help our young people to deal with theirs. The Lord Jesus chooses to focus upon his Father instead of his fear. To be honoured by our heavenly Father is greater than the rejection of fellow created beings **12:26**. If people want to see Jesus, then they must follow the way he deals with fear.

The Cross - 12:30-33

The cross will always do two things: judge or save. *"The 'hour' of the cross is therefore 'the dethronement of the Devil from his tyranny over men' and at the same time ('the hour') the enthronement of the true King, the glorification of the Son of Man" (Hoskyns & Bultmann).* What an encouragement this is for our young people, to know that the cross defeats Satan and all his evil schemes. If people want to see Jesus, then they must embrace the cross as the answer to all evil.

The cross defeats evil, therefore saving us. When Jesus is lifted up, the very thing the Pharisees feared **12:19** happens, for all people are drawn to him **12:32**, which echoes his conversation with Nicodemus **3:14, 8:28**.

Application

Making sure you're on the right side of history is one of the questions people today desperately want to get right. Here, Jesus unashamedly puts the cross at the very centre of history, and our response to it as the thing that defines us. If people want to see Jesus, then they must accept that his cross is the centre of history.

The Light - 12:34-36

This is the third and last time Jesus calls people to live within his light **8:12, 9:5, 11:9-10**.

12:35 – He warns that the light will soon be turned off

12:35 – He warns that the darkness is waiting to overtake them

12:35 – He warns that without his light they'll be lost

12:36 – He pleads with them to become children of the light.

Application

We must follow our saviour in pleading with our young people to leave the darkness and enter the light that Jesus brings. The following verses will reveal the danger of consistently rejecting his call and warnings.

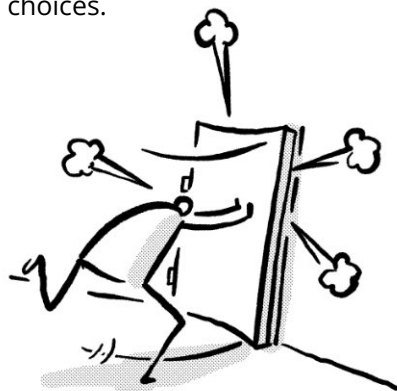


A Rejected Son - 12:37-43

The author starts this section with a tragic statement. The light has shone incredibly brightly, but the people have refused to come into it **12:37**. The fault is clearly not with the light, for the six signs and the teaching that's accompanied them have been stunning. The purpose of the signs and the teaching is to create a right belief **20:30-31**, but this has been stubbornly rejected by the people. "Faith based in signs may be inferior, but it is better than unbelief" (**2:11, 10:38; 14:11**) (Carson).

In one verse, the narrator sums up one of the main themes of

the last twelve chapters: "Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" **12:37**. To illustrate what's happening, John refers back to Isaiah 6, where the great prophet preached God's message to his own people. Even though Isaiah was sent by God, the people still rejected him, something Jesus' CV had warned us would happen to him **1:11**. We learnt in session 18 that God's patience came to an end with Israel's leaders. They made it consistently clear they didn't accept Jesus' CV or postcode **10:19, 25, 31, 39**, and here we come face to face with the consequences of their choices.



As we ponder these difficult verses, which I hope raise questions in the young people's minds, some wisdom from Donald Carson is, I think, helpful:

"God commands Isaiah to undertake this ministry in the full knowledge that the results will be negative; indeed, such preaching to these people evokes a negative response. In that sense, God himself, through the prophet, hardens the hearts of the people – a point later recognised by the prophet when he begs the Almighty to display himself in more merciful ways (Is 63:15-19). The assumption that God may judicially harden men and women frequently surfaces in the New Testament (e.g. Rom 9:18; 2 Thess 2:11). If a superficial reading finds this harsh, manipulative, even robotic, four things must constantly be borne in mind"
D. Carson.

I have adapted Carson's points and added Bible verses:

1. Don't pit God's sovereignty against mankind's responsibility

All the way through the gospel, Jesus has been calling people to embrace his CV and to accept his postcode. When they've refused to listen and accept him, he's always held them accountable for their decision **7:5, 7, 8:23-24**.

2. People love darkness

If left to ourselves, will always choose to stay in spiritual darkness **3:19-21**.

3. God's sovereignty gives hope

The fact that God is sovereign gives us hope that anyone can be saved **4:39-42**.

4. God's sovereign purposes include God turning the light out

We learnt in session 18 that God's patience came to an end with Israel's leaders. They made it consistently clear they didn't accept Jesus' CV or postcode **10:19, 25, 31, 39**.

Application

The sovereignty of God is both a great comfort and a wakeup call. God's sovereignty means our salvation is 100% secure, for we're held in the hands of the Almighty **10:27-29**. Yet it is also a severe warning, for if we play with the claims of Jesus, then we're incredibly naive. If we continually harden our heart to his call, then God might turn out the light.

A Speaking Son - 12:44-50

Postcode and CV - 12:44-46

The last words of this chapter are a plea from the eternal Son to accept his CV and postcode.

Txt	CV	Txt	Postcode
12:45	You look at Jesus, you see the Father	12:44	If you reject his postcode, then you are rejecting the Father
12:46	He is God's light; to reject him is to remain in darkness	12:46	You look at Jesus, you see the one who sent him
12:47	He is the saviour		
12:48	Rejecting the eternal word leads to judgment from the Father	12:48-50	His authority to speak comes from his postcode. To reject him leads to judgement
12:49-50	His words are the Father's words		

Application

The chapter finishes with truth and grace **1:14**, as the eternal Word of God calls the people to believe. A call that goes out to everyone who reads this gospel **20:30-31**.

Study 22 – John 12:20-50

Read 12:20-25

1. What question does the world want answering? *Read 12:20-21*

Today's passage is Jesus answering that question. It's his last public speech and interaction with the people of Israel.

4. How does this quote help you understand what it means to 'hate their life'.

"The Christian is the one who knows his or her true value and purpose and lives accordingly by following and serving the son. The fruit (Christian) is so organically joined to the seed (Christ) that its very existence is directed by the interrelationship. Hating life – which means to love it rightly (25) – is to live according to the sequence death–life–obedience." Hoskyns

2. Jesus gives himself the title Son of Man. What qualities does the Son of Man have? *Look up Daniel 7:13-14*

• *What are the practical outworkings?*

3. How does the illustration Jesus gives explain his mission? *Read 12:24*

5. What different ways does Jesus describe his death? *Read 12:27-33*

Why is that significant?

• *How does that fit with the description of the Son of Man?*

6. What warnings and encouragements does Jesus give? *Read 12:34-50*

7. What impact should the warnings and encouragements have upon you personally?

OVERVIEW OF JOHN 13-17:

When The Son Leaves

Introduction

When we teach John **13-17**, we must understand that the emphasis changes from the relationship between Father and Son, to Jesus and his followers. The Son is returning to the Father, so

the question Jesus is answering is, *'how will His followers survive?' The table below reveals how the theme works its way out in chapters 13-17:*

	Jesus speaks of his departure	Txt	Disciples' response
13:1	He's returning to the Father via the cross		
13:33	Jesus will leave them. Where he goes, they cannot follow		
13:36	Where he goes, they cannot follow	13:36	Peter does not understand Jesus
14:1-4	Jesus will leave them to prepare a place for them	13:5	Thomas does not understand Jesus
14:18	When he goes he promises not to leave them as orphans		
14:19, 25, 28	They will soon not see him any more		
15:26	When he leaves, he will send the Spirit		
16:5,10	Returning to the one who sent him	16:5	Disciples grieve Jesus leaving
16:16	He may be speaking of the cross or his final departure	16:19	Disciples do not understand
16:22	He promises they will see him again, which guarantees of their joy		
17:11	Jesus will remain in the world no longer		
17:12	All the time Jesus was with them he protected them		
17:13	Jesus will return to the Father		

There are three questions John wants us to focus upon in chapters 13-17:

1. What are we to **expect** when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

Up to now the focus has been the relationship between Father and Son. That relationship is now the model for every disciple to follow, so they don't fall away **16:1**.

"...from now until the end of chapter 16 Jesus is explaining to them the fact that he is 'going away', and that they cannot follow him just yet. He is showing them what it all means for their future life, their own sorrow and joy and mission to the world." (T. Wright)

Session 23 – John 13

Serving like the Son

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The setting for this chapter is the Passover, which takes us back to the Exodus and Israel's salvation from their enemies. The theme of Passover has followed us all the way through John's gospel. Right at the beginning we hear John the Baptist declaring Jesus to be the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world **1:29, 36**. Lastly, in *John 10*, we heard that Jesus is not only a lamb, but also the shepherd who's prepared to lay down his life for the sheep **10:11**.

We learnt in the last chapter that the cross is the event in world history where God's glory (his greatness on public display) is most clearly seen **12:23-25**. Today's chapter begins to show how a world view dominated by the cross affects how we treat each other.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

How will the disciples survive when Jesus leaves?

A follower of Jesus is marked by loving the way He loves.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

Jesus Is About Power - 13:1-5, 12-16

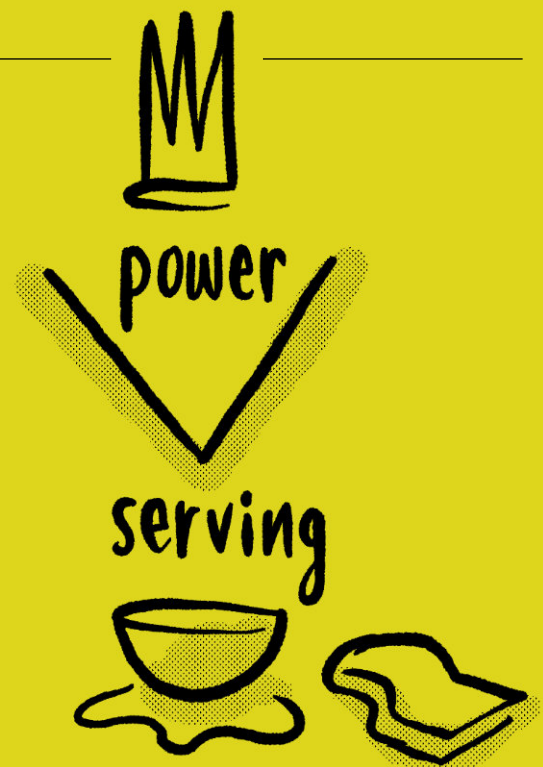
The last twelve chapters have been a display of shock and awe as Jesus has displayed the Father's power.

His Signs

The problem with many of our young people is that they have become familiar with the miracles of Jesus. Familiar with him turning water into wine, healing the incurable, feeding thousands with a lad's packed lunch, and raising a guy who had been dead for as long as four days. When people encountered the raw power of Jesus, the common reaction was utter fear.

His Speech

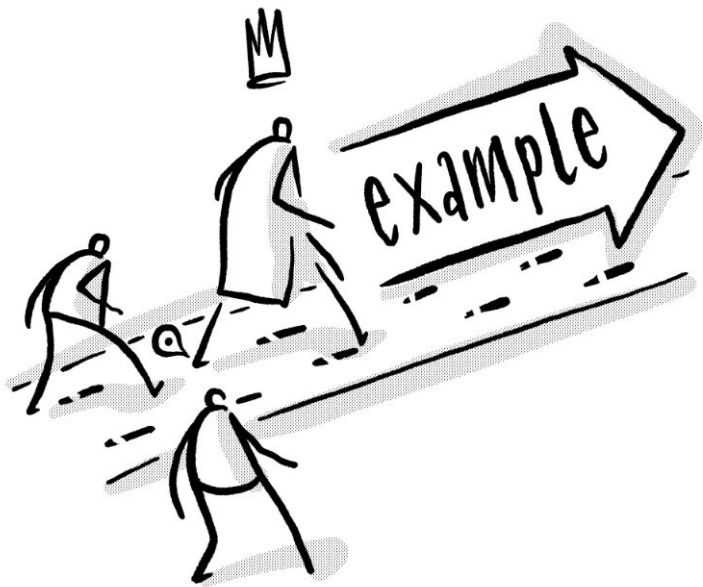
From the beginning of the gospel, Jesus lays down the marker that no one will control him. When people experience the first sign, the interest in him begins to gather pace. The huge temptation he faced was to speak in ways that people would like, therefore boosting his ratings even further. This temptation is first recognised and fiercely resisted by Jesus **2:23-25**. He speaks his Father's words, as some choose light and others darkness **7:43-44**. He brings division, yet by chapter 12 the majority want to follow him **12:12**, which brings great fear to those who hate him **12:19**.



His Splendour

His power is not merely for this world, as one day he will judge the nations and be worshipped by those who love him **12:23**.

Therefore, when the author tells us that, "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God"; **13:3**, we are meant to think of these kinds of things. This should leave us asking one question: 'how will he use this kind of power?' This purpose of this chapter is to give his followers the answer to that question.



Cross-Like Love

If the cross is at the heart of what it means for God to be glorified, then we should expect 'cross-like love' to dominate how Jesus uses his power. Here Jesus chooses to take on the role of a slave and wash the disciples' feet. The eternal creator, and one-day judge of all, chooses to serve those he's created in the most basic, earthy way.

The Lord Jesus puts the same question to each of his disciples: "Do you understand what I have done for you?" **13:12**. The point Jesus is making is crystal clear. 'If you claim to be one of my followers, then you must follow my example.' He then reminds them that he's their teacher, Lord, and example **13:14-15**. The only proof that we follow him as Lord is a sacrificial life which serves all people **13:16-18**.

The greatest expression of the Father's love was to send His Son to a broken world and love it **3:16**. The Lord Jesus reflects his Father's character by sending his followers to the same world, to share the same love **13:15-17**.

"The foot washing – and the crucifixion itself, to which it pointed – was Jesus' way of showing who God was and is" T. Wright

Application

The Lord Jesus asks his disciples **"Do you understand what I have done for you?" 13:12**. The main point Jesus is making here is clear, 'my followers, follow my example. If you follow me as

your teacher, then you will not only follow me as your example but teach others to do so, through both words and deeds' **12:14-15**. The only proof a person is following Jesus as Lord is when they choose to daily live a life of sacrifice for others **13:16-18**.

The power Jesus has is always used to serve others in every area of life, and his followers are called to do the same.

"But the truly Christ-like leader (or young person) is known by the ease and spontaneity with which he or she does the little, annoying, messy things – the things which in the ancient world the slave would do, the things which in our world we always secretly hope someone else will do so we won't have to waste our time, to demean ourselves." T. Wright

When the Son returns to the Father, his followers must continue to love the world like their master and teacher.



Cross-Like Division

When Jesus chooses to wash the disciples' feet, it's all of them, including Judas. The story has the beauty of Jesus serving his followers at the centre, but the background music is sinister, as Judas plots to betray Jesus **13:2, 26-30**.

Application

Having a sacrificial love that's open to all is a messy, complicated business. If we have an expectation that sacrificial love is easy, then we need to think again. This story, like many others in John's gospel, is based upon reality. Loving people sacrificially is hard, tough and means denying self. It means falling to the ground and being crushed like a seed, so others gain life **12:25-26**. The betrayer leaves his fellow disciples and the one who's washed his feet and goes back to the darkness where he's most at home **13:30**. Our saviour knew this would happen, yet he still chose to love him. As we seek to apply this example to our young people, we must work hard to imagine what it looks like in their setting.

Jesus Is About Purity - 13:6-9

It's worth reminding ourselves the three questions chapters 13-17 are answering:

1. What are we to expect when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

The feet-washing Jesus performs points to the cross in another way, which Peter's actions help us to understand. When the saviour comes to Peter with a towel and a basin, he's clearly having none of it **13:6-8**. His motive may appear honourable, but something much deeper is going on.

"In making this protest, Peter was in fact displaying the pride of unredeemed men and women, who are so confident of their ability to save themselves that they instinctively resist the suggestion that they need divine cleansing. They desire to do everything themselves".

R.V.G. Tasker

The protest Peter gives leads to Jesus explaining the gospel in the most beautiful way. The only way anyone joins the family of God is through being washed by the servant saviour. His perfect life and sacrificial death are the only way to be made clean

before a holy God. The response Peter gives makes up for his initial mistake, as he pleads with Jesus to wash every part of his body **13:9**.

Application

If our young people are going to grow in their relationship with God, they must learn the joy of being washed clean by Jesus. The first step is to recognise just how big our ego is, and how thoroughly dirty our heart is. In future sessions we will learn that the role of the Holy Spirit is to wash us clean, so we reflect the character of Jesus. The way a disciple lives and survives is to rejoice that Jesus makes them clean and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work.

Jesus Is About Practice - 13:31-38

The question Peter can't get his head around this time is the fact that Jesus will one day leave them **13:33**. Once again his response presents us with the main point of this part of the story. With his ego still inflated, Peter promises to lay down his life for Jesus **13:37**. How Jesus responded we can only imagine; perhaps he raised one eyebrow slightly? Of course, we know it's Jesus who will ultimately lay down his life at the cross and Peter who will fail **13:38**.

The question Jesus wants Peter to answer is not 'where I am going' but what does it look like for you to love your brothers and sisters once I am gone **13:34-35**? How will you 'lay down your life' for others, thus glorifying God **13:31-32**.

"Whereas the Old Testament demanded that men should love their neighbours as themselves, the New Law is that they should love the brethren better than themselves and die for their friends." Hoskyns

Application

If our young people are passionate about loving each other in a Christ-like way, then their friends will be attracted to them. There are so many things Jesus could choose as the one thing to focus upon to attract the world, but he chooses sacrificial love. That's where the power lies, for that's the greatest way we reflect our servant saviour, thus glorifying God.

Study 23 – John 13

1. Think of examples from John 1-12 where Jesus has shown divine power.

5. What lessons can you learn from Peter's protest?

2. How would most people use that kind of power today?

6. What do you think it will look like for you to lay down your life for others?

Read John 13:34-35, 37.

Read 13:1-17

3. Why does Jesus wash the disciples' feet?
Focus upon 13:12-17

7. If GF and Revolution was marked by all of us living like this:

• *How different would it be from school?*

4. How does this quote help you understand why Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet?

"In making this protest Peter was in fact displaying the pride of unredeemed men and women, who are so confident of their ability to save themselves that they instinctively resist the suggestion that they need divine cleansing. They desire to do everything themselves."

R.V.G. Tasker

• *Would your friends be attracted to come?*

Session 24 – John 14

“I will not leave you as orphans”

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The last session made clear that Jesus would soon be leaving his disciples **13:1, 33, 36**. To prepare them, he gives intense training, so that they are ready for his departure.

In each chapter, Jesus looks at a different issue his disciples will face when he departs. In this chapter Jesus looks at the issue of fear **14:1, 27**, for he knows they will feel like orphans when he's gone **14:18**. *The questions below will help us understand and apply chapters 13-17.*

1. What are we to expect when the Son returns to the Father?

2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?

3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

- The work of the Holy Spirit is to remind God's people of the words and works of Jesus.
- Remembering leads to loving, which leads to obeying Jesus.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage: Jesus Is About Power - 13:1-5, 12-16

The Treasure Trove Is Very Big

These chapters contain a huge amount of treasure, so my aim will be to cover the main truths. Each session will have two sets of small group questions, which will aim to cover as much of the ground as possible.

Introduction

Following Jesus for three years would have engaged every emotion. The joy when he turned water into wine was accompanied by fear when he cleared the temple and stood up to Israel's powerful leaders. Wonder mixed with awe when he healed the sick and raised the dead. Their journey was an emotional rollercoaster, but to have Jesus in the driving seat was an immense comfort, for when the storm of hatred came their way, he would shield them from the blows. So, when he tells them he's leaving, it's no wonder they fear and feel like orphans **14:1**. So how will Jesus' teaching help them face their fears?

Application

Fear is an emotion every one of our young people will encounter at different levels. At the beginning of the talk or study, ask the young people "what causes you to fear?" As we prepare the study it's crucial to have our own young people in mind, but also young people living in countries where persecution for following Jesus is common. If we get the application right in that context, then there's every chance we'll get it right for our young people.

1. Remember Your Future - 14:1-7

The Trinity's number one mission is to restore humanity by bringing them into a living relationship that grows and blossoms into the likeness of Christ. Up to now, the 'Father's House' was the temple **2:16**, where people met with God. The arrival of Jesus changes that, for every time a human being meets him, they meet with God **1:18**. In the opening verses, Jesus wants the disciples to know that this relationship is an eternal one, and he's at the very centre of it **14:2-4**.

Application

This is Jesus' first answer to fear: to believe that Jesus controls our eternal future. When Jesus departs, he wants His disciples to know where he's going and what he'll be doing. The present reality for many believers will be insecurity and opposition, but their eternal future is 100% secure.

In that light, the first answer Jesus gives is a call to remember his CV and postcode. The way Jesus wants them to deal with fear is to remember and apply what He's been telling them for the last twelve chapters. They shouldn't fear, for he's, the way, the truth and the life. Below is a small example of how John 14:6 is a summary of Jesus' CV and postcode.

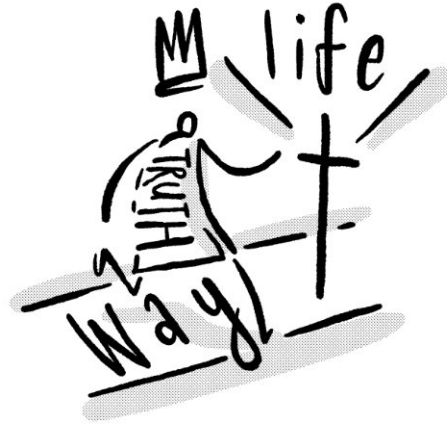
The Way

His CV and postcode

1:6-8 – John the Baptist declares Jesus to be the only true light which leads to God.

Application

Jesus is the light of the world 8:12, 9:5. If you reject his light you remain in darkness, constantly stumbling, and never knowing where you're going 12:35-36, 45-46.



The Truth

His CV and postcode

1:14 – Jesus' whole life and character are full of truth.

Application

The truth He speaks sets you free 8:31-32, 42.

1:11-13 – Jesus comes from heaven to give his children spiritual life.

Application

The Father and the Son are the source of all life 5:21.

The Life

His CV and postcode

1:3-4 – Through Jesus, all things were made, for he is the source of all life.

"Jesus destroys the wall that divides humanity from God (the way), denies the falsehood that distorts humanity in relation to God (the truth), and defeats the last and greatest enemy of humanity, death (life)." Calvin



2. Remember Your Compass - 14:8-14

As the disciples listen to Jesus' first answer, it is almost as if the turmoil in their hearts stops them hearing what he's saying. With the challenges they face, his assurances of an eternal home feel a very long way off. In response, Jesus gives them a compass, consisting of four crucial truths to help them navigate their fear and the reality of Jesus leaving.

My Words - 14:8-10

The first direction Jesus wants to point them towards is the authority of his words. This is not new teaching, for all the way through the gospel he's been showing that his words carry the same authority as the Father's **3:34-35, 8:28, 12:49-50**. This doesn't mean that Jesus is the Father, for they are separate persons of the Trinity. "He both exists unchangeably in Himself and inseparably in the Father" Augustine. The point Jesus is making is that his words have the same authority as the Father's **14:9-10**.

Application

Jesus wants his disciples to know that his words must be the basis and foundation of their confidence. They must learn to take every fear to the words, teaching and promises of Jesus.

My Works - 14:10-11

When the disciples watched Jesus perform his signs, they were watching God in action **5:36, 10:25, 38**. His departure doesn't make those signs suddenly inactive, but instead makes what they were pointing to even more relevant. The seventh sign will be his death, resurrection, and exaltation, the culmination of his works **14:10-11**.

Application

When we consider his works, we are focusing upon the most important things God has done. His works are the compass by which we judge reality and answer our fears **14:11**. The way his followers "do greater things" **14:12**, is by taking His message to the world. The works are great – simply because we are taking the complete and finished work of Christ to the world. Jesus was limited in his humanity, whereas the church (God's people) can reach the whole world. . This should be a huge challenge and encouragement to our young people.

"They are invited – no, commissioned to participate in the ongoing and powerful ministry of God the Father, the exalted Christ, and the indwelling Holy Spirit. The ministry of the church is truly the work of God in the world." Hoskyn

My Name - 14:12-13

The third direction the compass is pointing towards is the powerful 'name' of Jesus. Throughout the Bible, names are always cemented to a person's character, which is vital in seeking to understand these verses. When a disciple asks the Father for something, it must reflect the character, mission, and purposes of Jesus. If we do that, we are guaranteed a positive answer. The Father's passion is to glorify the Son; if that's at the heart of a disciple's prayers, then the Father promises to answer **14:12-13**.

Application

This is a wonderful opportunity to help our young people focus upon the true nature of prayer. Following Jesus is a decision to make his character and mission the hub of all our prayers. Whatever gifts, talents or dreams our young people have, we want the mission of Jesus to be at the centre.

"Asking in 'the name' is to reject your agenda and to adopt his. It's to reject your character demands and to adopt his." E.W. Klinck

My Spirit 14:15-31

The final direction the compass is pointing to is the person of the Holy Spirit. These verses introduce us to the work of the Spirit, which will be further explained by Jesus in chapters 15-17. Here the focus is the Spirit's work of helping disciples remember the words and works of Jesus. Remembering his words and works is the way we deal with fear, and the feeling of being left as an orphan **14:18**.

Application

Many of our young people will feel just like orphans. In their schools they may be the only Christian in their class, year or even whole school.

The Spirit Teaches The Disciple to Remember, Love and Obey - 14:15-31

When a follower of Jesus feels like an orphan, alone and in despair, they will be tempted to be unfaithful and disobey. When that happens, the Spirit of truth will remind the disciple of the words and works of Jesus **14:17, 26**. The Spirit wants to constantly apply the teaching of Jesus so that the disciple's relationship with the Father and Son continues to be living and vibrant. The more the disciple opens their life to the influence of the Spirit, so they learn to replace human fear with the peace of God **14:25-27**.

PEACE = *"An unbroken union with the Father, even in a world filled with continuous strife, persecution, humiliation, and even death". Hoskyns*

The world our young people are growing up in understands love very differently to Jesus. In our culture, love is primarily understood as sentimental, based around feelings and emotions. Yet Biblical love is based upon what's true about Jesus. *"Love according to this gospel is never sentimental or an emotion; it is always moral" (Barrett)*. It's therefore perfectly possible to love and obey Jesus without any emotions, feelings or sentimentality involved. We choose to love and obey Jesus because of what he's said (words) and done (works), and not because we feel a certain emotion or feeling **14:15, 21, 23**.

The images Jesus uses to describe God's response to our obedience are all relationship based. *"Love is not a sentimental expression but a relational foundation" (E.W. Klink)*. When we choose to obey him, the Trinity respond by revealing their love **14:21**, by making their home in the life of each believer **14:23**.

"in each other, and that we are 'in' him and he 'in' us. And we will be joined to Jesus and the father by an unbreakable bond of love. This, in turn, leads back to where the sequence began. He will show himself to us. All the main themes of the gospel so far are now revealed for what they are: truths about the inner life of the father and son, truths which turn to fire and love and invite us to warm ourselves within their inmost circle". T. Wright

The final truth the Holy Spirit reminds the disciples of is the victory of Jesus. The devil repeatedly tried to get Jesus to be unfaithful to the words and works his Father had given to him. Wonderfully, the devil's mission was a complete failure, for the Lord Jesus always obeyed his Father **14:30-31**. The passion of the Holy Spirit is to help us love and obey the Lord Jesus by being faithful to his words and works.

Study 24 – John 14 (1)

Read John 14:1-7

1. Jesus starts his teaching seeking to help the disciples with their fear. What are they so fearful of? *Look up 13:1, 33, 36.*

2. How does Jesus seek to answer their fears about the future? *Look up 14:1-7*

3. How does this quote help you understand John 14:6? Trace these themes through under the three subheadings below (Way, Truth, Life).

"Jesus destroys the wall that divides humanity from God (the way), denies the falsehood that distorts humanity in relation to God (the truth), and defeats the last and greatest enemy of humanity, death (life)." Calvin

The Way – Look up: 1:6-8 and 12:35

The Truth – Look up: 1:14 and 8:31-32, 42

The Life – Look up: 1:3-4 and 5:21

Read John 14:8-14

4. How do these truths about Jesus deal with their fear of him going?

Txt	Truth about Jesus	Difference it should make
14:8-10		
14:10-11		
14:12-13		

Study 24 – John 14 (2)

1. When the disciple feels like an orphan, alone and in despair. What does the Holy Spirit do?

Look up 14:17 and 26.

3. When our culture uses the word love, what are some of the meanings?

2. When the Holy Spirit reminds the believer of these truth's what effect should it have?

4. What does Jesus always link love with? *Read 14:15, 21, 23.*

Txt	Truth about Jesus	Difference it should make
14:8-10	Jesus speaks the words of God	You learn to take your fears to the promises of Jesus
14:10-11	Jesus does the works of God	You learn to judge reality by the historical acts of Jesus
14:12-13	Jesus' name is all powerful	You learn to pray and trust in the powerful name of Jesus

5. What relational images does Jesus use to describe a disciple's relationship with the Trinity? *Look up 14:21, 23.*

What is your experience of this?

Ask your leader what their experience of this is.

What is the effect on the follower of Jesus? Look up 14:24-25

6. In what way has Jesus shown that the devil has no hold on him? *Look up 14:30-31.*

Definition of peace = "An unbroken union with the Father, even in a world filled with continuous strife, persecution, humiliation, and even death". *Hoskyns*

Session 25 – John 15

Your Identity!

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The major issue Jesus focused upon in the last session was the disciples' feelings of being abandoned as orphans. At the Passover meal, Jesus made clear that he'd soon be leaving them **13:1, 33, 36**, so their fear is both legitimate and real. The way Jesus leads his people is through teaching them crucial lessons that will help them stand firm and reflect his character. He is the Good Shepherd who wants the very best for his precious sheep **10:11**.

His teaching last session focused upon five crucial truths:

1. When you fear, remember the authority of my words **14:8-10**, works **14:10-11**, and name **14:12-13**.
2. The work of God the Holy Spirit is to remind all disciples of the authority of Jesus' words, works and name **14:17, 26**.
3. When they remember, they experience the love **14:21, 23** and peace of God **14:25-27**.
4. The Enemy's primary aim was to get Jesus to disobey and disown his Father. This was something Jesus always refused, instead choosing to love his Father, **14:30-31**.
5. The more the Spirit shows us Jesus, the more we love him. The more we learn to love him, the more we will desire to obey him **14:15, 21, 23**.

Today's teaching will continue to answer these three questions:

1. What are we to expect when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Followers of Jesus choose to make Jesus' CV and postcode their identity.

When they do that, they must expect the same reaction from the world as Jesus received.

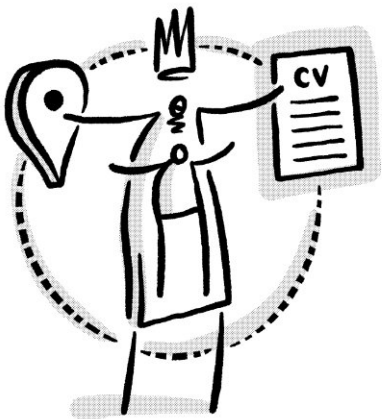


The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

Introduction

There are two major truths Jesus wants to cement into the mind and heart of every disciple. He wants them to know who they are, and how their identity fits with the world they live in. Last week we learnt that the Spirit's role was to remind the disciples of the authority of Jesus. This week, He wants to remind the disciples that following Jesus leads to hatred from the world.

Txt	Your Identity Jesus' CV & Postcode	Txt	Results of believing Jesus' CV & Postcode
15:3	Clean through Christ's word		
15:4	In Jesus	15:5	Bear much fruit
15:7	In Jesus	15:7	Prayers answered
15:8	A disciple who bears fruit	15:8	Glorify the Father
15:9	Jesus loves us, like the Father loved him	15:9-11	Motive to want to remain Motive to want to obey Receive the joy of Jesus
15:12	Loved by Jesus	15:12-13	How Jesus loved them is the example of how they are to love one another
15:14	Friends not servants		They will know what the Father thinks
15:16	Chosen	15:16	Bear eternal fruit, and know the reality of having your prayers answered by your Father
15:18	You follow Jesus	15:18	The world that hates Jesus will hate you also
15:19	Chosen out of the world You do not belong to the world	15:19	The world hates those who refuse to belong to them
15:20	A servant of Jesus	15:20-21	The servant experiences the same treatment as their master



Your Identity

The major lesson Jesus wants to teach his disciples is their true identity is rooted in him. The more the disciples understand this, the stronger and more equipped they will be to stand firm and reflect His character. All through John we have seen the major reason people reject Jesus is when he brings attention to his CV **1:1-18**, and postcode **7:28-29**. The big lesson of John 15 is that his CV and postcode is now the disciple's primary identity. With that comes both a wonderful opportunity to experience God's love, but also the world's hatred.

The Call To Dependence - 15:1-4

The passage begins with the identity of the Father and Son. Here Jesus uses an illustration straight from the Old Testament to help them to begin to understand how their identity is rooted in him. In the Old Testament, the vine was Israel, but no matter how thorough God's care for the vine was, they never produced good fruit **Isa 5:1-2**. This left the Father with only one option, and that was to uproot the vine **Ezk 15:2-6, 19:10-14**.

The message of John's gospel is clear: where Israel failed, Jesus always succeeded. In fact, the gospel goes even further than that, for Jesus not only loves the Father completely, but also fulfils everything the Old Testament pointed forward to.

"The Gospel of John has already taken care to describe how Jesus fulfils and replaces the old covenant persons and institutions of the temple (e.g., ch 2), sacred places/mountains (e.g., ch 4), Moses (ch 5), and the Jewish feasts (e.g., ch 6); as the true vine Jesus also supersedes Israel as the centre and source of God's people. The places (i.e., the land, Jerusalem, temple, altar) and the people (Israel, Jewish bloodlines, priestly heritage) have been fulfilled and replaced by one person: Jesus Christ"
E.W. Klink.

Add to that all the signs, and you have Jesus' CV and postcode. He is the vine that each disciple is connected to.

Application

Our prayer as youth leaders is that our young people stand firm and reflect the character of Jesus. For that to happen they must first understand the identity of Jesus, for that's where their strength lies. If they don't get this, they will never be able to bear spiritual fruit, as Jesus makes clear in **15:1-4**.

The Call To Remain - 15:4-8

Our first base is to define the kind of spiritual fruit God is looking for. The fruit he's looking for is an obedience that flows from a true understanding of God's love. This is seen most clearly in the life of Jesus when he says "I love

the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me" **14:31**. The Son's constant focus was his Father's love **5:20**, which drove and controlled his obedience.

"Love and obedience go hand in hand. Jesus obeys His Father because there is mutual and permanent love between Father and Son. Similarly, the disciple can obey Jesus only when he responds to the love Jesus has shown to him". R.V.G. Tasker



When Jesus calls his followers to 'remain in him and his love' **15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10** he's calling his followers to believe and to continue believing His CV and postcode. The way Jesus remained faithful to his CV and postcode was to continually remind himself of his Father's love. His disciples must follow this pattern by focusing upon the love of Christ. The more we focus on Christ's love, the more we will want to obey him. *"Remaining in the love of God is not some mystical experience; it is an active response of obedience."* (**E.W. Klink**). The more we focus on Christ's character, the more they will want to love, obey and adopt his CV and postcode as theirs.

Application

Once we've defined what spiritual fruit is, we can then begin to grasp our true identity. Our lives and whole beings are connected to the life of God's eternal Son **15:5**. To remain in him is now our primary identity. The beginning, middle and end of a disciple's identity is that they remain in him, for their connection to Jesus is now the number one identity.

The Call To Love - 15:9-17

The first verse of this section is mind-blowing. Every child of God is loved by Jesus with the same quality and intensity of love with which the Father loves the Son **15:9**. It's this eternal love that defines every child of God, and the foundation for their obedience **15:10**. This carries on the theme started in the previous two chapters, **13:1, 14:21, 23**.

Application

When a young person grasps this, it's revolutionary. When our young people find their identity in the love of Christ, true gospel joy will follow **15:11**. When a young person stands upon the love of Christ, life's circumstances no longer control their responses and reactions. They are learning to judge every challenge life throws up by the eternal love God has for them.

When a young person's identity is anchored to the love of God, they're free to love others. With the assurance and security that God loves them, they can focus upon other's needs and not their own. Every day, they're learning to focus on how Jesus loved people so they can follow his example **15:12**. Rejection is still painful, but they know they're a friend of God. The eternal God has shared his plan of salvation with them, for they are his friends not servants **15:14-15**, chosen in love **15:16**.

When young people begin to reflect the love of God for them within a youth group, then it has massive potential for Kingdom growth. When a youth group's identity reflects God's

love for them, its potential for influence within their local schools, sports clubs etc is huge **13:34-35**. *"The love of God for Christians becomes the love of God between Christians."* (E.W. Klink).

The Call To Suffer - 15:18-27

Having understood who we are, Jesus now focuses on how the world receives us. The word that Jesus uses to sum up the world's response to his followers is hate. This is no new word, for it's been used to describe the world's response to Jesus: for they loved darkness and hated the light he brought **3:19-20**.

If the disciple of Jesus identifies with Jesus' CV and postcode, then they must expect the same response that Jesus received.

"Christ's disciples are now a foreign entity in the world. And the world's antibodies will naturally respond to them in force with intent to destroy". E.W. Klink

15:18 – The world will hate us, because it first hated Jesus

15:19 – The world will hate us, because we belong to Jesus

15:20 – The world will hate us, if we stay faithful to the teaching of Jesus

15:21 – The world will hate us, if we stay faithful to the name of Jesus

15:21 – The world will hate us, if we stay faithful to the Father who sent Him.

15:23-24 – When the world hates us, it is because it first hated the Father and Son

Application

Just as the world rejected Jesus, so they will reject his followers. That's why Jesus focuses first upon the disciple's identity. Our identity is utterly wrapped up in who Jesus is, his words, works, CV and postcode. This is the identity the world cannot accept, and it gets mad when we refuse to change or compromise. The world hungers for our young people to belong to them and will not accept anything else **15:19**. The only way our young people will stand firm and reflect the character of God, is to look outside of themselves to their identity in Jesus. That's where their strength is, for he's the vine they receive their life and sustenance from.

"The call of the Christian is to receive the hate of the world with humility but also with the intention of service". Barrett

These final verses might seem a little strange, and a bit of tag-on, but they're far from that. Clearly, Jesus is teaching his disciples that the world will hate them, like it hated him. When they heard Jesus say those words, fresh fear may have invaded their hearts. Yet Jesus wants them to know once more that they will not be alone. He will send the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit of truth. They are not alone, for he will train them to speak the words of Jesus.

Study 25 – John 15 (1)

1. If you were to ask your friends what makes up their identity, what would they say? Which part of their identity would they say was the most important to them? Why?

Read 15:4-10

5. For you to bear fruit where must you remain?

What are the consequences if you don't remain?

2. Jesus begins with an illustration. In the Old Testament, Israel was the vine and God the gardener. How does Jesus change things?

6. What's the relationship between understanding God's love and bearing fruit? **Look up 15:9-13**

3. Who's the vine, gardener, branches in *John 15:1-7*

7. How are Jesus' followers to be identified? **13:34-35, 15:12**

4. Why is it significant that Jesus is the vine?

8. What's the difference between a servant and friend?

How faithful were Israel? **Look up Isaiah 5:1-2**

9. Every Christian is a chosen friend of God
How should that identity affect our confidence?
Look up 15:14-16

How faithful was Jesus? **Look up 5:20, 14:31**

Study 25 – John 15 (2)

1. How has the world responded to Jesus? **Look up John 3:19-20**
2. What's the relationship between a believer's identification with Jesus' CV and postcode and persecution? **Look up 15:18-25**
3. When a disciple is hated, whose company are you in?
4. In what way does belonging to Jesus mean you don't belong to the world?
5. What might that look like for you at school, sports club etc?
6. Think back to what should be the primary thing that identifies Jesus' followers **Look up 13:34-35, 15:12.**
7. What comfort should the last verses of the chapter bring to you? **Look up 15:26-27**

How should that be a comfort and give you confidence?

Session 26 – John 16

The Spirit and The Cross

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Why the long teaching session?

The reason for this intense teaching session is the imminent departure of Jesus **13:1, 33, 36**. Up to now, the disciples have witnessed a man who is dripping with power and authority, but who also makes plenty of enemies. The disciples are quick to realise that, once he's gone, they will face the enemies on their own, without their all-powerful leader to defend them.

With this in mind, Jesus' teaching seeks to answer three questions:

1. What are we to expect when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

What Jesus has covered so far:

John 13

13:8 – The all-powerful word of Jesus makes a disciple clean

13:12-14 – Jesus is the example of how disciples are to love each other

13:15-17 – We are commanded to follow his example

John 14

14:1, 18, 27 – The disciples' greatest fear is that there're be left as orphans

The answer to fear is to remember Jesus' authority

14:2-3 – The disciples must remember that Jesus controls their future

14:8-10 – The disciples must remember and trust Jesus' all-powerful word

14:10-11 – The disciples must remember and trust Jesus' all-power works

14:12-13 – The disciples must remember and trust Jesus' all-powerful name

14:17-26 – The Holy Spirit's role is to help each disciple remember these truths

14:15, 21, 23 – The more the Spirit reminds us, the more we want to obey Jesus

John 15

The answer to fear is to remember your identity

14:31 – Spiritual fruit is to follow Jesus' example of what it means to love the Father

15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 – A disciple only bears spiritual fruit by remaining in Jesus

15:9 – The Father loves every disciple with the same love with which he loves the Son

15:14-16 – We are friends not servants, chosen in love

These are the truths Jesus wants to put into every disciple's tool bag, to help them reflect his character in a dark world. Today he will add a few more.

2 Truths



The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Son, through making the cross the focus for all believers

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

Your Crisis - 16:1-6

Two Realities - Hold Them In Tension

The opening words of Jesus help us remember the context of the previous chapter. The disciples are constantly being asked to hold two realities in tension. Their identity is sure, for they are eternally connected to the all-powerful Son of God, and perfectly loved by the Father **15:9**. They are friends not servants, chosen children, not forgotten orphans **15:15-16**. These truths lead to the second reality, for if they remain in Jesus, they must expect the same response from the world that he received **15:18-21**.

Application

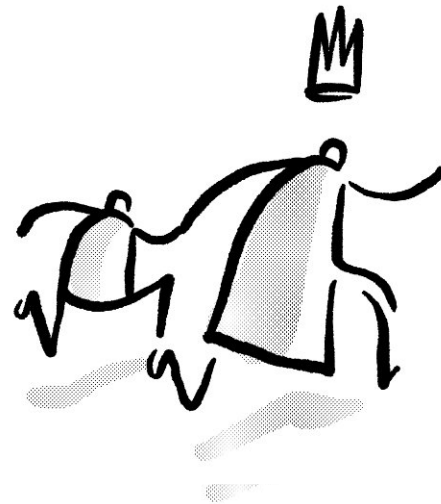
Holding two things in tension is a huge part of the Christian journey. The teaching Jesus gives, is aimed at helping his followers continue on their journey **16:1**. He knows the hatred of the world will be fierce, and will tempt them to give in and give up. When they face that hatred, they must remember their identity, and continue to apply all that Jesus is teaching them to their daily lives.

Cancelled From The Community

Part of Jesus' CV involves being rejected by his own people and community **1:11**. The warning Jesus gives to his disciples, is that owning his CV and postcode as your identity will lead to the same response **16:2**.

Application

We know from the story of the blind man that the temple was the centre of the community, and being barred was the sign of total rejection **9:22-23, 34**. Here Jesus is warning that rejection from your community is part and parcel of identifying with his CV and postcode. It's



therefore only right that we pass on to our young people the warning Jesus gives us here. These words bring grief into the disciples' hearts **16:5-6**, so what will Jesus say?

Your Coach - 16:7-15

Stick Close To Your Teacher - 16:7

The first truth that answers their understandable grief, concerns their teacher (coach). When a disciple suffers rejection and hatred from their community, they must listen to their coach. Up to now their teacher has been God the Son, but from now on it will be God the Holy Spirit **16:7**. So, what will God the Holy Spirit want to teach the disciples so that they 'don't fall away'?

The True Nature of Sin - 16:8-9

All the way through John's gospel we have seen Jesus preaching and applying his CV and postcode. His preaching always causes a division between those who want to remain in spiritual darkness and those who are drawn to his light. The Spirit wants to show us that the true nature of sin is not lying, stealing or adultery, but instead a rejection of Jesus' CV and postcode **16:9**. The Spirit's work is to teach the disciples how to apply Jesus' CV and postcode in such a way that the world understands the true nature of sin.

Application

As youth leaders we must help our young people learn how to explain their faith to their friends. But the application of that message and the spiritual life it brings is not down to them, but to the person of the Holy Spirit. This is a liberating truth that our young people must understand and enjoy.

"He will expose the naked truth that the root of sin lies in the desire of men to live their lives in self-centred independence, disowning any allegiance to Jesus." R.V.G. Tasker

The True Nature of Righteousness - 16:10

The Holy Spirit will teach every disciple that a righteousness life is accepting what God says is right, as opposed to what the world says. All the way through John's gospel, people have witnessed God's righteous through the life of Jesus. Some have been drawn to it, while others have hated it. *"Thus, the use of 'righteousness' by Jesus here serves as a summary of the rejection of Jesus displayed by all the opponents of Jesus during his ministry, both Jew and Gentile."* (Luther). The Holy Spirit reminds the disciple that they no longer belong to the world, for they reflect the righteous character of Jesus.

The True Nature of Judgement - 16:11

The defeat of 'the prince of this world' is the greatest guarantee that judgement will come to those who reject Jesus. The 'prince of this world' stands condemned, for the cross and resurrection will soon strip him of his power.

Application

When our young people feel the heat from their friends or community, they must ask the Holy Spirit to remind them of the true nature of sin and righteousness.

Sin = rejection of the one the Father has sent

Righteousness = rejection of the righteous life of Jesus or his followers

Judgment = those who remain with the prince of this world, stand condemned

The Lord Jesus will only be 'glorified' once people know and understand the meaning of the words, sin and righteousness **16:14**

"The grace of God is that the work of the Spirit is to reveal the sinful condition of the world, and the work of the Son is to remove it."
E.W. Klinck

Txt	Truth about The Son
1:14	Glorious and full of grace and truth
1:17	Grace and truth come through Him
3:21	The truth of Christ brings you into God's light
4:23-24	He brings God's truth to the world
8:32	His truth sets you free
8:40, 44-46	He speaks the truth of God
14:6	He is God's truth
17:17	He is the word of truth
18:37-38	He alone defines truth

Nothing New - 16:12-15

The Holy Spirit's one passion is to glorify Jesus, which is achieved in two ways. As the Spirit of truth, he's got nothing new to say, for his work is to magnify the words and works of Jesus **16:13-15**. In his teaching, Jesus wants to show us that



the Spirit mirrors him. Just as the Son only spoke the words given to him by the Father, **8:28**, so the Spirit only speaks the words given to him by the Son **16:13-15**. *The table below shows the truths the Spirit will glorify.*

Application

One of the subtle strategies of the devil is to seek to drive a wedge between the work of the Son and the Spirit. Applying the teaching of Jesus on the person and work of the Holy Spirit is the best way to counteract that.

Your Comfort - 16:16-33

The departure of Jesus is still the question that fills the minds and hearts of his followers **16:16-18**. To answer their questions Jesus turns the disciples' thinking towards the cross.

The Cross brings joy and sorrow - 16:19-20

The first truth about the cross concerns the responses it will generate. The cross will bring deep grief to his followers, but great delight to a world that's been plotting his downfall **16:19**. Very soon his own people will be screaming for his crucifixion, and rejoicing when it happens **19:15-16**.

The word joy is used four times to describe a disciple's response. To get to grips with the importance of the word, a definition is really helpful "joy is a feeling of inner gladness that can't be stolen".

The disciple's grief will soon turn to joy when they see and experience the risen, triumphant Son of God **16:20**.

Txt	Joy and the disciple
16:20	The death of Jesus brings grief, but his resurrection joy
16:21	The pain of childbirth leads to resurrection life
16:22	The foundation of their joy is the historical resurrection of Jesus
16:24	Their joy is based upon their relationship with God the Father

The Cross Is like a birth - 16:21-22

Secondly, Jesus uses the illustration of a woman giving birth to describe his cross. The disciples will soon feel like a husband watching the one they love suffering. Yet once the suffering is over, new life will be celebrated **16:21**. The resurrection of Jesus gives a joy that persecution cannot destroy **16:23**.

Application

In a few chapters we will hear the world's joy at the trial and execution of Jesus **18:40, 19:6, 15**. As we train our young people to follow Jesus, we must help them understand, that the world's hatred is followed by the victorious resurrection of Jesus.

The Cross Welcomes you to the Father - 16:23-28

Thirdly, Jesus shows that the cross revolutionises our relationship with the Father. In the Old Testament, the sacrificial system was designed to protect a rebellious people from being judged by a Holy God. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest could only enter the Holy of Holies (God's presence), once he'd sacrificed a spotless lamb. If he approached God on his own merit he'd instantly die. The sacrifice of Jesus changes everything, for sin is punished, leaving the disciple free to approach the Father. The sacrifice of Jesus assures every disciple that when we pray in 'the name of Jesus' the Father delights to hear and answer **16:23-26**. When a disciple prays in 'the name of Jesus' the Father is reminded of His Son's life, death, and victorious resurrection. When he hears the sweet name of his Son on the lips of one of his children, his heart loves them even more **16:27**.

"The passage is all about the fact that Jesus' people have instant, immediate, direct and valued access into the very presence of the living God". T. Wright

Application

A right doctrine of the cross teaches our young people two fundamental truths. Firstly, their sin is deeper and more offensive to God than they could ever imagine. So serious, that the Father sent His Son to take the wrath of God, so his justice was satisfied. Secondly, the cross reveals the unfathomable depth of the Father's love. The more clearly our young people understand the seriousness of their own sin, the more wonderful God's love through the cross will appear. The way is made open, so now the Father wants to hear and answer his children's cries.

The Cross Brings peace - 16:29-33

Peace = "An unbroken union with the Father, even in a world filled with continuous strife, persecution, humiliation, and even death."
Hoskyns

The way Jesus answers the disciple's question, helps them see and understand that his postcodes from heaven **16:29-31**. In a world where challenges to their faith are fierce **16:32**, 'the peace of God' will guard them **16:33**.

"The source for this courage is certainly not found in the world, nor within the disciples themselves, but in the accomplished work of Christ. Said in another way, only with the correct object of faith can a person be grounded in a greater and more powerful reality than that which surrounds and threatens him." **E.W. Klink**

Application

The final verses bring us back to the original question **16:1**, 'how can followers of Jesus keep going and not give up'? The world hates it when Jesus preaches his CV and proves his postcode. When Jesus is crucified, they foolishly think they've won, when in reality it's the victory of God. This is the reality we want our young people to live by.



Study 26 – John 16 (1)

1. What two truths is Jesus calling the disciples to hold in tension?

Their identity – Look up 15:9, 15-16

Their place in the world – Look up 15:18-21

2. What's the purpose of Jesus' teaching from John 13-17? *Look up 16:1-4*

3. What's Jesus' first warning and how does that link with his CV? *Look up 1:11 and 16:1-4*

How might people experience that today?

4. The Holy Spirit is our teacher and coach helping us remain faithful to Jesus.

What truths will help us remain faithful? *Look up 16:7-11; the definition of the important words below may help you*

Sin = rejection of the one the Father has sent

Righteousness = rejection of the righteous life of Jesus or his followers

Judgment = those who remain with the prince of this world, stand condemned

5. How is the Holy Spirit's work the same as Jesus'? *Compare 8:28 with 16:13-15*

6. Below are the truths the Spirit wants to remind all believers of — what are they? *You may want to pair up and split the verses up.*

Txt	Truth About The Son
1:14	
1:17	
3:21	
4:23-24	
8:32	
8:40, 44-46	
14:6	
17:17	
18:37-38	

Study 26 – John 16 (2)

Jesus states four vital truths about the cross

1. What emotions does the cross invoke in followers and enemies of Jesus?

Why do you think that is? Look up 16:19-20

2. Look how many times joy is mentioned in 16:20-24. *What creates joy in the disciple?*

Txt	Joy and the disciple
16:20	
16:21	
16:22	
16:24	

3. How does the illustration of birth help us understand the cross further? *Look up 16:21-22*

4. How does the cross radically change our relationship to the Father? *Look up 16:23-28*

5. In a world full of turmoil, how does the cross bring peace? *Look up 16:29-33*

This definition of what Jesus means by peace may help:

Peace = "An unbroken union with the Father, even in a world filled with continuous strife, persecution, humiliation, and even death". Hoskyns

6. How should a Biblical view of the cross shape your worldview?

How will it make you different to your friends?

The way you view the world?

Session 27 – John 17

Praying for Glory

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Each chapter has focused upon the fear the disciples have concerning the imminent departure of their Lord and saviour.

John 13 – The answer to fear is to remember to love each other like Jesus

John 14 – The answer to fear is to remember Jesus' authority

John 15 – The answer to fear is to remember your identity is in Jesus

John 16 – The answer to fear is the cross of Jesus

Today he teaches us how to make his CV and Postcode the foundation of our prayers.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

The three prayers of Jesus focus upon his greatness being enjoyed and known by as many people as possible.

The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

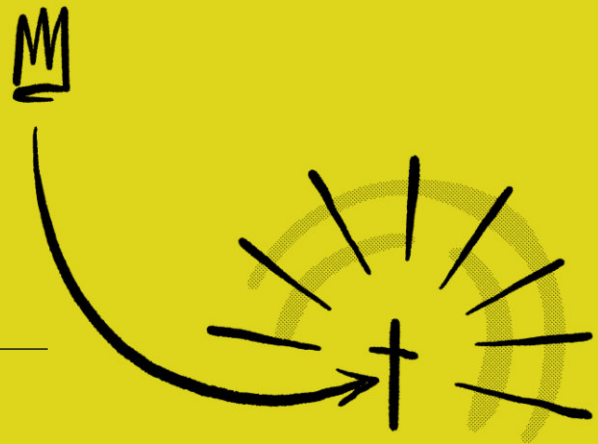
Introduction

In this chapter Jesus prays three separate prayers:

Prayer 1 – The Trinity – Their Mission

Prayer 2 – The Twelve – Their Mission

Prayer 3 – The Church – Their Mission



Prayer 1 - The Trinity - Their Mission

The table below shows how Jesus' CV and postcode are the foundation of his prayer:

John 1	Jesus' CV and postcode	John 17	Jesus' prayer
1:14	The reason Jesus has come is to display God's glory	17:1	For the Son to be 'glorified'
1:14	Jesus glorifies the Father who sent him	17:2	For the Father to be 'glorified'
1:12-13	The Son enters the world to create children of God, giving them eternal life	17:2	That the Son would give eternal life to those the Father gives him
1:14, 18	He is sent by the Father to display truth and grace	17:3	That people would believe Jesus Postcode. That He's been sent by the Father
1:9, 14, 17	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:4-6	That the Son would be 'glorified'

The key word in the first prayer is 'glory'. The definition we have worked with to define glory has been 'God's greatness on public display'. This is what Jesus is praying for, so how does the prayer reflect this?

They Would Know God

The primary way God's glory is seen is through His people entering into an eternal relationship with him **17:2-3**. This is why Jesus has been sent by the Father, and His cross and resurrection will complete His work **17:4**.

Application

For our young people, this prayer might feel a little ego-centric, praying to be 'glorified'. This thinking fails to understand two crucial truths.

It's not a created being praying to be 'glorified' but the creator of all things **1:1-3**. When a created being hungers to be glorified, you can be sure arrogance and pride are present.

Last session we learnt that the Spirit's work is to 'glorify the cross' **16:20, 21, 22, 24**. When the Spirit glorifies the cross, lost people become children of God.

"It is from the cross that He is to reign and distribute His royal bounty; while to unbelievers the hour of the passion is an hour of judgement, to believers it brings the gift of eternal life which consists in an ever-deepening experience of the only real God, an experience mediated through Jesus".
R.V.G. Tasker



Prayer 2 - The Twelve - Their Mission

The table below shows how Jesus' CV and postcode are the foundation of his prayer:

John 1	Jesus' CV and postcode	John 17	Jesus' prayer
1:1-2	The reason Jesus has come is to display God's glory	17:6-7	Jesus is the Word they have believed in
1:18	Jesus glorifies the Father who sent him	17:8	They believe Jesus Postcode. He been sent from the Father
1:12-13	The Son enters the world to create children of God, giving them eternal life	17:9	The twelve disciples belong to the Father
1:16	He is sent by the Father to display truth and grace	17:10	Glory comes to God through the life of the twelve disciples
1:5, 9-13	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:11-12	Protection by the power of the Father's name
1:1-2	The unity of the trinity is seen from the beginning of time	17:11	The disciple's unity would not be threatened
1:12-13	The Son enters the world to create children of God, by giving them eternal life	17:13	They would know the joy of Jesus
1:11	His own people reject him	17:17	The world will hate the apostles
1:5, 9-13	No one can defeat Jesus who is the light of God	17:15	Protection from the evil one
1:9, 14, 17-18	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:17-19	The Father sends the Son The Son sends the twelve

The first prayer focused upon the mission of the trinity to bring 'glory' to the finished work of Jesus. The second prayer focuses upon the unique work the twelve apostles have been given.

Protected - 17:8-12

Three times Jesus prays that the twelve will be protected by the Father's powerful character (name) **17:11, 12, 15**. So what's the unique mission they've been given that requires protection.

The twelve disciples (apostles) are unique, for they were the eye- and ear-witnesses of all that Jesus said and did **17:8-9**. This is something Jesus already mentioned.

14:25-26 The Holy Spirit will remind the apostles of everything Jesus said to them.

15:26-27 Only the twelve were with Jesus from the beginning to the end. They are unique, for they heard what he said, and saw what he did.

The reason they need divine protection is because they face same enemies Jesus encountered **17:14**. *"'Word' here properly means more than the written Scriptures. It refers to the message from the Father in and of the person and work of Jesus Christ, who sends 'the Spirit of truth' (15:26) and is 'the truth' (14:6), which he gave to the disciples, and they 'received', 'understood' and 'kept'" E.W. Klink*

The reason they need divine protection is because the same world and evil one who hated Jesus hates them also **17:14-15**.

Dedicated - 17:13-19

Their protection is essential, for Jesus wants them to remain within a world that hates them. For this reason, they need to be sanctified, which means to be set aside, and dedicated to a special God-given task. Their unique role is to pass on the truth of Jesus; something that requires His prayers.

"By this, Jesus requests that the Father immerse the disciples in the revelation of himself in the Son, sanctifying them by sending the Paraclete to them to guide them into all truth." E.W. Klink

Application

There are two possible applications to make for our young people:

1. This proves their faith is built upon the historical words and works of Jesus.
2. The fact that we are here today with the gospel of John in our hands is evidence Jesus' prayer was answered. The apostles were protected, for we have the historical account of what Jesus said and did.

Prayer 3 - The Church - Our Mission

The table below shows how Jesus' CV and postcode are the foundation of his prayer:

John 1	Jesus' CV and postcode	John 17	Jesus' prayer
1:1-2, 12-13	Jesus is God's message	17:20	For the Son to be 'glorified'
1:1-2	The unity of the trinity is seen from the beginning of time	17:21-23	For the Father to be 'glorified'
1:5, 13-14, 18	The plan of salvation is a Trinitarian plan	17:21-23	That the Son would give eternal life to those the Father gives him
1:9, 14, 17	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:24	People would believe Jesus Postcode. He's been sent by the Father
1:12-13, 14, 18	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace, glory and love to those the Father's given to him	17:25-26	The Son to be 'glorified'

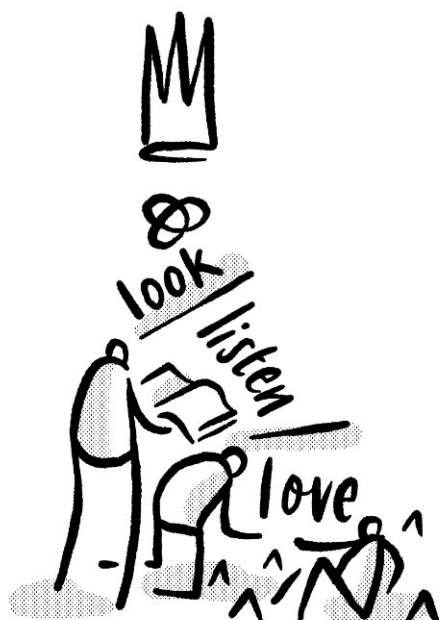
The final prayer is for all the young people following Jesus today. The all-powerful Son of God prays three things for us.

Listen - 17:20

He prays that his followers will listen to the apostles. Everything we hear and experience today, must be judged by what the apostles saw and heard. If

Application

This is a hugely important truth for our young people, whether it be their Muslim friends who think Jesus only a prophet, or friends with a secular world view. What the apostles gave us in the New Testament must be listened to and obeyed.



Look - 17:21-23

The second theme is unity. Often people think the primary focus of Jesus' prayer is the unity of Christians, but a closer look reveals the main focus to be the unity of the Trinity. *"However, the unity depicted here is not a unity that stems from just 'being with one another,' nor is it a call to organise and form a united group for friendly and effective coworking. The point here rather is a unity or 'in-one-ness' that is established in the unity controlled by, defined by and shared by the unity of the Father and the Son. This kind of 'in-one-ness' cannot be obtained by a human process but can only be an act 'from above', a unity that is divine from start to 'completion'. It is a unity by the Spirit' not by an organisation."* (E.W. Klink) The prayer is encouraging us to look away from ourselves and

instead to the way the Trinity relate. It's only when we look away from ourselves to the Trinity, that we have truth and love defined with perfect accuracy. Only then can we begin to work through how we as God's people reflect the unity seen so clearly within the Trinity.

Application

The more our youth groups learn to reflect the nature of the Trinity, the more powerful their witness will be to the watching world. When our youth groups relate with a Trinitarian unity, the world takes notice and believes Jesus CV and postcode 17:23.

Love - 17:24-26

The prayer finishes with a wonderful invitation to enjoy all the beauty of the Trinity's character. The Lord Jesus wants every disciple to see and experience every aspect of his glory 17:24. To enjoy his glory, is to experience his love, which then transforms all your relationships on earth 17:25-26.

Application

To enjoy his glory, is to experience his love, which then transforms all your relationships on earth 17:25-26. The more a disciple understands God's love, the more they will be motivated to love others. The impact this has upon the world will be deep and lasting, for they will have a visual display of the Father and Sons relationship 17:20-21.

It may well come as a surprise to our young people that Jesus prays for them to enjoy him. Enjoying Jesus is the heart of what it means for Him to be glorified 17:1. As we see his greatness on public display, so we're drawn to his brilliance. *"Seeing the 'glory of God' is nothing less than the perfect happiness of the Christian".* (Calvin)

Study 27 – John 17(1)

Read John 17:1-6

1. What is the link between Jesus' prayer and his CV and postcode?

John 1	Jesus' CV and postcode	John 17	Jesus' prayer
1:14	The reason Jesus has come is to display God's glory	17:1	
1:14	Jesus glorifies the Father who sent him	17:2	
1:12-13	The Son enters the world to create children of God, giving them eternal life	17:2	
1:14, 18	He is sent by the Father to display truth and grace	17:3	
1:9, 14, 17	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:4-6	

2. Why is Jesus praying for his own glory not ego-centric?

5. What does Jesus want all people to know and receive?

3. What is the work Jesus has completed?

6. How does that link to His 'glory'?

4. How does Jesus' prayer complement the work of God the Holy Spirit? *Look up 16:20, 21, 22, 24.*

Study 27 – John 17(2)

Read John 17:6-19

1. What is the link between Jesus' prayer and his CV and postcode?

John 1	Jesus' CV and postcode	John 17	Jesus' prayer
1:1-2	The reason Jesus has come is to display God's glory	17:6-7	
1:18	Jesus glorifies the Father who sent him	17:8	
1:12-13	The Son enters the world to create children of God, giving them eternal life	17:9	
1:16	He is sent by the Father to display truth and grace	17:10	
1:5, 9-13	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:11-12	
1:1-2	The unity of the trinity is seen from the beginning of time	17:11	
1:12-13	The Son enters the world to create children of God, by giving them eternal life	17:13	
1:11	His own people reject him	17:17	
1:5, 9-13	No one can defeat Jesus who is the light of God	17:15	
1:9, 14, 17-18	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:17-19	

2. What is the repeated request of Jesus to his Father about the twelve disciples?
Look up 17: 11, 12, 15.

5. Why is this protection essential?
Look up 17:13-16

3. Why does he pray this?

6. What is the evidence that Jesus' prayer was and is being answered?

4. What is their unique role?
Look up 14:25-26, 15:26-27

Study 27 – John 17(3)

Read John 17:20-26

1. What is the link between Jesus' prayer and his CV and postcode?

John 1	Jesus' CV and postcode	John 17	Jesus' prayer
1:1-2, 12-13	Jesus is God's message	17:20	
1:1-2	The unity of the trinity is seen from the beginning of time	17:21-23	
1:5, 13-14, 18	The plan of salvation is a Trinitarian plan	17:21-23	
1:9, 14, 17	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace and glory	17:24	
1:12-13, 14, 18	The Son is sent to make known God's truth, grace, glory and love to those the Father's given to him	17:25-26	

2. What's the first thing Jesus prays for us?
Look up 17:20

5. What is Jesus' longing to share with us?
Look up 17:24-26

3. How might the twelve disciples' unique mission help you share the gospel with a Muslim friend?

6. Have you ever imagined that the reason God made you, was for you to enjoy him?

4. Who is the focus of unity? *Look up 17:21-23*

What effect should that unity have on us, and what impact should it have on our friends when they come to church or our youth group?

OVERVIEW OF JOHN 18-21: The Glory of The Son

This final section of John's gospel has four main themes.

The Seventh Sign

The final section introduces us to the last of the seven signs, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Glory

The definition of the word 'glory' we have used throughout John is 'God's greatness on public display'. The glory of God is seen most uniquely at the cross **7:39, 12:16, 23, 28, 13:31-32, 17:1**.

The Garden

The gospel of John started in the Garden of Eden with Jesus as creator **1:1-3**, and finishes in a garden with his arrest **18:1**, crucifixion **19:41**, and resurrection **20:15**.

The Governor

As we study these chapters with our young people, it will feel like those who hate and oppose Jesus have total control. A closer look reveals a different story, for all the power people have is given from above **19:11**. Three Kingdoms are on a collision course, but only one is eternal **18:36**.



Session 28 – John 18

Easter Meets Eden

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Throughout *John 1-12*, Jesus has preached his CV and postcode calling people out of spiritual darkness and death and into His light and life. As He's preached, we've witnessed an aggressive response leading to hatred and violence. This attitude of hatred comes to its climax in today's chapter.

The previous five chapters focused on Jesus leaving his disciples *13:1, 14:2, 16:10*.

Their fear of being left as orphans 14:18, leads to Jesus giving his disciples some in-depth teaching seeking to answer these three questions:

1. What are they to expect when the Son returns to the Father?

2. How are they to live when the Son returns to the Father?

3. How will they stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?

Having answered those questions, John now takes us to the seventh sign, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

The old Adam meets the new Adam.

Kingdoms rage against Jesus, but His eternal Kingdom will triumph.

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

Introduction: Easter Meets Eden

Here we enter a scene in the Garden of Gethsemane, and as we enter, we're meant hear an echo from the Garden of Eden. As we compare the two gardens, we will see striking similarities, and also glorious differences.

When the Son entered the world as God's Word, he encountered a world full of rebellious human beings. A world full of Adams. Our journey through John's gospel has shown that when the light shines, people prefer darkness *3:19-20*. These chapters bring that clash to its ultimate climax.

Gangs In The Garden

In the Garden of Eden, Adam betrayed God by rebelling against His authority. The events, stories of the world may be good, bad or indifferent, but nothing is holding them together, or directing their events. The story of



the Bible declares a very different message, from the Garden of Eden, to the Garden of Gethsemane, God's sovereign plan is at work.

The Gang That Arrests - 18:1-14

In the Garden of Eden, we see Adam and Eve hiding from their creator *3:8*, in the Garden of Gethsemane the gangs hunt him down *18:2-3*.

In the Garden of Eden, it's the voice of God that has the power to create *Gen 1:3* and judge *Gen 2:15-16, 3:14, 16-17*. As the different gangs hunt down Jesus, it looks like they have complete control of his destiny. As we look at the gang

that Judas is guiding, it's a detachment of 200-600 soldiers. They look in absolute control until Jesus speaks and lets them know who he is **18:4-6**. He only has to speak a few words "I am he" and they instantly fall to the ground. Hundreds of soldiers arrive to arrest him, but they can't lay a glove on him. *"They are hopelessly outnumbered by one"* (**Garland**).

The one who spoke creation into being 1:2, now allows himself to be arrested. He accepts the cup his Father has given him to drink, as he humbles himself to be bound by a single piece of rope **18:11-12**.

Application

It's essential that we see these events with the background of Genesis 1-3. The sovereign nature of God that's displayed at creation, is now being displayed in salvation.



The Jewish Gang - 18:15-27

The fact that Jesus is rejected by his own people is a fundamental part of his CV 1:11. Here in these verses we see a 'rejection sandwich' as the Jewish trial is sandwiched in-between Peter's denials.

Integrity and Innocence - 18:19-24

In John 10, the Jewish leaders revealed themselves to be selfish shepherds. One of John's aims was for us to compare their selfish attitude, with the sacrificial nature of Jesus **10:11-13**. As the trial begins to play out, we're meant to ask the question, 'who's acting like the real High Priest?' *In the Old Testament the High Priest fulfilled three main roles.*

1. Teach the word of God

2. Represent the people of God

3. Approach God through the sacrifice of a lamb

The phoney High Priest starts by questioning Jesus' teaching, who responds by drawing attention to his integrity **18:20-21**. The Priests respond with violence towards Jesus, who responds by drawing attention to his innocence **18:22-23**.

"We now know, if there had been any doubt, what is going to happen and what it means. The true high priest will be sent to his death by the false one, so that through his death God will rescue his people. The true Adam will be sent to his death by the false ones, so that the garden may be restored, and instead of bloodshed there may be healing and forgiveness. The Word who was and is God is led away for questioning by God's official representative"
T. Wright

Application

The attitude and behaviour of the Jewish leaders teaches our young people something very important about human nature. If we think back to the signs and the teaching of Jesus, the Jewish leaders' actions are completely irrational. The more clearly God reveals himself, the more violent people's hatred becomes.

The Disciple Who Denies - 18:15-18, 25-27

The one who appeared so bold and brave at the last supper **13:37**, is now a quivering wreck. The fulfilment of the CV **1:11**, seems complete as one of his most faithful disciples denies him three times.

Application

As Jesus is left betrayed by Judas and then denied by Peter the picture looks completely hopeless. Yet Jesus' CV give us hope, for he's the saviour who's come to forgive rebels **1:12-13**.

The Roman Gang - 18:28-40

We move from the Phoney Priests to Powerful Pilate, as the Roman Gang now seeks to put

Jesus on trial. This trial is full of so many things, but the most straightforward way to look at it with the young people is to focus on the questions asked and the answers given.

Clean Hearts Or Hands Full Of Blood?

The Jewish gang, led by their Phoney Priest, bring Jesus to Pilate. As we read the beginning of the trial, we're meant to see the clear irony. They bring to Pilate the only person who owns a divine CV and heavenly postcode to be tried and crucified. As they arrive at Pilate's Palace they refuse to enter, for fear they will become ceremonially unclean **18:28**. Without realising it, they bring God's lamb to be the Passover sacrifice for the whole world **1:29**. They think their hearts are pure, when in reality their hands are covered in divine blood.

Application

This part of the story reveals the blindness of the Jewish leaders. As they bring Jesus to be crucified, their big concern is their own personal cleanliness before God. The Lord Jesus is living out what he warned the disciples would face in the future. The Jewish Gang think they are performing an act in support of God, when in reality they are murdering His eternal Son **16:2**.

Question 2 - 18:32-36

Postcode Kingdom

The conversation Pilate has with Jesus is a private one, and the first question concerns whether He's Israel's King. The answer Jesus gives focuses upon the nature of his Kingdom. Suddenly the tables are turned, as Pilate becomes the one who's now answering the questions. As far as Jesus is concerned, there are three Kingdoms colliding and only one has a postcode from heaven **18:36**. As we watch the trials proceed, the natures of the Kingdoms will be clearly seen.

Application

Every Kingdom, political system or empire is ultimately manmade. The only Kingdom that's eternal is the one the Son of God is establishing by his life, death, resurrection and exaltation. In a world that is full of unstable Kingdoms and political empires, this should be a huge comfort to our young people.

King of Truth

The third question Pilate asks focuses again upon whether or not Jesus is Israel's King. As we listen to Pilate's question, the author wants us to think back to the signs Jesus has performed. In the light of those, isn't the answer obvious? Again, Jesus' focus is his character, *"He describes his kingship (and the nature of his rule) by explaining his mission's purpose (truth telling) and result (truth hearing)". E.W. Klink*

Application

A popular phrase that our young people will hear and maybe use themselves is 'make sure you are on the right side of history'. Here Jesus shows that there's only one side to be on when it comes to truth and history **18:37**. As leaders, we must teach our young people that standing on the right side of history should lead to humility and never pride. The one whose character is full of truth, is also full of grace **1:14**.

Question 4 - 18:38-40

No Answer Given

The question Pilate asks Jesus, gets no answer, for the author is expecting the readers to work it out. The only person who can answer the question is the one who has the right CV and postcode **14:6**.

Application

This is where we want to leave the young people at the end of this session. We have come face to face with two different Gangs that choose to act like Adam. The only difference is that when God turned up in Eden, Adam and Eve choose to hide. When Jesus turns up on planet earth they choose to hunt and destroy **2:21**. Yet the one who is the truth will set up an eternal Kingdom that won't be destroyed.

Study 28 – John 18 (1)

Introduction

In this chapter, we are meant to compare the first garden in the Bible (Eden) with the gardens in this chapter.

Jesus is *arrested* in a garden – 18:1

Jesus is *crucified* in a garden – 19:41

Jesus *rises* in a garden – 20:15

The Arrest - 18:1-14

1. What are the similarities and differences between the Gardens of Eden and Gethsemane?

Compare:

Gen 3:8 with Jn 18:1-2

Gen 1:3 with Jn 18:4-6

The Jewish Gang - 18:15-27

2. How is the Jewish trial and Peter's denials a fulfilment of Jesus' CV – *Look up Jn 1:11, 18:15-26*

In the Old Testament, the High Priest fulfilled three main roles:

- *Teach the word of God*
- *Represent the people of God*
- *Approach God through the sacrifice of a lamb*

3. Who is acting more like the High Priest at the trial? *Look up 18:19-24*

The Roman Gang

As we read the Roman trial, the author wants us to focus upon the questions:

4. What is the major irony/ absurdity in this trial?

What are the Jewish leaders worried about? – 18:28

How does this marry up with their actions towards Jesus?

Without realising it, how are the Jewish leaders fulfilling God's salvation plan? Look up 1:29.

5. Pilate's questions focus upon Jesus' identity. How does Jesus answer him? *Look up 18:32-40*

6. How should Jesus' answers give you comfort and confidence?

Study 28 – John 18 (2)

Application Questions

1. Have you ever thought of history reflecting one story?

- *Have you ever thought of the Bible as that one story?*
- *How might that affect how you read your world, your social media feed, all that wars etc?*

2. How can looks be deceiving?

- Jesus versus 200-600 hundred soldiers – *but Gen 1:3, Jn 18:4-6*
- Jesus bound by a single piece of rope 18:11-12 – *but Jn 18:4-6*

3. What circumstances in your life appear one way, but with the reality of Jesus' CV and Postcode, could be viewed differently?

4. How can you learn to read your life circumstance in the light of Jesus' CV and postcode?

5. Why is Jesus happy for the discussion to be focused upon his teaching? *Look up 18:19-24*

6. How can Peter's unfaithfulness be an encouragement to you?

7. How has their religion completely blinded them to their own dark hearts? *Look up 18:28*

Could you ever see Christianity doing that to someone; why or why not?

8. How should the Kingdom Jesus is creating be an encouragement to you? *Look up 18:37*

Txt	Jesus CV
1:1	He's God
1:2	He's Eternal
1:3	He's Creator
1:13	Power to save
1:14	God made flesh
1:14	Sent from the Father

9. What might it cost you to believe and live by Jesus' words? *Look up 18:37*

Session 29 – John 19

‘Here Is The Man’

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The last chapter gave us the impression that the two gangs-controlled Jesus’ destiny. Yet he only had to speak two words ‘I am he,’ for the whole detachment of soldiers to fall helplessly to the flaw **18:5**. The Jewish and Roman Kingdoms were made and ruled by humans, whereas his Kingdom is eternal **18:36**. Today’s chapter has the same feel as last week, two gangs displaying the rebellious nature of Adam as they send Jesus to be crucified.

As we look at this vital chapter with our young people, we must have in our minds Genesis 1-3, Easter meeting Eden. As we seek to teach this chapter, it’s appropriate to remember these words from **Martin Luther**: “*The cross alone is our theology*”.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

“His throne is the cross from which he reigns”
John Stott

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

Introduction

As we teach this passage, a few things need to be remembered.

Remember It’s A Story

The beauty of scripture is that God’s truth is explained in different ways. For a carefully worked out theological and technical explanation of the cross and resurrection we are given the book of Romans. To explain the cross and resurrection in story form we are given the gospels. The leader’s notes today divide the story into four scenes, all based around the presentation of Jesus as the image of God. Like all good stories there’s an engaging plot, strong characters and triumph over evil.

Remember You Are Limited

In teaching the young people, it’s impossible to include every detail John has given us. As we look at each scene, I will seek to bring out one or two vital truths John wants us to know.

This Man Is God’s Image - 19:1-7

The curtain rises on a scene that’s utterly brutal, as we see Jesus mocked and then mercilessly flogged. This scene should not surprise us, for Jesus warned that his body and reputation would be destroyed **2:19**. Again it looks like the gangs rule the garden.

The trial and the imminent crucifixion are happening on the sixth day **19:31**. In that light, the words of Pilate have huge significance as he presents Jesus to the crowd declaring “Here is the man”. As soon as we hear those words, we should think back to the creation story, where God created mankind on the sixth day.



Genesis	Here is the Man - Adam	John	Here is the - Jesus
1:26-27	Mankind is created	1:14	The eternal Son takes on flesh and blood
1:26-27	Mankind is presented to the creation as his unique image	19:5	Pilate presents Jesus, God in flesh, to the crowds



The response of the crowd to the presentation of Jesus reveals three things:

Darkness Is Total - 19:6

When the eternal Son is presented to the crowd, they hunger for his destruction. Everything we've been told about mankind's hearts **3:19-20** is revealing itself.

Innocence Is Told

Three times Pilate will declare Jesus to be innocent, and two of them are in this part of the story **18:38, 19:4, 6**.

Law Is Twisted

As the curtain comes down on the first scene, the screams of 'Crucify' dominate. The Jewish Gang's justification for hating Jesus is their own scripture **19:7**. As 'the man' is presented, we are meant to ask two questions. Who is really on trial? Who is guilty of blasphemy?

"The King of the Jews, crowned with thorns. The innocent king, the true man, the one who told the truth, and was accused of blasphemy. 'Here's the man!'. The words hang over the whole of chapter 19 as Jesus goes to the cross. This, John is telling us, is the true reflection of God. This is what it means that Jesus, the eternal Word, took our flesh. Look at this man, and you'll see your living, loving, bruised and bleeding God". T. Wright

Application

This scene could not really look or feel any darker as the human heart is fully exposed in its hatred towards Jesus. One shaft of light comes from a surprising source, as Pilate three times declares him innocent. Where are we standing? With the Jews in their rejection of Jesus, or with Pilate recognising his innocence?

This Man Is God's Judge - 19:8-15

The curtain opens and we find Jesus for a second time facing an interrogation from Pilate.

Postcode - 19:8-9

All the way through John's gospel we have seen Jesus preaching his postcode. Here Pilate asks him where he's from, but Jesus gives him no

answer. The reason Jesus doesn't answer Pilate is because he's already given him the answer **18:36-37**. Just like in the first interrogation, the tables are being turned as the one who seems to have all the power suddenly becomes the one in the dock.

Power - 19:10-11

As the Roman Governor, Pilate believes he's in total control of Jesus' destiny. The reply Jesus gives doesn't challenge his power, as much as remind him of where it's from **19:11**.

Preparation - 19:12-15

The answer Jesus gives continues to convince Pilate of his innocence, so he responds by trying to set him free. His attempts are utterly pointless for the Jews want Jesus crucified. As the curtain comes down on the second scene, it's the screams of the chief priests 'We have no king but Caesar' that dominate. These haunting words are the last words spoken by the Jews in this scene. The Phoney Priests think they're clean and ready for their Passover celebrations, when in reality they have prepared the lamb for slaughter and themselves for judgement.

Application

The people with the power seem to be Pilate and the Priests as they decide Jesus' destiny. Yet the way the author tells the story is designed to make us question that. Who is sitting on the judgment seat at the trial, Pilate or Jesus **19:13**? Has Pilate placed Jesus on his judgement seat to make a point?

"The narrative wanted to present two coexisting and competing realities simultaneously, namely, the 'authority' of both Pilate and Jesus, which vv. 10-11 made clear was the central issue between them. From the narrative's perspective, both were sitting in the judgment seat. The historical strand of the Gospel's plot would suggest Pilate was the one seated, for the seat did belong to his Roman office; yet the cosmological strand of the Gospel's plot just as strongly suggests that Jesus was the one seated, for the seat also belonged to his divine office. In order to communicate this, the narrative intentionally makes the sitting of the 'judge' explicitly implicit so that the scene is presented in the fullness of its historical and cosmological contests". E.W. Klink

We teach this story to our young people knowing that Jesus will rise and return to his postcode, the Father's right hand. *In that light, people's attitude towards Jesus is what will lead to their judgement.*

Pilate – He declares Jesus to be innocent but still sends him to be crucified. His actions condemn him.

Jews – Their words condemn them, as they cry for his crucifixion.

This Man Is God's Saviour - 19:16-37

A King? - 19:16-22

The curtain rises for the third scene, and we see Jesus lifted up upon a cross. As we look closer, we see the inscription 'King of the Jews', something the Phoney Priests hate. The 'hour' that Jesus has spoken of from the very beginning has finally come. The time of his glorification has arrived. *"The cross is the throne from which Christ rules" (J. Stott).*

Txt	The Cross Is The King's Glory
2:11, 18	His cross is his hour of glory. He will be destroyed but will rise to glory
7:39	Not yet glorified, is an arrow to the cross
12:16	'Only after he was glorified' is pointing to the cross
12:23	The 'hour' in which he will be glorified is the cross
12:28	The Father's true glory will be seen at the cross
13:31-32	As Jesus leaves the last supper to be arrested and crucified, God will be glorified
17:1	The 'hour' is his cross, where Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be glorified

A Saviour Who Finishes His Work - 19:28-30

All the way through his crucifixion Jesus is fulfilling scripture. When he asks for a drink it's a direct fulfilment of Psalm 69:21. The one who thirsts now is the one who quenched the eternal thirst of the woman at the well 4:13-14, and everyone who would come to him 7:37-38. The eternal Son thirsts so we may have eternal living water. This is his Glory.

"Jesus has borne the death penalty on our behalf. Behold the wonder! There He hangs upon the cross! This is the greatest sight you will ever see. Son of God and Son of Man, there He hangs, bearing pains unutterable, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Oh, the glory of that sight!" Charles Spurgeon

A Saviour Who Gives Faith - 19:35-37

The author wants to leave each reader with a stiff challenge, "do you believe what you're reading is true?".

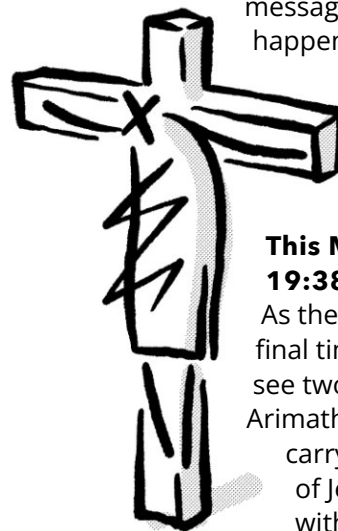
Application

If we don't challenge our young people at this point, then we're not teaching John's gospel. Here the author raises his voice and calls for all

of us to 'listen up'. His

message is clear: this really happened, I saw it with my

own eyes, and heard it with my own ears – do you believe me?



This Man Is God's King - 19:38-42

As the curtain rises for the final time in this chapter, we see two men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus carrying the lifeless body of Jesus. So why finish with this story? There are three reasons:

The King's Disciples - 19:38-39

Here we have two disciples of Jesus, Joseph and Nicodemus. We know a lot more about Nicodemus' journey to becoming a disciple of Jesus than Joseph's, 3:14-16, 3:19-21, 7:45-52. When he came at night the first time it was to interrogate Jesus; now he comes to worship.

The King's Burial - 19:39-40

The two disciples have come to worship, they give Jesus a King's burial.

"A hundred pounds of spices (in our wight system, about eighty pounds): a hundred times the amount Mary had poured over Jesus in Bethany (12:3), and that had caused people to grumble at the extravagance. It was the kind of quantity (and quality, for that matter) that you might use for a king. That was probably the point. Joseph and Nicodemus agreed with Pilate's notice, though for very different reasons. If Israel ever had a king, surely this was the man." T. Wright

The King's Rest - 19:41-42

Having worshipped their King, they now lay him in the tomb to rest, for his work is completed. This picture should remind us of the Garden of Eden, when God rested after finishing the work of creation **Gen 2:2**. The work of salvation is finished, so Jesus rests on the seventh day. The curtain comes down for the last time in anticipation of the King's resurrection which will bring in the new creation.

"The entire gospel has been crafted within a 'creation week' structure, 2:1, 12:1, 1:19. The creation of man was literally renewed at the incarnation 1:14. The focus of the majority of John was on the sixth day, the creation of the God-man, awaiting the seventh day, the day of rest, to arrive. But the seventh day has now come and gone! Jesus, 'the man' (19:5), has completed his work 19:30, ceasing from all his activities. The biblical irony is stark: the Son of God rested from his creative work in a new tomb located in a garden 19:41. In this one statement the entire biblical story is summarised, for all of creation has been reborn. From this garden tomb life (eternal) was recreated. Thus, as the sun rose on this new 'day' so did the unique Son for whom this day would henceforth be named 'the Lord's Day'." E.W. Klink

Application

This final scene hammers home the central message of this chapter: *"The cross alone is our theology"* (**M. Luther**). The first place a disciple looks to confirm that Jesus is King is the cross. That's the place we must encourage our young people to look and then worship.

Study 29 – John 19 (1)

1. Why are Pilate's words 'here is the man' so significant? *Look up John 1:14, 19:5, 19:31 and Gen 1:26-27*

4. How do the Jews justify their hatred against Jesus? *Look up 19:7*

2. How is *19:1-7* a fulfilment of *2:18-19* and *3:19-20*

5. With the differing responses to Jesus, what question do you think John wants us to ask ourselves?

3. How is Pilate's opinion of Jesus different to the Jews? *Look up 18:38, 19:4, 6.*

Study 29 – John 19 (2)

1. How is the cross both the promised hour and the time when Jesus will be glorified?

Think of Jesus' CV – 1:12-13, 17-18

Txt	What's Said About The Hour and The Glory?
2:11, 18	His cross is his hour of glory. He will be destroyed but will rise to glory
7:39	Not yet glorified, is an arrow to the cross
12:16	'Only after he was glorified' is pointing to the cross
12:23	The 'hour' in which he will be glorified is the cross
12:28	The Father's true glory will be seen at the cross
13:31-32	As Jesus leaves the last supper to be arrested and crucified, God will be glorified
17:1	The 'hour' is his cross, where Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be glorified

Think of God's love and wrath 3:16, 36

4. What is the challenge the author presents us with? *Look up 19:35-37*

5. Read the quote below to help you understand why Joseph and Nicodemus believe Jesus to be their King?

"A hundred pounds of spices (in our wight system, about eighty pounds): a hundred times the amount Mary had poured over Jesus in Bethany (12:3), and that had caused people to grumble at the extravagance. It was the kind of quantity (and quality, for that matter) that you might use for a king. That was probably the point. Joseph and Nicodemus agreed with Pilate's notice, though for very different reasons. If Israel ever had a king, surely this was the man." T. Wright

2. Why is Jesus being thirsty so significant? *Look up Ps 69:21, John 19:28-30, 4:14-14, 7:37-38*

3. Why are the words 'it is finished' so important?

6. What is the link between God resting in Eden and Jesus being laid in a tomb? *Look up Gen 2:2.*

Session 30 – John 20

The Eighth Day

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

The gangs have destroyed God's temple as Jesus said they would; now it's time for the Temple to rise. The day of Jesus' resurrection brings a new world, the eighth day. John presents Jesus as the hero of the new creation, who fulfils four different roles.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

The victorious Son brings in the New Creation.

The Message - The Meat of The Passage

The Son Is Our Priest: John 20:1-10

The tomb, which had been the place of rest for Jesus, now it becomes a picture of the Temple in the Old Testament.

The Linen

On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest represented the whole of God's people *Lev 16:17*. His role was to sacrifice the animal so the people could be cleansed from their sin and accepted by a Holy God *Lev 16:29-30*. After the Priest made the sacrifice in the Holy of Holies, he would then take off his sacred linen tunic – the sign the sacrifice had been accepted by a Holy God *Lev 16:23, 30-33*.

When the disciples arrive at the tomb (temple), three times we are told that the disciples saw the linen *John 20:5, 6, 7*. Without realising it, the disciples have entered the Temple. Clearly, there're in shock and don't realise all they're witnessing. The sacrifice has been made and accepted; so, there're eternally forgiven.

The Angels

The role the angels play helps us understand further how the tomb reflects the temple. The Ark of the Covenant was placed at the centre of the Temple, with a gold atonement cover. At each end of the atonement cover was an angel, overseeing the place where the sacrifice was



made and accepted *Ex 25:17-22*. When the sacrifice was made, the Priest had access to God, and was free to pass on God's commands to the people *Ex 25:22*.

When Mary arrives at the tomb, she's greeted by two angels. Like the angels on the Ark, they sit either end of the place where the atonement had been made *20:11-12*. After Mary recognises Jesus, she then takes His commands to the disciples *20:17*.

Application

This is a massive encouragement to our young people. The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is accepted by the Father, so they are eternally forgiven.



The Son Is Our Gardener - 20:11-18

The author uses the word 'saw' purposefully 20:1, 6, 8, for he wants us to know our faith is built upon eyewitness accounts. Here, Mary sees Jesus but does not recognise him 20:14. This mistaken identity leads to one of the most powerful and beautiful truths, as it opens up the true identity of Jesus. *"Mary's intuitive guess, that he must be the gardener, was wrong at one level and right, deeply right, at another. This is the new creation. Jesus is the beginning of it. Remember Pilate. 'Here's the man!'. Here he is: the new Adam, the gardener charged with bringing the chaos of God's creation into new order, into flower, into fruitfulness. He has come to uproot the thorns and thistles and replace them with blossoms and harvests."* (T. Wright). The new creation has arrived, for the risen gardener is present.

Application

When we teach the resurrection to our young people, we must help them see that it's a historical fact which stands up to the most intense scrutiny. But if we just stay there, we've made a big mistake. The gospel writer wants us to focus primarily upon the meaning of the resurrection. How it points who Jesus is, and the hope He brings. The gardener is here, so the new creation is guaranteed.

The Son Is Our Brother - John 20:11-18

Up to now Jesus has addressed his followers as 'disciples', 'servants' and 'friends'. But now the sacrifice has been accepted, and the gardener's arrived to uproot sin, he's free to call them brothers 20:17. This is what his CV had always promised 1:12-13, and now his followers can enjoy.

Application

Here we have the contrast and seeming contradiction that C. S. Lewis helps us see in the character of Aslan: *"He's good, but not safe"*, in The Chronicles of Narnia. Throughout the gospel, we have seen that Jesus is anything but safe. He can call nature to attention and raise the dead. He will stand up for the weak and vulnerable, whatever the opposition. He's not safe, but he's now our good brother.

The Son is Our Lord and God - John 20:19-31

Peace and Hope

The first words Jesus says to his fearful brothers is 'peace be with you' 20:19, 21. He knows they're in a state of fear, for they dread the same fate that he has just endured. His presence brings them peace, for he's their resurrected brother.



The missing disciples from the first appearance is Thomas. The Lord Jesus seeks out the doubter to gently rebuke him, and then bring him to belief 20:26-27.

Slaughter and Sending

In both appearances, the marks of slaughter are presented to his brothers 20:20, 27. When the brothers see the wounds, they rejoice 20:20, and worship him as God 20:27. The major theme of chapters 1-12 was the Son being sent by the Father to save the world. Now the Son sends his brothers to take His message of love and forgiveness to that world 20:21-23.



Application - Belief Leads To Life

The chapter finishes with the reason why John wrote his gospel: He's written it so people would believe His CV and postcode and then worship him.

Study 30 – John 20 (1)

1. What was the primary purpose of the Day of Atonement? *Look up Lev 16:23-34*
2. What is mentioned three times in these verses *20:1-7*, and how does that link back to *Lev 16*?
3. Staying with the Old Testament Temple, what is the link between the Ark of the Covenant and the angels at the tomb? *Look up Exodus 25:17-22 and John 20:11-12, 17.*
4. Why do you think the author uses the word 'saw' continually? *Look up 20:1, 6, 8.*
5. How is Mary both right and wrong about Jesus' identity? *Look up 20:14*

Study 30 – John 20 (2)

1. How has Jesus previously referred to his disciples? *Look up 15:15*

3. What are the two responses of his brothers when he shows them his wounds?

What's significant about how he refers to them now? Look up 20:17

Why is that significant? Look up 20:20, 27

2. What are the first words Jesus speaks to his brothers? *20:9, 27.*

4. How does Jesus' sending of his disciples reflect the whole of his life? *Look up John 20:21-23, 3:16*

Why is that important?

5. Why did John write his gospel?
Look up 20:30-31

How would it have revolutionised the life of Thomas? Look up 20:26-27

6. How have you responded?

Session 31 – John 21

Grace And Truth

The Link - Connecting The Jigsaw

Last session we witnessed the tomb of Jesus being changed from a place of rest to the Temple. The day of resurrection is the eighth day, for he's come to bring in the New Creation.

When Mary and the disciples meet their risen Lord, he reveals four great truths:

20:1-10 - He's Our Priest – The linen reveals the sacrifice is accepted.

The appearance of the angels points back to the Ark of the Covenant.

20:11-18 - He's Our Gardener – He is the gardener who pulls up all the roots of a broken fallen world and replaces it with the New Creation.

20:11-18 - He's our Brother – The cross brings forgiveness, the resurrection guarantees the sacrifice is accepted. We are now brother and sisters of Christ.

20:1-31 - He's Lord and God – The right and appropriate response to our Priest, Gardener and brother is to bow and worship.

The biggest mistake we can make with this wonderful final chapter, is to ask it the wrong questions. The hero of every chapter so far has been Jesus, and this chapter is no different. If we approach the chapter asking questions like what does the number of fish mean, or why different words are used for love, then we might just miss John's main focus. So, let's keep our eyes on the risen Jesus, so we can teach our young people more wonderful truths about our risen and reigning Lord and God.

The Truth - The Seat Belt Test

Every disciple is completely dependent upon the risen Jesus for spiritual fruit and forgiveness.

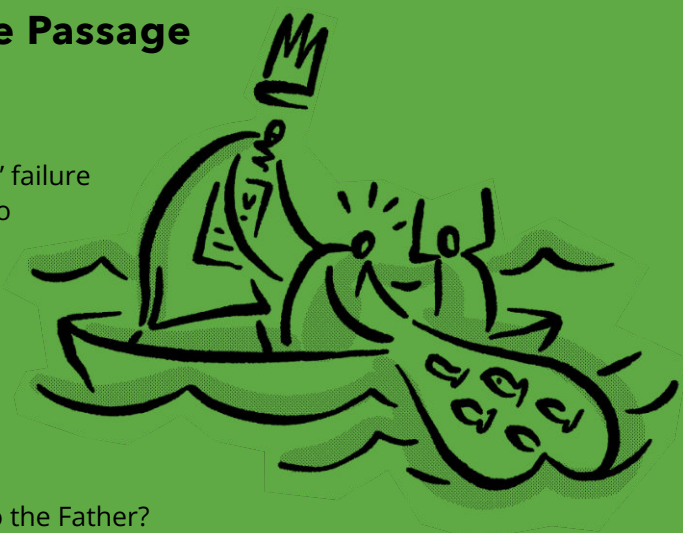
The Message - The Meat Of The Passage

A Command - 21:1-6

Just like Mary in the previous chapter, the disciples' failure to recognise Jesus leads to a brilliant opportunity to understand more of what it means to have him as your Lord and God.

The intensive teaching Jesus gave in chapters 13-17 was to prepare his disciples for his departure. ***When we looked at those chapters, we learnt that they were answering three key questions.***

1. What are we to ***expect*** when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to ***live*** when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we ***stand firm and reflect*** Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?



In his teaching, the Lord Jesus made it crystal clear that the disciples needed to be utterly dependent upon him. If they depended upon themselves for spiritual fruit, they would always be fruitless **15:5**. This story is a graphic image of that reality. The Lord Jesus was absent while they were fishing so they caught nothing. It's only when they obey the command of the risen Lord that fish are caught.

Application

All the way through the gospel, the most powerful thing is the word of Jesus, which is a direct fulfilment of his CV **1:1**. *The table below helps us see this.*

Txt	When Jesus Speaks
1:43	Jesus commands Philip to follow, and he obeys
2:8	He speaks and water is changed into wine
2:22	The words of Jesus and scripture have identical authority
3:34	The words of Jesus and scripture have identical authority
4:42	His words give spiritual life to the woman and her whole town
4:41, 50	Jesus heals the official's son by speaking
5:8	He heals the lame man by commanding him to 'Get up'
5:25	His voice will raise the dead on the last day
6:68	His words bring eternal life
7:17	His words are God's words
9:7	His words heal the blind man
10:3, 5, 16, 27	His people are marked by listening to His voice
11:43	His words raise Lazarus
14:21	Obedience to his voice is the primary evidence that a disciple loves him
15:7	It is only by listening to his words that we bear spiritual fruit
18:5	His words cause a detachment of soldiers to fall to the ground
18:9	The words of Jesus and scripture have identical authority

The mark of a young person who loves Jesus will be a growing devotion and obedience to Jesus words. If they are to *stand firm and reflect Christ's character*, then his word must be the foundation of all their life choices.

1. What are we to expect when the Son returns to the Father?
2. How are we to live when the Son returns to the Father?
3. How will we stand firm and reflect Christ's character when the Son returns to the Father?



A Feast - 21:7-14

Once the fish are caught, Jesus invites his brothers to a feast **21:16**. Everything about the story points to the disciples being utterly dependent upon Jesus. Only through His command will the fish be caught **21:6** and their hungry stomachs filled **21:10-12**. As we observe the feast that Jesus invites the disciples to, we are meant to think back to the feeding miracle in John 6. Just as the disciples are completely dependent upon Jesus to feed their stomachs, so they are entirely dependent upon Jesus to feed their souls **6:35**.

Application

Back in chapter 16, Jesus explained to his disciples what the work of the Holy Spirit was. His job is to bring every follower a joy, which means 'a feeling of inner gladness that can't be stolen'. When the Spirit reminds them of the words and works of Jesus, his CV and postcode, the joy of Christ is felt and experienced. When they are reminded of the cross and resurrection which bring forgiveness and victory, then joy is felt and realised **16:21-23**.

A Redemption - 21:15-23

This is the third time Peter has met the risen Jesus **21:14**, and as he approached him, the fire and coals would have reminded him of the last time he saw Jesus **18:18**. With the three denials fresh in his mind, he must have wondered what Jesus was going to say to him.

Truth and Grace

The most succinct summary of Jesus found in his CV is 'he was full of grace and truth' **1:14**. So, how will these be revealed as he speaks to Peter? The conversation is shaped around the same question, which is asked three times **21:15, 16, 17**. Each time Peter answers the question by declaring his love for Jesus. Clearly, Jesus is unafraid to present Peter with the truth of his sin, but always the aim is to redeem. The aim of the question is to bring Peter to a position where he knows his weakness.

We know from Peter's denials that he's not been chosen because of his natural courage and bravery, for he's a failure. He's chosen and commissioned by Jesus to be a leader in loving and caring for God's people. He's being called to model what it looks like to love God's people like Jesus has loved the twelve John **13:34**. 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another'.

Application

The world chases many things. Through their education at school our young people will be trained to focus on passing exams, so they finish top of the pile. Here, Jesus offers a different kind of mission and path to greatness. Clearly, Peter's natural disposition is to look over his shoulder at his contemporaries, who may be his rivals **21:21**. But Jesus wants Peter (and us) to have a completely different focus. The biggest prizes Jesus gives out are for those who follow his example of sacrificially putting others first. Here in these verses, he's calling Peter to constantly remember how he has been a shepherd to him, and to replicate that example. In other words, 'stand firm and reflect Christ's character'. The Lord Jesus calls us as youth leaders to the same mission, 'stand firm and reflect Christ's character'.



Last Words of Jesus

The last words of Jesus **21:22**, are perfectly matched with the first words he spoke **1:43**. This is the consistent call throughout the gospel: 'follow' the one with a divine CV and heavenly postcode.

A Reminder - 21:24-25

Throughout this chapter, the author has reminded us that he's an eyewitness to what we are reading **21:7, 20**. He wrote this book, and witnessed first-hand all that we are reading.

Application

Sadly, our culture is shaped in such a way that the claims of Christ are not taken seriously. The gospel of John is no fairy story, but instead a first-class eyewitness account.

"The entire Gospel therefore has become the confession of a personal eyewitness of the person and work of Jesus Christ".

E.W. Klink

Study 31 – John 21

1. What is the link between Jesus' teaching in *John 15:1-5* and the story of the fish?

Look up 21:1-6

2. Pick five of the verses in this table to see how central the power of Jesus' words are to his CV.

Txt	When Jesus Speaks, what happens?
1:43	
2:8	
2:22	
3:34	
4:42	
4:41, 50	
5:8	
5:25	
6:68	
7:17	
9:7	
10:3, 5, 16, 27	
11:43	
14:21	
15:7	
18:5	
18:9	

3. What do you think it looks like for you to be devoted and dependent upon Jesus' words?

4. What's the link between the breakfast Jesus prepares and John 6:35?

Study 31 – John 21 (cont'd)

5. The CV of Jesus describes him as being 'full of grace and truth'. How are those character traits being displayed by Jesus in his conversation with Peter? *Look up 21:15-23*

6. What is the link between John 13:34 and the mission Jesus gives Peter to feed God's sheep?

7. What's significant about the first words and last words of Jesus? *Look up 1:43, 21:22*

8. Why should the last two verses give you confidence? *Look up 21:24-25*

GLORY

JOHN'S GOSPEL

God's Greatness On Public Display

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