

# SIGNS & WONDERS

Finding Hope in the Miracles of Jesus

*PCPC Fall Bible Study*

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## Finding Hope in the Miracles of Jesus

2020 FALL BIBLE STUDY

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## LESSON ONE

## INTRODUCTION

**W**e are so glad you have joined in our combined adult Bible study this fall at Park Cities Presbyterian Church. In this unusual time of coronavirus challenges and our church's construction progress, we are entering into a rare opportunity to focus on the person of Christ as we study, all together, the miracles of Jesus.

The following Bible study questions are intended to help you get the most out of each of the videotaped teaching times. We encourage you to work through them first before watching the video sessions. *You will get far more out of the teaching and your small group discussion if you do.*

You can do each week's study questions in one sitting, or you might want to plan on doing a couple of questions each day of the week so that you have some time in the Bible every day. As you study, understand that the goal is not to get the "right answer." There is no set way to answer each question. Some of you will write many words, and some will only jot down a couple of phrases. We hope you feel the freedom to do whatever works best for you. These questions are meant to provide you with key background you will need for understanding the passage we are studying and to help you understand more about who Jesus is as we study each miracle.

Our hope is that these questions will get you thinking, get you digging, and fill you with a new hope in Christ as the Holy Spirit opens your mind and heart to understand these miracles more than ever before. Do not be frustrated by questions that seem too hard or that you may not have time to answer. The teaching videos each week will help clarify difficult questions and encourage your faith in Christ as we learn of His Kingdom and His character through these miracles.

We are excited to see what God will do in and through each of us as we study these selected "signs and wonders" of Jesus. The miracles demonstrate that Jesus is God and that He cares deeply about our pain, our needs, and the struggles we all face in this fallen world. Each of them points us to the new Kingdom of God Jesus ushered in at the miracle of His birth and culminate in the miracle of His resurrection from the dead. Each miracle says, "this is not the way it is supposed to be" and helps us look forward to a Kingdom that will be without sin and sorrow, filled with the joy of being with God for all eternity.

We pray this fall's study will result in a greater unity in Christ and love for one another as we learn more about Jesus through His signs and wonders.

Warmly,

Paul Goebel  
Kari Stainback

## WEDDING AT CANA

JOHN 2:1-11

*For this first week, here are questions to discuss together as a group after the lecture:*

1. John calls this miracle a “sign” (2:11). Discuss how the signs and wonders of Jesus can affect our belief in Him.

2. How does Mary honor Jesus with her request?

What does this teach us about the way we make our requests to Jesus when we pray?

3. The wedding servants got to see a miracle because they obeyed Jesus' unusual request. Is God challenging you to step outside of your “norm” and trust Him with the outcome?

How can your group pray for you in this area?

## LESSON TWO

### A MIRACULOUS CATCH

LUKE 5:1-11

1. **Read and re-read the passage.** Who are the people in this passage? Where does this miracle take place? What time of day is it? Take your time and “look around” in the passage. What do you observe? What is happening?
  
2. **What else is going on?** Look back at the preceding chapter, Luke 4. This is the beginning of Jesus’ calling of His disciples. Read verses 38-44. What do you think Simon learned about Jesus as he watched Him heal his mother-in-law?
  - a. Who do the people coming to Jesus think He is?
  - b. What does Jesus say is His purpose?
  
3. Why does what is happening in this passage constitute as a miracle?
  
4. What is Simon Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ request to put their nets out again? Why?

Why do you think he complied and with what expectation?

**GETTING PERSONAL:**

Low expectations of how Jesus can work in our lives often comes from a limited understanding or a small view of Him. How can our obedience to Christ grow our understanding of God and increase our faith? Can you think of a time when you have obeyed God even though it didn't make sense to you? How did that experience increase your faith?

5. The miracles of Jesus are "...acts of heavenly normalization, which is to say they are isolated snapshots of the transformation of the broken world to the way it will someday be." (*The Wonder Working God*, Jared Wilson). **Read Genesis 3:17-19.** What aspect of Adam's curse on work is happening here?

a. How is this miraculous catch a sign of God's Kingdom to come?

b. How does this encourage us in our work today?

6. We would expect Simon Peter to go a little nuts with that huge of a catch with gratitude and jubilation for the enormous boost to his finances, especially given the empty nets he'd experienced the night before. However, he falls on his knees in fear in front of Jesus and begs Him to "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (vv. 8-10). What do you think Simon Peter is thinking?

a. What do his actions tell us about what he believes about Jesus now?



- b. Why does he basically tell Jesus, “Go away?”

### INSIGHT:

In his book, *The Holiness of God*, R.C. Sproul comments on this catch: “We notice that Jesus did not lecture Peter about his sins. There was no rebuke, no word of judgment. All Jesus did was show Peter how to catch fish. But when the Holy is manifest, no words are needed to express it. Peter got the message that was impossible to miss. The transcendent standard of all righteousness and all purity blazed before his eyes. Like Isaiah before him, Peter was “undone.”

- 7. How does Jesus respond to their fear, and what new job do they have?

- a. What qualifies them for this assignment from God?

- b. What is their response?

### GETTING PERSONAL:

Isn't it amazing that Jesus changed these ordinary fishermen's day jobs from that of catching live fish that then become dead to now catching dead men so they can be alive forever? These men “left everything and followed Him” at Jesus' call. Think and pray before you answer this question: Is there anything or anyone that matters more to you than following Jesus today?

- 8. Fast forward about three years, and we read a similar story in a similar setting in John 21:1-14. What has happened before Peter's suggestion to go fishing?

- a. How is this story similar to and yet different from this one in Luke 5:1-11?

- b. How does the resurrected Jesus renew their hope?
  
- c. How does knowing Jesus and His calling for you to follow Him wholeheartedly bring you hope?

### EXPLORE MORE:

Throughout his Gospel, Luke focuses on Jesus' training of the apostles, the creating of a missionary people who will participate in His mission by becoming disciple-makers themselves. The paradigm is that the Father sent the Son, the Son sends the Spirit, and the Spirit enables Jesus' people as Jesus sends them. It will not be until the book of Acts that Luke will present the clear picture of how Jesus' promise to Peter here unfolds.

**A. Read Acts 2:36-41** and comment on the changes wrought in Peter by his years of discipleship under Jesus and the enabling of the Spirit.

**B.** What are some of the means of your own Christian formation and equipping that may have been neglected or de-emphasized during these current times?

## LESSON THREE

### JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC

LUKE 5:17-26

1. **Read and re-read the passage.** Who are the people in this passage? Where does this miracle take place? Does that have anything to do with the miracle? Take some time to prayerfully observe the passage. What do you notice? What is happening?
  
2. **What else is going on?** Look back at the preceding verses in Luke 5. We have just learned that Jesus is calling His disciples and that He is able to cleanse us and give us new job assignments in His Kingdom. **Read Luke 5:12-16.**
  - a. How are the people responding to Jesus?
  
  - b. What do we learn about Jesus from this miracle of healing the man with leprosy?
  
3. Why is what is happening in this passage considered miraculous?
  - a. From the crowd's viewpoint, which miracle is the greater?
  
  - b. From the Pharisees' and scribes' perspective, which miracle is greater?
  
  - c. What does Jesus say is the greater miracle of the two?

### BIBLE DICTIONARY:

**Scribe** (verse 21) - high officials, advisors to the chief priests and teachers of the Law

**Pharisee** (verse 21) - religious leaders who took obeying the Law and additional rules extremely seriously

**Blasphemy** (verse 21) - here, claiming authority that belonged only to God

**Son of Man** (verse 24) - an all-powerful human ruler (Daniel 7:13-14). Jesus' favorite term for Himself

4. No healing in Jesus' ministry makes a direct connection between a person's physical illness and his or her sin. Jesus wants His disciples to know more about Him by this demonstration of His power.
  - a. **Genesis 3:3, Romans 8:20-24.** What do we learn about sin and death in these verses?
  - b. **Psalm 32:1-4.** What connection does this psalm make between sin and its physical impact?

### GETTING PERSONAL:

Illness and chronic disease touch our lives in one way or another. In your experience with physical suffering, how do you deal with the mysterious connection between our personal sins and the diseases and physical illness that God may assign to us? How do you pray about it?

5. What is unexpected in the way that Jesus reacts to the paralytic and his four friends?
6. When Jesus pronounces that the man's sins were forgiven, He perceives that the scribes and Pharisees are not happy. In fact, Jesus calls these questioning thoughts "evil" in Matthew 9:4. **Read again Luke 5:24.**
  - a. What does Jesus clearly say His purpose is?

b. How does He prove it to the scribes and Pharisees?

7. What was the former paralytic's and the crowd's reaction to what they heard and saw in that home that day?

### GETTING PERSONAL:

At the Word of Jesus, this man's sins were forgiven, the greatest miracle any human being can experience and one that only God can do for us. What difference does it make in the way you live out your day today to know that your greatest need—forgiveness of your sins—has been taken care of by Jesus?

### EXPLORE MORE:

A. The phrase “power of the Lord” in verse 17 of chapter 5 is synonymous with the *Spirit* of the Lord. By the time this incident takes place, Jesus has been conceived by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, and led by the Spirit in His confrontation with the devil in the wilderness. **Read Luke 4:16-21.** In this inaugural sermon in the synagogue as He proclaims His mission statement, Jesus self-identifies as One who will carry out that mission in the power or Spirit of God. What are some of the ways Jesus' work in His encounter with the paralytic are a pictorial of the redemptive activity He had claimed as His own in His reading in the synagogue?

B. In addition to the *power* of Jesus to carry out the work of His mission, the narrative focuses on the *authority* of Jesus, the full authorization and prerogative of God to implement the plan of God. “Son of Man” is a frequent self-designation Jesus uses to speak about *His* agency in the redemptive plan. The context in which Jesus uses it each time determines whether He is alluding to authority, suffering, etc. **Read Daniel 7:13-14**, a description of a vision of the prophet Daniel with which the Pharisees and scribes would have been familiar. By alluding to Daniel’s prophecy with this self-reference, what audacious claims would Jesus be adding to what He has already made to the religious leaders?

C. What are some of the ways the extraordinary claims of Jesus about Himself bring you comfort today in the midst of all that is swirling around you?

## LESSON FOUR

### JESUS CALMS THE STORM

MATTHEW 8:23-27

1. **Read and re-read the passage.** Who are the people in this miracle of Jesus' story? Where does the miracle take place? What bearing does this have on the miracle Jesus performs? Take time to be quiet and still, to pray and ask the Lord to help you observe this passage. What do you see? What is happening?
2. **What else is going on?** Skim the preceding three chapters, Matthew 5, 6, and 7. What is this famous sermon of Jesus? What are some of the main points of Jesus' teaching?
3. **Read Matthew 7:28-29.** What amazes Jesus' listeners? Why is that?

Remember that Jesus' disciples are among those in the crowd. What are they learning about Jesus' authority?

4. **Read Matthew 8:1-17.** How does the amazement of the disciples grow as they watch Jesus heal many people of many things?

How does this demonstrate His Kingdom authority?

5. Look at the two potential followers of Jesus in **Matthew 8:18-22**. What keeps them from becoming followers of Jesus, even though they both were amazed by Him?
  
6. In our passage this week, **Matthew 8:23-27**, Jesus gets in the boat with “His disciples.” Considering what we have learned about these men so far, what do we know about their faith in Christ?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

James Montgomery Boice describes being a true follower of Jesus as this: “Nothing can come before a deliberate, active, practical following for one who wants to be His disciple” (*The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1, The King and His Kingdom – An Expositional Commentary*). How do you know the difference between a faith in Christ that is amazed at His teaching and what He does for us or a genuine faith that means we are truly His disciple? Where are you on this path of following Jesus?

### BIBLE DICTIONARY:

**The Lake of Galilee** sits approximately 600 feet below sea level. It is surrounded by high hills on its western, northern, and eastern sides. Canyons cut through these hills. The easterly wind storms that hit the land of Israel are quite severe, and even in the present day, can cause damage to property and agriculture, even the loss of life.

7. The disciples and Jesus are on the boat, Jesus is asleep, and one of these terrifying Lake of Galilee storms begins to flood the boat with water.
  - a. What right action do the disciples take in the middle of this extremely frightening storm?
  
  - b. What does their question of Jesus reveal about their faith?



- c. What does Jesus' response to them reveal about His biggest concern for them?

## OWNING THE PASSAGE:

It may seem an easy yes to say, “I’m a follower of Jesus. I’ve left everything to follow Him.” But why is it so hard to have peace and trust Jesus when the storms of life suddenly come our way? How has God helped you grow in this grace to trust Him more?

8. Note that Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves, and instantly the sea was calm.
  - a. How do the disciples react?
  - b. What does this tell us about Jesus' authority? (See Job 38:8-11, Colossians 1:16-17.)
  - c. How do the disciples grow in their knowledge of who Jesus is and what He can do?

## OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Jesus knows that it is often hard for us to trust Him, especially in times of crisis. In those times, He gives grace to help us in our need through godly friends, the Word, and prayer. How is God teaching you to trust Him more lately? Pray for an opportunity to share that story with another person and to tell him or her about the reality of Jesus' love and care.

**EXPLORE MORE:**

- A. In chapter 8, following the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records multiple miracles which prove the authority and veracity of Jesus' teaching and necessitate a response from the observers. Each episode begs the question of whether Jesus will find genuine faith and how that faith will express itself. In the boat, the disciples' amazement is slowly turning to genuine faith. But what about the crowds which seem to always be around and are always *just* amazed. Generally speaking in the Gospels, the crowds serve as apathetic observers of the ministry. **According to Matthew 27:20-23**, what are the consequences of crowds being amazed but never becoming true disciples of Jesus?
- B. What word in that passage demonstrates how easily people are influenced, and how is that a warning for us as we examine what pressures are impacting our spiritual development?

## LESSON FIVE

### JESUS HEALS THE MAN WITH DEMONS

LUKE 8:26-39

1. **Read and re-read the passage.** Who are the characters in this passage? Where does this miracle take place? Does the setting for this miracle have any impact on it? Take time to prayerfully study this challenging passage. What do you notice?
  
2. **What else is going on?** Look back at the preceding miracle in which Jesus calmed the storm. What did we learn from this passage that Jesus has authority over? Jesus is continuing to demonstrate His authority in this passage as well.
  
3. **What occurs in this passage that is a miracle?** What we see in this story is a man suffering from severe emotional affliction and physical bondage. What did Jesus see as the cause of this man's suffering?

#### BIBLE DICTIONARY:

**Gerasenes** – a Gentile region east of the Sea of Galilee called Decapolis

**Demons** – supernatural beings who are subservient to Satan—were once angels who rebelled against God and, like Satan, were cast out of heaven—now subservient to Satan

**Legion** – a Roman army division of 4,000-6,000 men

**Abyss** – the realm of the dead

4. What do the demons believe to be true about Jesus? Compare this with Peter's response to Jesus in Matthew 16:13-17.

5. Notice that Jesus does not respond to the demons' request by sending them into the pigs, but rather He gives the demons permission to go into them. How do the following passages demonstrate God's reign over evil?
  - a. Job 1:9-26
  - b. Mark 1:27
  - c. Luke 22:31-32
  - d. Revelation 20:1-2
6. As the herdsmen see what Jesus did for this poor man, they spread the word to the townspeople. Why do they respond in fear to all they see?
7. How can our fears overpower our faith in God? Or, even worse, keep us from coming to God in faith? Is there a fear you have today over which you need ask Jesus to help you rest in His power and give you peace?
8. This man cleansed of thousands of demons becomes the first Gentile missionary. What is the method of evangelism Jesus commands? Why is this so effective?

9. Read Colossians 2:8-15. How does the cross of Jesus Christ ultimately triumph over evil?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

How do you see evil at work in our world and in your life? What have you learned from this passage that helps you to stand up to evil and to be at peace when you see it? If you were asked to tell others what Jesus has done for you to fight evil in your life, what would you say?

### EXPLORE MORE:

A. From beginning to end, the Bible is the story of our missional God coming after His broken people again and again to bring healing and renewal, restoring all of creation to His original intention for it. If you know the end of the Bible's story, you know that it does not end with humanity sitting on clouds playing harps but in a new creation that has been cosmically healed and rid of all evil. It ends with human beings restored to a place of complete fruitfulness and flourishing. That new condition begins the moment a person becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and is called to participate in the mission of God here on earth. What are some of the ways and places God has called you to engage in mission right where you live?

- B. What seems to be the pervasive characteristic of the inhabitants of this story, and what are some ways you might be an agent of healing where that is prevalent in your own community?

## LESSON SIX

## JESUS RAISES JAIRUS' DAUGHTER/HEALS A WOMAN

MATTHEW 9:18-26

1. **Read and re-read the passage.** Matthew weaves two stories of miracles within one in this passage. Who are the people in this passage? Where does it take place? When do these miracles occur? Prayerfully read this passage and the corresponding accounts in Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56. What similarities do you notice between the two stories? What differences do you see?
  
2. **What else is going on?** To gain some context, read Matthew 9:9-17. Where is Jesus having a meal and with whom?
  - a. Who does Jesus say that He has come to help?
  - b. What question is Jesus answering as this story begins to unfold?

**NOTE:**

The two other accounts of this story in Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56 give us more detail than Matthew's. Matthew, it seems, is more interested in showing that Jesus healed a sick woman on the way to raising a dead girl, and he connects the two by showing Jesus has authority over death.

3. **Jairus' Case:** We learn from Mark's account that this ruler's name was Jairus, and he was a ruler in the synagogue. When Jairus first comes to Jesus, his daughter is near death. Later, after the "delay" of healing the bleeding woman, Jairus' servants come and essentially say, "Never mind' your daughter has already died."
  - a. What might have made Jairus appeal to a man whom most of his peers had rejected?

- b. What does Jairus want Jesus to do?
- c. Why does he persevere even after the news that his daughter has died?

#### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

How do you see Jesus use desperation in our lives to drive us to Himself? What obstacles keep you from being desperate for Jesus?

**4. The Bleeding Woman's Case:** We learn in Luke's account that this woman has not only been bleeding for 12 years but that no one could heal her.

- a. How is this woman desperate for Jesus?
- b. What does she say to herself that was "heard" by Jesus when she touched the fringe on His garment?
- c. How does Jesus respond to her?

#### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

"If only's" run through our minds and sometimes dominate our thoughts. Many things had happened in the woman's life to get her to this point. What must sometimes happen in our lives to bring us to the point of desperation so that we cry out in faith to Jesus?

#### BIBLE DICTIONARY:

***Touching Bleeding Women*** - According to Leviticus 15:25-33, a woman who had excessive menstrual bleeding was considered unclean. A woman in this condition was barred from attending any temple gatherings. Should someone touch her or come near where she had been, they too would be considered unclean.

***Touching a Dead Body*** - According to Leviticus 21:10-12, a religious leader was not to have contact with a dead body or he too would be considered unclean.



### 5. Putting the two cases together

These stories are presented together to show us that what was true of the hemorrhaging woman was true of Jairus' daughter as well. Both women were considered unclean for Jesus to touch—the woman because of her bleeding and the little girl because she was dead.

a. What else is similar about their situations?

b. How does Jesus restore them?

6. The word *daughter* is used for both of the females in this passage. What does this teach us about the relationship Jesus desires to have with us?

7. What does Jesus' willingness to touch that which is "unclean" teach us about what He came to do? How does this miracle point us to how Jesus deals with the uncleanness of this world (see Revelation 7:14)?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Brokenness casts its shadow in our lives as we witness and experience that which is unclean and sinful and as we endure sickness and death. How does what you believe about Jesus' authority over each give you hope for how you live each God-ordained day?

**EXPLORE MORE:**

- A.** Throughout the Gospel accounts, even as He is performing miracles that amaze great crowds, Jesus sometimes, as He does in this story, cautions individuals not to make known what He has done. This is often referred to as the “messianic secret.” There is a hiddenness of certain aspects of His mission that He is not yet ready to reveal. **According to Psalm 64:2, John 7:8, and John 11:45-48**, what are the reasons for this concealment?
- B. Read John 12:20-32; 14:1-2, 27-31.** As the pivotal moment of Jesus’ mission approaches, what does John reveal are some of the glorious truths about the Redeemer and His people that will be a result of the completion of the mission?

## LESSON SEVEN

### JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

JOHN 9:1-41

**1. Read and re-read the passage.** Who are the people in this passage? Where does it take place? On what day does this miracle occur? Notice the variety of understandings each of the characters in this story has of Jesus.

**2. What else is going on? Briefly read John 8.**

a. Who does Jesus say that He is (v. 12; vv. 54-58)?

b. What is the reaction of the Jewish leadership to Jesus (v. 59)?

#### NOTE:

The Gospel of John includes only seven of the many miracles Jesus did while He was on earth. This miracle is the sixth one recorded. Each of them, John tells us, is included “*so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name*” (John 20:31). This miracle, like the others John includes, teaches us a spiritual truth about our salvation.

**3. Read John 9:1-12.**

a. What question do the disciples ask Jesus about the blind beggar and his condition?

How does He answer them?

b. How does Jesus describe Himself in verse 5? Notice this is a repetition from John 8:12.

- c. How does the way Jesus heals this man demonstrate our spiritual state until He opens our eyes?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Notice Jesus' answer to the disciples' question about the cause of this man's disability in John 9:3: *"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."* How have you witnessed God use either your suffering or that of those close to you to demonstrate the reality of Jesus' grace and glory?

4. How does the blind beggar's relationship with Jesus progress in this miracle story?  
In each of the following verses, note what he believes about Jesus.

- a. John 9:8-12

- b. John 9:15-17

- c. John 9:24-34

- d. John 9:35-38

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

What is your salvation story? How has God opened your eyes to see who Jesus is? Take some time to trace your story of believing in Christ. Share this with your group.

5. How does the Jewish leadership's reaction to Jesus performing this miracle progress?

What do they believe about Jesus in each of the following verses?

a. John 9:13-17

b. John 9:18-23

c. John 9:24-34

6. Read John 9:39-41.

a. How do the Jewish leaders see themselves?

b. How does Jesus see them?

c. What has to happen for our guilt—our sin—to be taken care of?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Revelation 21:23 tells us of a city to come when God establishes His Kingdom that *"has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb."* How does knowing God has brought you out of darkness and into the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ give you greater love for Christ?

7. How does this motivate you to share your faith in Jesus with those who are spiritually blind?

**EXPLORE MORE:**

- A. Read Philippians 3:7-9.** What are some of the obstacles that might have kept the parents in the John narrative from being able to grasp what Paul describes in Philippians?
- B.** What might be some contemporary situations you find yourself in that would challenge you in these same ways? How will Paul's words help you respond?
- C.** There is no type nor description of the Lord Jesus Christ in the entire Old Testament which identifies Him more distinctly than Isaiah's Suffering Servant passages. **Read Isaiah 42:1-9,** in which the Lord points out how very different from man's ways are the methods by which His true Servant will bring about His Kingdom. What are some of the ways you see the vivid characteristics in Isaiah's prophecy revealed by the Lord Jesus in the John 9 narrative?
- D.** What are some ways the man born blind is emblematic of Isaiah's "prisoners?"

## LESSON EIGHT

## JOHN 6:1-15

- 1. Prayerfully read and re-read the passage.** Who are the characters in this miracle story? Where does it take place? When is this happening? This miracle of Jesus is the only one besides the resurrection of Christ that is repeated in all four Gospels. Compare John's version with Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, and Luke 9:10-17 and note the similarities and the differences.
- 2. What else is going on?** Notice what is happening before this miracle story. **Read John 5:39-47.** What is Jesus saying the Pharisees believe?

NOTE:

As a reminder, the Gospel of John includes the miracles of Jesus that are intended to teach us a spiritual truth about our salvation (see John 20:31).

3. Where do Jesus and His disciples go after they have had a full day of ministry?

## Why does the large group of people follow Him?

## BIBLE DICTIONARY:

**Two Hundred Denarii** one denarius was equal to one day's wage. Philip's estimate is that it would take more than seven months of an average salary to feed all the people.

**Five Thousand** not including women and children—more accurately, approximately 20,000 people.

4. How does Jesus use this impossible situation to test and train Philip and the other disciples?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Have you ever been asked by Jesus to do something when you felt utterly incapable of it? What did you learn from that experience?

5. Read Exodus 16:1-5, 13-18 and 2 Kings 4:42-44.

a. What two prophets are mentioned in these Old Testament verses?

b. How might this miracle of Jesus remind the people of them and why?

c. What was Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15-18?

6. What is the response of the people to Jesus after this miracle?

And how does Jesus react? Why?



**OWNING THE PASSAGE:**

Jesus cares deeply about meeting our needs. Sometimes, like the people in the crowds following Jesus, we desire more. In what areas of your life do you need to trust in God's larger Kingdom purposes and feed on Jesus as your daily bread?

7. Jesus explains the meaning of this miracle in John 6:22-59. How do you see this miracle as a "trail of breadcrumbs" to Jesus as the Bread of Life?

**EXPLORE MORE:**

- A. The insincere and apathetic crowds play an interesting role in the Gospel accounts. In their nationalistic zeal, the crowd in this story had perceived that Jesus was a messiah who would meet their physical, political, and military needs. John tells us that after the miracle, "they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king..." **Read Psalm 73:23-28.** What is it that God's true people have always known about Him that the miracle was meant to teach?
- B. Because Jesus is our all-sufficient Lord, He demands exclusive ownership of our lives. There are many influences in our lives that draw us away from feeding only on Him and abiding solely in Him. What are some of the things on which we are currently feasting but from which we should be fasting?

**C. Read Revelation 3:20.** Knowing that this is our Lord's desire, what steps of spiritual discipline will you take today to participate in this intimate fellowship?

## LESSON NINE

### JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

JOHN 11:1-45

1. **Read and re-read the passage:** Pray before you read it. What is happening in this miracle story? Who are the people involved? Where does this miracle take place? When does it take place?

2. **What else is going on?** Look back at John 10. How does Jesus describe Himself in John 10:7-18?

What is the reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus' statements in John 10:31-40?

How is Jesus' ministry growing in John 10:40-42?

3. What kind of relationship does Jesus have with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha?

What is unexpected in the way that Jesus responds to the news that Lazarus has died?

4. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, how long had Lazarus been dead?

Why is this significant to the miracle Jesus is about to do?

5. Martha and Mary each have their own conversations with Jesus about their grief.

- a. What does Jesus tell Martha about Lazarus?
- b. Does she blame Him for her brother's death?
- c. How does He help her understanding of who He is (verses 25-26)?
- d. How does Jesus meet Mary in her grief?
- e. Is she blaming Jesus? Read John 11:33-36.
- f. What do we learn about Jesus' compassion and humanity?

#### BIBLE DICTIONARY:

**“Deeply moved”** is used to describe Jesus' feelings about Lazarus' death in John 11:33 and 38. It implies outrage or indignation toward death itself.

#### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

When you go through times of pain, suffering, and sorrow, do you think it is okay to ask God questions? How are you strengthened and comforted by seeing from the narrative how Jesus sympathizes with you when you are grieving?

6. When Jesus stands before Lazarus' tomb, what does He command be done?

- a. What assurance does He give Martha in John 11:38-40?
  - b. How does this affirm her previously expressed faith in John 11:27?
7. In what ways does this miracle glorify God as Jesus said it would in John 11:4?
8. When Lazarus is raised from the dead, how do the people respond? **Read John 11:45, 53, 57, and 12:10.**
9. Little did this crowd know that in only a few weeks Jesus would also be buried in a tomb after He was crucified on the cross as our Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. Instead of men rolling the stone away, angels did. And they announced to Mary Magdalene and her two friends that Jesus had risen, just as He said He would (Mark 16:1-7). What does this miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead teach us about death and the Kingdom of God and how Christ alone saves us?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

You may be facing a difficult or painful situation. Is there any area of unbelief about who Jesus is that keeps you from surrendering that circumstance to Him? Ask Jesus to use these circumstances to build your faith and bring glory to Himself.

**EXPLORE MORE:**

**A.** Affliction is the tool God uses most often to usher us into clearer truth about Him and allow us to experience His power in our lives more fully. The psalms of lament are expressions of faith that are borne out of complete desperation. In these psalms, the psalmist always (with one exception) comes around to a better understanding of God's greatness and provision for His people's restoration.

**Read Psalm 42.** What are some of the ways the psalmist is expressing the same sentiments Martha and Mary are expressing to Jesus?

**B.** In what ways does this story of Lazarus refute the false gospel that if God were truly good, He would not allow bad things to happen?

## LESSON TEN

### JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD

MATTHEW 28:1-10

1. **Read and re-read the passage.** Pray as you read this passage of Scripture. What is going on? Who are the characters in this miracle of Jesus? Over what timeframe does the resurrection of Jesus occur? The account of Jesus' resurrection is also found in Mark 16:1-13, Luke 24:1-12, and John 20:1-18. Each Gospel author tells the same story from his perspective. Read each as you have the time and note the differences. Consider how the differences do not diminish the truth of the resurrection of Christ but rather help to authenticate it.
2. **What else is going on?**
  - a. **Read Matthew 27:45-66.** How does Jesus die?
  - b. Who are the women looking on?
  - c. Who buries Jesus and how?
  - d. Who watches this process?
  - e. How do the chief priests and the Pharisees collaborate with Pilate to make sure the tomb is secure?
  - f. On what claim of Jesus are they basing these actions?
3. **Describe the scene as Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" come upon Jesus' tomb.**
  - a. What do they expect to find?
  - b. What is the reaction of the guards to the Angel of the Lord?

c. What is the reaction of the women to him?

4. In Matthew 28:5, the Angel of the Lord speaks to the women.

a. What are some of the ways his words comfort and instruct them?

b. The Angel of the Lord leads them into the tomb and says, “Come, see.” How would this have helped their understanding of this miracle?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Eyewitness accounts to the life and ministry of Jesus were the way the Gospel, the Good News of Christ, spread so quickly after Jesus’ resurrection. Today, how does Jesus ask us to “come, see” the truth of the Gospel? Share with your group how the Lord has asked you to “come, see” the evidence that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead.

5. What is the next instruction the Angel of the Lord gives to the women (Matthew 28:7)?

a. How do they react when they had the surprise of meeting Jesus on the way to tell the disciples He had risen from the dead?

b. What is Jesus’ directive to them?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

Does the truth that Jesus has risen from the dead compel you to go and tell others? What opportunities are you praying about now to share the good news that Jesus Christ has risen?

6. The guards hurry off in the opposite direction to tell the chief priests what has happened.

a. What are they afraid of?



- b. What story are the guards to go and tell others?

### OWNING THE PASSAGE:

The greatest story the world has ever heard is that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. How do you personally know that it is true, and how has it changed your life?

### EXPLORE MORE:

- A.** Not even the shocking evidence of an empty tomb could be the confirmation for the women that Jesus had been raised from the dead. John's Gospel, for example, records Mary Magdalene's immediate assumption that someone had taken the body and hidden it. In Matthew 28:5-6, the angel explicitly shows the women that Jesus was no longer there. But what was he implicitly reminding the women which would lead them to believe in Jesus' resurrection?
- B. Look back at Matthew 26:75.** What is it in both of these examples that must be the foundational criteria for our response to perplexing, difficult situations? What might it look like to apply this criteria to every bit of news feed, social media threads, false gospels, etc. that we encounter this week?
- C. Read Romans 6:5-14** to see the biblical interpretation of what the resurrection of Jesus Christ accomplished for His people. What does Paul say is now true of the Christian life because of the resurrection, and how does this empower and challenge you in your daily living, your worship, communion with other Christians, your vocation, and your witness to the Gospel?

## NOTES

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