

Week 4: The Gospel of John

1. What stood out to you from the message this past Sunday? Was there anything that seemed timely or relevant to you? Was there anything which made you uncomfortable, or with which you disagreed?
2. How does the Gospel of John differ from the other three gospel accounts in the Bible in how it portrays Jesus? In what ways is this helpful and in what ways is it confusing or difficult? What does John reveal that is absent or less obvious in the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke?
3. Read John 20:30-31 and John 21:24-25. What do these verses tell us about who is writing this gospel account and why? The speaker on Sunday suggested this gospel was written by a community experiencing fear and persecution at the hands of the Jewish authorities. How might this context impact how the gospel was written and how we should interpret it?
4. Read John 2:19-22, John 15:26-27, and John 16:12-14. Since the gospel is being written after Jesus' resurrection and with the Spirit's guidance, how might this change the way Jesus' words are presented and interpreted?
5. "I AM" (*ego eimi*) is the name God gives Godself in Exodus 3:13-14. In John's gospel, Jesus says seven times "I am..."
 - ...the bread of life (6:35, 41, 48, 51)
 - ...the light of the world (8:12, 9:5)
 - ...the gate for the sheep (10:7, 9)
 - ...the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
 - ...the resurrection and the life (11:25)
 - ...the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)
 - ...the true vine (15:1, 5)

Which of these resonates most with you right now? What does it tell you about Jesus?

6. Read John 1:1-13 and John 14:15-21. What do these verses tell us about Jesus' identity? What do they tell us about our own identity?
7. John portrays Jesus as being beyond judgment, and instead says we judge ourselves by how we respond to the Light. Read John 3:16-21. Are there aspects of your life where you "love darkness rather than light"? Are there circumstances or relationships in which you long to experience the freedom of stepping into the light rather than hiding in the dark? Share as appropriate and spend some time praying for one another.

Practice for the week: Light in the darkness

Take some time this week to reflect on the verses below. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Light a candle and watch the flame for a few moments. Take some deep breaths and quiet your mind. Slowly read one or more of the passages several times, and invite Jesus to speak to you through the Spirit.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

~ John 1:4

Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

~ John 3:20-21

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

~ John 8:12