

4 Small Group Meetings from John's Gospel

Week 1: Who is Jesus?

Introduction:

Read John 20:30-31

John's aim in writing was not to write down everything Jesus has done, a lot of that had been done by Matthew, Mark & Luke. John's aim was to select certain accounts from the life of Jesus in order to bring people to faith in Jesus, for them to have eternal life & to encourage them to keep going in their faith.

The word *believe* in the passage we have just read has a double meaning, it can mean to come to belief in Jesus but also to keep on believing in him. The author leaves the reader clear about whom their faith should be in Jesus.

Hebrews 12 encourages us to do the same so we might continue in our faith. Read Hebrews 12:2-3

In particular John chooses to include 7 '*I AM*' statements in his gospel that focus upon who Jesus is. '*I Am*' is the name of God given to Moses in Exodus 3, the term '*I Am*' specifically identifies Jesus with & as Yahweh the God of Israel.

1. Bread of Life 6:35
2. Light of the World 8:12
3. The Gate for the Sheep 10:7
4. The Good Shepherd 10:11
5. Resurrection & the Life 11:25-27
6. The Way the Truth & the Life 14:6
7. The True Vine 15:1-8

Small Group Activity:

Have a time of extended prayer & worship of God using the sayings as the focus for our thanksgiving of Jesus. The passages could be written out on strips of paper which are given to people to read out. As one is read out spend some time focusing on that aspect of who Jesus is giving praise & thanks. In this context you could also break bread. For the more creative groups you could have prayer stations with visual aids for each of the 'I am statements' for people to move around & pray & draw together for corporate worship at the end.

Spend sometime in prayer for those people you are in contact with who need to come to know the bread of life, light of the world etc.

Week 2: Evangelism – Jesus Style

Introduction

As we saw in the last group John was written *‘That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God & by believing you may have life in his name’* 20:31 The author’s aim in writing is clearly evangelistic & the miracles called ‘signs’ by John & the sayings that followed clearly serve this purpose. We are going to look at two different examples of how Jesus reached out to people from the Gospel of John

Nicodemus

Read John 3:1-21

1. Why do you think Nicodemus approached Jesus?
2. How can the way we live our lives open up the doors for Nicodemus type encounters? What are the challenges for us day to day?
3. What incomplete knowledge of Jesus did Nicodemus have?
4. Are there any Nicodemus type people we know?
5. What were the important things Nicodemus needed to grasp in order to be born again?
6. What are the important things we need to communicate when explaining how people can come to know Jesus?

Man Born Blind

Read John 9:1-41

1. Who approached who in this instance & why?
2. What happened to the man to get him thinking about Jesus?
3. What were the stages involved in this man coming to know Jesus?
4. Were any of us like the man with increasing revelation about who Jesus is/do we know any people who are on a journey towards Jesus like the man?

Discuss

1. Similarities & differences between the two accounts & what we can learn from it in terms of our evangelism.
2. John 5:25 says *‘I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.’* How we are as the ones Jesus has commissioned to take his good news into all the world seeking to enable people to ‘hear the voice of the Son of God’?

Prayer:

Pray for

- Lifestyle evangelism so we may have Nicodemus type encounters.
- Nicodemus type people we know & for God’s help in communicating his good news when we have the opportunity.
- For those we may know who are on a journey towards Jesus like the man born blind
- Opportunities to pray for people for healing – this is what started the man on his journey towards Jesus.

Week 3: Discipleship

'Certainly the Fourth gospel is a gospel for Christian disciples. The Christ of St. John invites people not only to live, but also to go on living in him.' Smalley

1. Read the following verse & discuss how people become disciples of Jesus?
 - John 1:12-13
 - John 1:35-50 – 1st disciples
 - John 3:5-8 - Nicodemus

2. How is being a disciple an on going journey rather than a one off event? Read Ch 15:1-8 & discuss this in the light of that chapter.

3. What are the characteristics/features we see of a disciple in the following passages – make a list.
 - John 13:1-17 – Jesus washes his disciples' feet
 - John 15 – abiding in the vine & opposition
 - John 17 – Jesus prepares his disciples for what is to come

4. Looking at the list you have compiled what challenges you in your discipleship of Jesus in the realities of day to day life? Depending on the makeup of the group you may want to split up into single sex groups to discuss this if it will help to promote more honesty & accountability.

Prayer: John 14:12-13 says *'I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.'* Right after this passage Jesus speaks of the promise to send the Holy Spirit. Pray for one another with the challenges that have been shared & ask for God to fill us with his Holy Spirit to enable us to live as followers of Jesus - challenges & all!

Week 4: Holy Spirit

Introduction

We saw in our last study from John's Gospel that Jesus said to his followers 'I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.' 14:12-13.

what follows immediately after is Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. This is no coincidence if we are to fulfil all that God has for us to be & do we need the Holy Spirit. Today's study is a look at John's teaching on the person & work of the Holy Spirit.

John uses two different words for the Holy Spirit

- The *pneuma* (pronounced without the 'p') is word used to describe the role of the Holy Spirit prior to Jesus death & resurrection; its role is in the life & ministry of Jesus.
- The *Paraclete* is John's distinctive title for the Spirit, which expresses its role as the living presence of God among the followers of Jesus after his death & ascension. The function of the *Paraclete* was to communicate the revelation of God in Jesus & lead believers into a new life.

They are not two different Holy Spirit's but John does use two different words to communicate the work of the Spirit. We will focus on John's *Paraclete* passages & the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

1. Read John 14:15-17 If the Holy Spirit is 'another Counsellor (*paraclete*)' who is the 1st counsellor & how does this reflect the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
2. Other translations of *paraclete* into English have included the words:
ADVOCATE – In a Roman court the advocate pleaded the case for the defence; in a Greek court it was the friend who have moral support.
COMFORTER, INTERCESSOR, REVEALER, HELPER, VINDICATOR, ACCUSER, MEDIATOR

How does this reflect the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives & the lives of others?

3. What other roles does the Holy Spirit fulfil?
John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:7-15
4. In the next New Testament book we see many examples of Jesus' followers doing amazing things & we are informed that they do these things 'filled with the Spirit' or 'full of the Holy Spirit.' Why considering Jesus' teaching to his followers in John is it so important for us to continue to be filled with God's Spirit?

Prayer:

- Thank God for giving us the Holy Spirit
- Pray for one another to be filled with the Spirit & expect God to do great things through you this week as you go out 'full of the Holy Spirit'