

The Good News according to John—a daily Bible guide

week three

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Welcome to Week Three

For those of you who are just jumping into the guide now, here are a few quick notes:

1. Brief introductions to the format of this guide and to the Gospel of John can be found at the beginning of Week One.
2. This guide can be found in various electronic forms. You can find us as a blog at dailybibleguide.wordpress.com or in PDF at bostonvineyard.org/classesprograms/leap-of-faith. Or, download the app.
3. **Special family-friendly materials can easily be found by looking for the red text.** These materials include three 'For you and your family' Taking It Home sections per week, and a Spiritual Practice of the Week for Families.

Week 3: Spiritual Practice for Families: Study and Memorization. Since the Bible Guide itself is a study, we already have a head start on this practice. For this week, you could try adding some extra discussion and imagination into your reading of this week's passages. Some conversation-starter questions you might ask other members of your family are, "I wonder what your favorite part of the story is? I wonder what the passage makes you think about? I wonder what character you'd be in this passage?"

Many people also find memorization helpful when studying the Bible. Here are some ideas for making memorization a game, not a chore:

- Put the verse to music.
- Write each word on a different index card, arrange them in order on a surface, then take away one each time you recite the verse.
- Add actions to the verse.
- Add character's voices as you say the verse.

Try memorizing a couple of these famous passages from the Book of John:

- "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - 3:16
- "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." - 6:51
- "Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, 'I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.'" - 8:12
- "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." - 10:11
- "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" - 11:25-26
- "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener." - 15:1

At the end of the week, think about what you liked and what you might not have liked about this particular spiritual practice. Share your thoughts with each other.

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Monday, March 12—John 6:41-71

⁴¹ Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”

⁴³ But Jesus replied, “Stop complaining about what I said. ⁴⁴ For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. ⁴⁵ As it is written in the Scriptures, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

⁴⁷ “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ Yes, I am the bread of life! ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. ⁵⁰ Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.”

⁵² Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked.

⁵³ So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. ⁵⁴ But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever.”

⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

⁶⁰ Many of his disciples said, “This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?”

⁶¹ Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? ⁶³ The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But some of you do not believe me.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn’t believe, and he knew who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ Then he said, “That is why I said that people can’t come to me unless the Father gives them to me.”

⁶⁶ At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.”

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⁷⁰ Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.” ⁷¹ He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

Points of Interest

- ‘We know his father and mother’--suddenly, he’s gone from being the Prophet Like Moses to being Mary and Joseph’s boy from down the street. They really don’t like being told, ‘No.’ When Jesus refuses to give them more bread, they decide to put him in his place. Maybe they think they’re flattering him when they call him the Prophet. When Jesus responds, not with gratification, but by saying, ‘You ain’t seen nothin’ yet,’ they’re a little shocked: ‘Whoa, there. You make some great bread; but don’t get carried away.’
- ‘They will all be taught by God’--this is Isaiah 54:13. It’s part of Isaiah’s description of what things will be like on ‘the last day’:

Just as I swore in the time of Noah
that I would never again let a flood cover the earth,
so now I swear
that I will never again be angry and punish you.

10 For the mountains may move
and the hills disappear,
but even then my faithful love for you will remain.
My covenant of blessing will never be broken,”
says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

11 “O storm-battered city,
troubled and desolate!
I will rebuild you with precious jewels
and make your foundations from lapis lazuli.

12 I will make your towers of sparkling rubies,
your gates of shining gems,
and your walls of precious stones.

13 I will teach all your children,
and they will enjoy great peace.

14 You will be secure under a government that is just and fair.
Your enemies will stay far away.
You will live in peace,
and terror will not come near.

The Last Day is the day when fear and injustice die, when everything is beautiful and luxurious, when people live peacefully with one another and with God, when God himself is every child’s favorite elementary school teacher, and when life is an unbroken series of blessings. This is what Jesus is promising to whomever draws closer to him, instead of recoiling, when they hear what he has to say.

- ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’--this is exactly like Nicodemus’ response to Jesus saying that he needs to be born again (3:3). It’s just as absurd here. Literally eating Jesus’ body

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for dinner wouldn't give them the true nourishment Jesus is describing any more than crawling back into an old lady's womb would give anyone any more or better life.

- 'anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life'--with Nicodemus, Jesus explains that he's speaking spiritually. Here, Jesus just turns up the volume all the more: 'No, I insist, you must take a great, big bite of my flesh, raw and bloody; it's the only way to heaven.' Maybe Jesus is getting tired of saying, 'Look, guys, it's a metaphor.' Or maybe he's grown tired of these people and is trying to end the conversation quickly.
- 'in the synagogue in Capernaum'--this is basically Jesus' old neighborhood. We're dealing with his parents' bowling team, his friends from high school, the kids he played pick-up games of street ball with, and his third grade math teacher. It seems over-familiarity with Jesus makes it hard for them to accept the claims and offers Jesus is making.
- 'Jesus turned to the Twelve'--another part of the story John has never gotten around to telling. The Twelve are Jesus' closest disciples, a hand-picked inner circle. They're also known as the Apostles. *Apostle* literally means 'sent one'; I think it would have something of the same sense as 'deputy' or 'lieutenant.' All of the disciples we've heard of by name (Andrew, Simon, Philip, Nathanael) are in the Twelve.
- 'Lord, to whom would we go?'--at this pivotal moment, when almost everyone else decides to walk away, the Twelve both understand and embrace what Jesus has been talking about this whole time. I think they join John the Baptist and the Samaritan woman to form the complete list of those who 'get it.' They believe that Jesus and only Jesus is making an offer that can't be passed up, an offer of the kind of life they really want but can't get on their own.
- 'You have the words that give eternal life'--while Jesus has described his offer in numerous ways over the course of John, it seems that 'eternal life' has become his favorite label for it. It might be worth considering for a moment what in the world 'eternal life' is:
 1. While it seems to me that what's being described here is more than just not dying, that does, in point of fact, seem to be one element of it: 'Anyone who eats this bread ... will live forever' (6:58).
 2. It's also a deeply and lastingly satisfying life. Our needs and cravings are filled in a more fundamental, more complete, and more enduring way than they are in ordinary, non-eternal life: 'But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them' (John 4:14).
 3. It's still on its way. Eternal life in its fullness hasn't entirely arrived yet: 'the time is coming [my emphasis] when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem' (4:21).
 4. But it's also not entirely absent. We can get started with it now: 'the time is coming, indeed it's here now [again, my emphasis], when the dead will hear my voice' (5:25).In short, I think the 'eternal life' Jesus is offering is the kind of life we'd really want for ourselves, starting on a sample basis now, available in increasing measure, without end. I might call it 'perfect life' or 'heavenly life' or 'the good life.'
- 'but one is a devil'--kind of a bummer note to end on. I think Jesus' point here is that the Twelve are proving to be who he thought they were when he called them. For eleven of them, that

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means that they are making their way toward eternal life; for the twelfth, regrettably, it's quite the opposite. I am curious as to why Jesus would hire someone whom he believes will almost certainly end up working against him.

Taking It Home

- For you and your family: What's your favorite kind of bread? Think of one that tastes really good, that's good for you, and that you could eat every day without getting tired of it. Jesus says that he is kind of like that bread. How do you feel when you eat that favorite bread of yours? (Happy, grateful, satisfied, hungry for more, perhaps?) How does knowing Jesus make you feel the same way? What are ways you feel like you could use a little taste of Jesus today, just like you might want a snack of your favorite bread?
- For your six: Ask God to draw each of your six to closer to Jesus. As John points out it seems like we all actually need God's help to do that. Ask God to soften your six's hearts to Jesus. Ask God to give your six understanding of who Jesus is and what he is offering them.
- For our church: Ask God to help our church be faithful. Pray that none of us would turn away as so many of Jesus' disciples did. Instead, pray that God would strengthen our church and that we would stick with God even through hard times as a community.

Tuesday, March 13—John 7:1-24

¹ After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. ² But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, ³ and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! ⁴ You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!" ⁵ For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

⁶ Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. ⁷ The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. ⁸ You go on. I'm not going to this festival, because my time has not yet come." ⁹ After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee.

¹⁰ But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. ¹¹ The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. ¹² There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people." ¹³ But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

¹⁴ Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ The people were surprised when they heard him. "How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?" they asked.

¹⁶ So Jesus told them, "My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. ¹⁸ Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who

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sent him speaks truth, not lies. ¹⁹ Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me.”

²⁰ The crowd replied, “You’re demon possessed! Who’s trying to kill you?”

²¹ Jesus replied, “I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed. ²² But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses’ law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) ²³ For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath? ²⁴ Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly.”

Points of Interest

- ‘it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters’--the Festival of Shelters is both a harvest festival and the commemoration of the Israelites’ wandering in the desert during the time of Moses. For seven days, they live in tents, as a reminder that they were once homeless wanderers. It happens six months after Passover.
- ‘even his brothers didn’t believe in him’--apparently they do, in fact, believe that he’s capable of performing miracles--or, at least, they’re kind enough brothers to be encouraging about them. What they don’t believe is that Jesus is under orders from God, and that he is the bringer of eternal life. They think of him as someone trying to make a mid-life career change and break into the rabbi business. They can’t believe he’s not making use of all of the free publicity he could get for himself at a big religious festival.
- ‘my time has not yet come’--this is what he said to Mary at the wedding (2:4). His family has a habit of unwittingly shoving him forward, before he’s really ready for the next move.
- ‘Jesus also went, though secretly’--he goes, but not for the reasons his brothers give. He throws on a hat and some sunglasses and tries to go to the festival incognito, simply to enjoy the holiday as a private person.
- ‘Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach’--it appears that Jesus can’t help himself. When Jesus sees the temple filled with vendors and moneychangers and other distracting noise, he takes pity on the people who have come so far because they want to experience something sacred, and he offers them some true spiritual nourishment. Peter says in yesterday’s passage, ‘You have the words that give eternal life’ (6:68). Jesus shares some of those life-giving words with the temple crowds.
- ‘How does he know so much’--this is just the sort of publicity his brothers were recommending and Jesus intended to avoid. New audiences get a chance to hear him, and they’re impressed: ‘Who’s the new guy? He’s good.’
- ‘My message is not my own’--he now tells the crowd what he told his brothers: he’s not trying to make a name for himself. He’s simply passing along a message from God which he knows will be helpful to anyone who cares to take notice.
- ‘Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it’--I think we have a sudden shift of both topic and audience (a shift the audience itself, perhaps understandably, doesn’t follow). He picks up again the argument he was having with the religious leaders a festival or two ago about the

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Sabbath (5:16-17). It's not clear to me why, having aimed at a nice, quiet, private holiday, he ends up publicly picking a fight with the religious leaders. Maybe, ready or not, he just can't stand to let them continue on as they are.

- 'you are trying to kill me'--he points out that the leaders are strangely inconsistent in their attention to Moses' law. They go to great lengths to condemn Jesus for saying a few words and another man for carrying a mat, out of hyper-attention to the Sabbath law. But they give themselves a great deal of leniency where another--one might argue, more important--law is concerned: 'You must not murder' (Deuteronomy 5:17), like the Sabbath law, is one of the big Ten Commandments given by Moses.
- 'long before the law of Moses'--John takes Jesus' point even further than Jesus. Moses' laws aren't the be-all and end-all. Other laws existed before, and take priority over, Moses'. Even the religious leaders themselves operate by this principle, by letting the laws of circumcision trump the Sabbath law. Circumcision is the ceremony of initiation into the people of faith. Circumcision began five hundred years before Moses, in the time of Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14). When the rules about Sabbath and circumcision conflict, the leaders follow the circumcision rules. Coincidentally (or perhaps not), the murder law also takes precedence over the Sabbath law; the murder law goes back even further than Abraham, to the time of Noah:

And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image (Genesis 9:5-6).

By their over-attention to the Sabbath law, they are condemning themselves to death by a law with greater precedence. The irony is only increased by the fact that they are trying to kill the one whose aim is to bring eternal life.

- 'Look beneath the surface'--you can't always just read a law and then do it--even more so, you can't just read it and then enforce it harshly on someone else. In order to truly follow a law, you actually need to think about it: what's the law's intent? how does it harmonize with other, pre-existing and/or more important ones? The religious leaders think that they're great judges and lawyers, but they don't know the most basic thing about how the law works.

Taking It Home

- For you: Is there something that you're currently worked up about? Or is there routinely some part of your day or week that seems to be tense or stressful? Maybe it's your morning commute, a housemate not doing their chores, a particular child or friend who just has a way of getting under your skin. If you're like me, it's any trip to Market Basket. Take some time today to be still, and ask God to show you what is going on 'beneath the surface.' Consider that whatever outer emotions you feel are just a signal for something going on deeper for you. Next time this situation occurs, try paying more attention to what is going on at a deeper level and what God might be saying to you in it.
- For your six: Pray today for your six's friendships. Pray that, unlike Jesus' brothers, your six's closest friends and relatives would be sources of good advice and strong support for them.

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- For our church: They say that success is a matter of timing, and John seems to agree. Five times in this passage alone, he talks about whether the timing is right or not for Jesus. Ask God to give us good timing. Pray that God would oversee the timing of all the many things that happen here: the things that are being dreamt of, the things that are up and thriving, the things that need to end. Ask God to direct our timing in all of it.

Wednesday, March 14—John 7:25-53

²⁵ Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? ²⁶ But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah? ²⁷ But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from.”

²⁸ While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I’m not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don’t know him. ²⁹ But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you.”³⁰ Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.

³¹ Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. “After all,” they said, “would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?”

³² When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus. ³³ But Jesus told them, “I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. ³⁴ You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going.”

³⁵ The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. “Where is he planning to go?” they asked. “Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands? Maybe he will even teach the Greeks! ³⁶ What does he mean when he says, ‘You will search for me but not find me,’ and ‘You cannot go where I am going’?”

³⁷ On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” ³⁹ (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

⁴⁰ When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, “Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.” ⁴¹ Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others said, “But he can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? ⁴² For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.” ⁴³ So the crowd was divided about him. ⁴⁴ Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵ When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

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⁴⁶ “We have never heard anyone speak like this!” the guards responded.

⁴⁷ “Have you been led astray, too?” the Pharisees mocked. ⁴⁸ “Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him?” ⁴⁹ This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God’s curse is on them!”

⁵⁰ Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. ⁵¹ “Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?” he asked.

⁵² They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!”

⁵³ Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.

Points of Interest

- ‘Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?’--apparently the religious leaders’ desire to kill Jesus isn’t some private thought. It’s public knowledge. That being the case, everyone is confused as to why they would hold back. The crowds come up with the radical idea that the leaders know Jesus is the Messiah, and have nonetheless pitted themselves against him. They want to eliminate him, but they are--understandably--afraid of what might happen if they try, him being God’s Special Agent and all.
- ‘no one will know where he comes from’--we don’t know exactly where they get this idea, but it’s apparently a commonly-held belief at the time.
- ‘I know him because I come from him’--in a way, they know where he comes from; he’s Joseph and Mary’s boy from Nazareth. In a more important way, they don’t. They cannot see that he is a messenger sent from God.
- ‘Then the leaders tried to arrest him’--I’m not sure whether they’re somehow spurred to action by Jesus’ words, or by the fact that the crowds are calling them scaredy-cats. They’re losing control of the situation.
- ‘his time had not yet come’--Jesus sort of jumps the gun by coming out publicly at the feast, and the leaders respond in kind. But, as Jesus had told his brothers (7:6), the timing is indeed not right. Mysteriously, he is protected from harm.
- ‘would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?’--there are quite a few people who can indeed read the signs. If he acts like a Messiah, and talks like a Messiah, doesn’t that make him the Messiah?
- ‘You will search for me but not find me’--ultimately, Jesus’ fate is in God’s hands, not theirs.
- ‘Where is he planning to go?’--it wouldn’t be a passage from John’s gospel if someone didn’t take Jesus overly, somewhat humorously, literally. He’s talking about going to heaven, and they think he means that he has an overseas trip planned. In any case, it seems their point is that, as far as they know, wherever he could reasonably go, they could follow him (and kill him). Or maybe they’re just wishfully thinking that he’ll soon be out of their hair: ‘Wouldn’t it be great if he simply disappeared?’

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- ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart’--Jesus isn’t, as far as we can tell, directly quoting from a single Bible passage, but instead summarizing a number of passages such as Isaiah 44:1-3:

- 1** “But now, listen to me, Jacob my servant,
Israel my chosen one.
- 2** The LORD who made you and helps you says:
Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant,
O dear Israel, my chosen one.
- 3** For I will pour out water to quench your thirst
and to irrigate your parched fields.
And I will pour out my Spirit on your descendants,
and my blessing on your children.

Apparently the idea of living water, which has seemed so obscure to everyone, is not some novelty of Jesus; he’s been following an established biblical theme (which makes sense; all along he’s been telling us that he is simply passing along God’s words). Both the leaders and the people have been speaking confidently about how well they know the Bible, but they somehow miss that Jesus has been speaking biblical language all along.

- ‘he was speaking of the Spirit’--this time, John preemptively interprets for us: ‘He’s not talking about actual water. It’s a metaphor for the Holy Spirit’--as it was also in Isaiah 44, by the way.
- ‘But the Spirit had not yet been given’--everything we have seen so far is just a preview of what is still coming. Jesus has not yet gotten around to his real work of, as John the Baptist put it, baptizing with the Spirit (1:32-33).
- ‘the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David’--they too, like Jesus, are synthesizing several Bible passages here, for example,
The LORD said, “I have made a covenant with David, my chosen servant.
I have sworn this oath to him:
4 ‘I will establish your descendants as kings forever;
they will sit on your throne from now until eternity (Psalm 89:3-4).

and,

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
are only a small village among all the people of Judah.
Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you,
one whose origins are from the distant past (Micah 5:2).

They were just saying that everyone knows that the Messiah’s origins are mysterious, but now they go on to say that the Bible very clearly states that the Messiah comes from a specific town. Apparently, what the Bible has to say about the Messiah is not quite so clear and simple as they originally presented.

As it turns out, though John never told us and still doesn’t explain even now, the hometown of Jesus’ father Joseph is indeed Bethlehem. So, Jesus is from Nazareth (as everyone knows), and

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he is from Bethlehem (as Micah predicts) and he is from no one knows where (as was commonly believed). Wherever you think the Messiah is from, Jesus is from there.

- ‘We have never heard anyone speak like this!’--to the religious leaders’ exasperation, even the police recognize the signs. When they find the man they’ve been sent to arrest, they think, ‘Surely, they can’t mean him.’ He seems an awful lot more like a Messiah than a criminal.
- ‘Then Nicodemus ... spoke up’--Nicodemus is still living in twilight. He is uncomfortable with the stance of his fellow religious leaders, but he’s unwilling to come out fully on Jesus’ side.

Taking It Home

- For you: I know we all like to think of ourselves as individuals who make up our own minds about things, but I somehow suspect that we’re a little more like the masses that follow Jesus than we like to admit; for better and worse, the ‘crowd’ around us helps to shape our view about who Jesus is. In today’s passage, the crowd works together to figure out who Jesus is. Who are the people around you that help you better know Jesus? Do you feel like you have a great community of people around you, or is your primary community distracting you or pushing you further from Jesus? Ask God for an abundance of godly friends who will help you get a good picture of Jesus. If you have friends who are doing that for you, shoot them an email, text, or card to tell them what they mean to you.
- For your six: Jesus’ listeners are almost always operating on a strictly physical level, and Jesus is almost always seeing things from a spiritual level. It seems like understanding what’s going on at a spiritual level sheds a lot of light on to what is happening on a natural level. Ask Jesus for spiritual insight as to what is going on with your six. Ask Jesus to speak beyond what you can see and know on your terms and to give you discernment as to spiritually what is happening for your six. Next time you’re talking with your six, ask Jesus to make you aware of what is happening spiritually.
- For our church : Ask Jesus to fill our church with the Holy Spirit. Pray that he would fill each and every person who feels like they are running a little dry. Pray that during the Leap of Faith Jesus would meet our entire church in a fresh new experience of his presence.

Thursday, March 15—John 8:1-20

[The most ancient Greek manuscripts do not include John 7:53–8:11.]

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives,² but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them.³ As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

⁴ “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery.⁵ The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”

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⁶ They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷ They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” ⁸ Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

⁹ When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰ Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?”

¹¹ “No, Lord,” she said.

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

¹² Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

¹³ The Pharisees replied, “You are making those claims about yourself! Such testimony is not valid.”

¹⁴ Jesus told them, “These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don’t know this about me. ¹⁵ You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. ¹⁶ And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. ¹⁷ Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. ¹⁸ I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other.”

¹⁹ “Where is your father?” they asked.

Jesus answered, “Since you don’t know who I am, you don’t know who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” ²⁰ Jesus made these statements while he was teaching in the section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not arrested, because his time had not yet come.

Points of Interest

- ***‘The most ancient Greek manuscripts do not include John 7:53–8:11’***--we don’t today possess the original manuscripts of any of the books of the Bible, but numerous copies. The copies agree exactly in most respects, but there are occasional small differences, usually the difference of a letter, or a single word, or a phrase or two. The differences are checked against one another to make the best determination of what the original said. Here we have perhaps the biggest discrepancy among manuscripts. The entire following story is found in many manuscripts, but not in the earliest ones. Some manuscripts don’t have it at all. Some place it in different spots in John’s gospel, and some even place it in Luke’s gospel. Because of this diversity among manuscripts, and because it doesn’t sound very much like John (I’m sure you’ll pick up on the fact that it has a different writing style and what you might call a more straightforward narrative), most scholars don’t consider this story original to John’s gospel. However, since it has an undeniable power, seems authentic, and is included somewhere in so many manuscripts, it is accepted as a genuine gospel story. Out of respect for the many manuscripts which place it

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here, and because it fits thematically even if written by a different author, it is placed here in modern Bibles, but with the note that it has probably been grafted in.

- ‘Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives’--during feast times, Jerusalem proper would get overlooked by visiting worshippers. Jesus is staying in the suburbs and commuting in for the festivities.
- ‘The law of Moses says to stone her’--the law of Moses actually says both the man and the woman should be executed (Leviticus 20:10), but somehow the man is missing.
- ‘What do you say?’--they seem to feel that they’ve set the perfect trap here. Jesus’ only apparent choices are to be a rule-breaker or a killer. But don’t they know where Jesus will land here? He’s already shown himself perfectly willing to be called a lawbreaker in the case of the Sabbath and the man with a mat. And he has just used Moses’ own writing to show that saving a life takes precedence over a wooden application of Moses’ law (7:19-24). It’s hard to see how he’d say anything different here. And what do they think they gain, no matter what answer Jesus gives? It’s not as if they lack for plausible charges to arrest him; what they lack is police who are willing to make the arrest.
- ‘Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger’--there is indeed a thorny theological question here: why would Moses give such clear, harsh laws at all, if they weren’t meant to be enforced? But Jesus knows that they’re not asking genuinely, and he refuses to be drawn into their trap. He does his best simply to ignore them. We know the religious leaders are being disingenuous here for a couple of reasons. Firstly, there is, of course, their obvious glee at putting Jesus on the spot. Secondly, despite their apparent moral clarity that the woman ought to die, the death penalty was not in general enforced for adultery, by them or by anyone else really. There are numerous cases in the Bible itself of people being caught in adultery and not executed, the great King David himself being a prime example (2 Samuel 11 and 12). And the common practice in Jesus’ time was to impose some other punishment (*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. ‘Divorce’); in fact, it was illegal under Roman law for them to execute the death penalty (*IVP Bible Background Commentary*).
- ‘he stooped down again and wrote in the dust’--I go back and forth among picturing Jesus drawing stick figures in the dirt, writing something more profound such as other laws of Moses, or spelling out all the deep hidden secrets of the accusers. I’d love to ask Jesus what he wrote here.
- ‘All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!’--Jesus dares them to go ahead and stone her, on their own authority, not because he says so. They can’t do it. Their consciences won’t let them. They probably know that they can’t kill another person just to score some point in their rivalry with Jesus. And they also recognize that they don’t want to be held to the same standard as they’re proposing for this woman. When it comes down to it, with a person in front of them and a stone in their hand, they’re not such harsh and literal interpreters of the law as they like to pretend to be.
- ‘beginning with the oldest’--as they do a mental scan of Moses’ laws, they recognize that if they start stoning, they’ll keep stoning until no one is left standing. The ones with greater life experience recognize this first.

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- ‘Neither do I’--Jesus does what he was sent to do: ‘God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him’ (3:17)
- ‘I am the light of the world’--if the dotted line doesn’t make it clear, the language does. We’re now back to what was written by John.
- ‘you won’t have to walk in darkness’--when Jesus releases the woman, it’s with the words, ‘Go and sin no more.’ I don’t think this is so much a stern warning--‘I let you off with a warning this time, but next time I’ll have to stone you’--as it is an invitation. Now that she’s met Jesus, she has new light shining on her life. She doesn’t have to go about life in the same, old stumbling-in-the-dark way. The invitation stands for the religious leaders too, but, as Jesus had warned Nicodemus against, they ‘will not come into the light’ (3:20). They have the decency not to kill the woman, but then they slink back away into the darkness.
- ‘Such testimony is not valid’--I don’t know why the religious leaders suddenly think they’re in court. Jesus doesn’t need legally admissible evidence. The proof is in the pudding, as it were. If Jesus brings more light into your life, then what he’s saying is true. If he doesn’t, it’s not.
- ‘Where is your father?’--this must have been exasperating to no end. He was sent to the world precisely to shine a light so that people could see God (1:9,18). But if people refuse to turn on the light switch, how can he show them the Father? Of course, they’re probably just doing that taking-him-too-literally thing again. When he says that his Father can back him up, they think he means Joseph.

Taking It Home

- *For you and your family: How does it feel when you are in a very dark room? (e.g. it’s hard to see, we keep bumping into things, maybe it’s a little scary). What’s it like when a light is turned on? What makes you happy about the light? Jesus says that he wants to be like the light in a dark room. Are there parts of your life that make you feel like you’re in a dark room: scared or confused or out-of-sorts? Ask Jesus to be just like a flashlight, or nightlight, or bedside lamp, making things brighter, cheerier, and more obvious.*
- *For your six: Just as Jesus silences all of the voices of condemnation accusing the woman caught in adultery, ask Jesus to free your six from any condemnation. Whether it’s fear of accusation, an internal sense of accusation, or actual accusation from others in their lives, ask Jesus to protect them and set them free from it.*
- *For our church: Whatever it is Jesus writes(or draws), I love that he doesn’t get flustered by, caught up in, or distracted by the Pharisees’ complaints and games. Ask Jesus to help our church do the same. Pray that whenever we are faced with such situations that Jesus would help us respond calmly and not get distracted from him.*

Friday, March 16—John 8:21-41

²¹ Later Jesus said to them again, “I am going away. You will search for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going.”

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²² The people asked, “Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, ‘You cannot come where I am going’?”

²³ Jesus continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. ²⁴ That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I Am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.”

²⁵ “Who are you?” they demanded.

Jesus replied, “The one I have always claimed to be. ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won’t. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful.” ²⁷ But they still didn’t understand that he was talking about his Father.

²⁸ So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I Am he. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. ²⁹ And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.” ³⁰ Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

³³ “But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free’?”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. ³⁷ Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there’s no room in your hearts for my message. ³⁸ I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father.”

³⁹ “Our father is Abraham!” they declared.

“No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example. ⁴⁰ Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. ⁴¹ No, you are imitating your real father.”

They replied, “We aren’t illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father.”

Points of Interest

- ‘You will search for me but will die in your sin’--Jesus is warning them that his offer doesn’t stand forever. There will come a time when they will realize that the eternal life Jesus is offering would come in pretty handy. Hopefully, it won’t be when he can no longer do anything for them.
- ‘But they still didn’t understand’--I think we’ve reached what we call a complete breakdown in communication. Everyone is completely talking past one another now.
- ‘We have never been slaves to anyone’--I think Jesus is trying to compliment this group, or give them a great offer, or both: ‘Unlike those others, you really get it; you’re going to experience more and more freedom in your life because of it.’ But, though they’re originally enthusiastic

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about him, as soon as Jesus suggests that they might actually need something from him, they turn on him: ‘Hold on there, buddy. Who said we needed rescuing?’ A similar thing happens with Nicodemus (3: 4) and the people from Capernaum (6:41-42). They’re huge fans of Jesus, as long as he leaves them alone right where they are. But he can’t leave them alone right where they are, because his very nature is to offer them a better life than they currently have. They can’t have anything to do with him unless they want more out of life.

- ‘Our father is Abraham’--the people of Capernaum focus on Jesus’ parentage: ‘You’re not such a hotshot. You’re Joseph and Mary’s boy.’ These people focus on their own lineage: ‘Don’t you know who we are? We’re children of Abraham!’ Abraham was the first ancestor of all the Jews (he’s the grandfather of Israel). He’s also the Bible’s primary example of what it means to live a life of faith, and he’s described as the source of God’s blessing for the entire world. It’s as if he gathered so much blessing from God during his lifetime, that he could pass it on to his descendants as an inheritance:

I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. **3** I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12: 2-3)

Jesus’ listeners are telling him that they’re just fine living off of their inheritance from Abraham.

- ‘Abraham never did such a thing’--Jesus responds, ‘I knew Abraham. I don’t see the family resemblance.’ The very thing that made Abraham special was a willingness to accept good gifts from God. That’s what they’re refusing to do right now.
- ‘God himself is our true Father’--the more Jesus suggests that there’s more good out there, if they’ll take it, the more they insist that they have no need. Now, they’re not just Abraham’s heirs, they’re God’s. You may recall that saying something very like this got Jesus condemned as a blasphemer (5:18).

Taking It Home

- For you: I can empathize with these people’s resistance to admitting that they *need* something. Sometimes I know very well that things would be much better if I just asked for a little help, but I just can’t get myself to do it. How do you feel about idea of needing something, from God or from others? What is something you need today? Wisdom? Rest? Encouragement? A meal that somehow magically prepares itself? More time? Whatever it is, try telling Jesus. Look for ways today to tell Jesus that you need him and want what he has to offer.
- For your six: Are your six facing any continual struggles that they would like to be free from? Maybe its worry or a bad job situation or a conflict with a family member. Ask Jesus to set them free.
- For our church: The people in this passage hold on to what’s been passed down to them from generation to generation, yet, sadly, rather unreflectively. I wonder if churches have a propensity to do the same, and just act out the models of church that have been passed down through the ages without much reflection. Ask Jesus to help our church be innovative and to not be limited by the models of church that we have seen before us. Ask Jesus to keep our church fresh, vibrant, and closely connected with him.

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Saturday, March 17—John 8:42-59

⁴² Jesus told them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why can’t you understand what I am saying? It’s because you can’t even hear me! ⁴⁴ For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don’t believe me! ⁴⁶ Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don’t you believe me? ⁴⁷ Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don’t listen because you don’t belong to God.”

⁴⁸ The people retorted, “You Samaritan devil! Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?”

⁴⁹ “No,” Jesus said, “I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. ⁵¹ I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!”

⁵² The people said, “Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, ‘Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!’ ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I want glory for myself, it doesn’t count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, ‘He is our God,’ ⁵⁵ but you don’t even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I Am!” ⁵⁹ At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.

Points of Interest

- ‘If God were your Father, you would love me’--if God were their father, Jesus and they would be siblings. But there doesn’t seem to be much brotherly or sisterly affection.
- ‘you are the children of your father the devil’--their claims of God as their father provoke an equal and opposite response from Jesus: ‘The devil is more like it.’ I think what Jesus is saying here is that there’s so little understanding between him and them that it’s like they’re in completely different, and completely opposite universes. What is truth in his world is lies in theirs. Still, calling them devil spawn seems unlikely to bring them quickly to a better mutual understanding.
- ‘You Samaritan devil!’--And it doesn’t. Instead, it draws out racial epithets, and a little bit of ‘I’m rubber, you’re glue.’ Things are getting very ugly.

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- ‘I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!’--Jesus seems genuinely perplexed as to why they are having such a hard time in this conversation. He is merely trying to offer them the gift of eternal life, and it's come to this.
- ‘Your father Abraham rejoiced’--is Jesus softening his tone a bit? Instead of devil children, he's once again calling them Abraham's children. ‘Yes, you're children of Abraham. Please follow his example.’ If so, it doesn't really work.
- ‘I Am!’--this is God's name. When Moses and God first meet, Moses asks God to introduce himself. God responds that he is called I AM (Exodus 3:14). So, when they ask, ‘Are you saying you knew Abraham and are better than him?’ he answers, ‘Yes, Yes, most definitely yes. I don't just know Abraham. I don't just know God. I am God.’
- ‘Jesus was hidden from them’--someone--the Father, I presume? an angel, maybe?--is getting good at rescuing Jesus from assassination attempts.

Taking It Home

- For you: Whether its his age, his family lineage, or the town he was born in, Jesus just is not what the people expected out of the Messiah. Is there a situation in your life in which you feel like you don't quite match people's expectations? Ask Jesus if he has any tips on how to handle the expectations others have of you. Ask Jesus to remind you of the things most true about you. Finally, ask Jesus to give you the same confidence he had to hold on to his true identity even when others thought he couldn't possibly be up to the task at hand.
- For your six: Whether its the Father or an angel who hides Jesus--or maybe just that the Pharisees are really slow at gathering stones for execution--it's impressive how timely and effective the protection is. Ask Jesus today to protect your six from any harm that might come their way.
- For our church: Ask Jesus to help our church hear him. Whether he is speaking literally or figuratively in this passage, even though the people are right there next to him, they can't actually hear what Jesus is saying. I picture a parent trying to get their child's attention, but the child can't hear because the TV is on too loud, or just because they are talking away themselves. Ask Jesus to help our church become better at slowing down, being quiet, and have the space and posture to listen to him.

Sunday, March 18—John 9:1-17

¹ As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ² “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”

³ “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. ⁴ We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. ⁵ But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. ⁷ He told him, “Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “sent”). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

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⁸ His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some said he was, and others said, “No, he just looks like him!”

But the beggar kept saying, “Yes, I am the same one!”

¹⁰ They asked, “Who healed you? What happened?”

¹¹ He told them, “The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.’ So I went and washed, and now I can see!”

¹² “Where is he now?” they asked.

“I don’t know,” he replied.

¹³ Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, ¹⁴ because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. ¹⁵ The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, “He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!”

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath.” Others said, “But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?” So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

¹⁷ Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed you?”

The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.”

Points of Interest

- ‘Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?’--the disciples assume that blindness is a punishment from God. The fact that this particular man was blind from birth creates something of a puzzle. Obviously, he couldn’t have done anything to deserve the punishment before he was ever born. So, was God punishing him in advance for crimes God knew he would later do, or was God making him pay for his parents crimes?
- ‘so the power of God could be seen in him’--it’s not the blindness that comes from God, but the healing. I don’t think that Jesus means by this that God intentionally blinded this man just so that Jesus could later heal him and show how wonderful he is. That wouldn’t show God’s glory; that would be the cruelest, longest run-up to a magic trick ever. I think rather that Jesus is suggesting that when we run across some terrible thing in the world, we should take it not as an opportunity for philosophical dialogue on the nature of evil, but as an opportunity to do what we can to make the situation better. That’s God’s attitude.
- ‘The night is coming, and then no one can work’--Jesus has talked about a time coming when he would no longer be around, but thus far he’s always talked about it like a good thing. And when he’s spoken of the future, he’s talked about the ever greater ways in which there would be traffic between heaven and earth. The idea that there’s a future dark time is new. I wonder to what he is referring.
- ‘I am the light of the world’--since Jesus is the light, it’s only right that he should bring sight to this man’s eyes. I think he is also using this man as a picture for the spiritually blind people Jesus

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has been running across recently. How will these people ever see the light? By listening to Jesus, and wiping the mud out of their eyes.

- ‘But the beggar kept saying’--everyone else is debating about whether or not this man is the blind beggar. He’s right there, but they don’t think to ask him, or to listen to him.
- ‘because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud’--not this again! Once again, the Pharisees get so distracted by mud-making on the Sabbath that they totally miss the fact that a man born blind has been healed.
- ‘could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?’--try as they might, they can’t get around the signs. They’re intent upon getting people to see Jesus as an evildoer, but healing a blind man is something we’d normally call ‘good.’

Taking It Home

- *For you and your family: The blind man wasn’t the only who couldn’t see in this story. The people couldn’t see that the man was the same person who used to be a blind beggar, because they didn’t believe that the man could be healed. Why do you think they had a hard time seeing this miracle? Sometimes it can be surprisingly tricky to see, or remember, miracles and other good things Jesus does for us. Go around the circle as a family (or household or whatever) and each share a miracle or amazing gift from God you’ve seen or received. If you have trouble, help one another out, or ask God for help seeing and remembering.*
- **For your six:** While we only get a snippet of the blind man’s story, I can’t help but wonder about the rest of his story. Jesus becomes a key part of the this man’s entire life story. How well do you know the stories of your six? Pray that Jesus would somehow find his into the unique aspects of their stories. Next time you’re with your six ask them more about the story of their life.
- **For our church:** Ask Jesus to give our church sight, and show us where our blind spots are. On behalf of our church, tell Jesus we’re sorry for the ways that we are in fact blind and unable to see. Ask Jesus to raise up people of wisdom to help guide and lead our church.