



REVISED

The Gospel of John
Small Group Lesson 7
MS teaches this on 1.31.24
HS teaches this on 2.7.24

JOHN 11:28-35

LESSON 7



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Trials
Definition: A test that checks how well you can perform, show your qualities, or handle a situation.
- Loss
Definition: Losing something or someone. It's the feeling of grief when you no longer have someone or something valuable to you.
- Grief
Definition: A deep sadness you feel when you lose something or someone, especially when it's caused by someone's death.

Ice Breaker Questions

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, BRIEFLY share a time where you faced a loss, a great trial, or a situation where God's timing didn't line up with yours. How did you keep going? What valuable insight did you gain from God through that experience?

1. Have you ever really needed help and reached out, but no one responded right away?
2. Have you ever blamed God and distanced yourself from Him after losing someone or something, like a family member, pet, or even a dream for your future?

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

Remember, in the book of John, the author is selecting snippets from Jesus' life to show that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. John chose these events to help readers like us learn the good news so that we too can see and believe in Jesus.

This week, we find ourselves in John 11, where we read about Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. These three were siblings and super close to JESUS. They lived in the village of Bethany, which was located about two miles away from Jerusalem (John 11:18).

The news of Lazarus falling seriously ill reached Jesus. *But here's the twist:* Jesus received the message and DIDN'T hurry up and leave. He stayed in Jerusalem for two whole days after hearing this news, before going to Lazarus.

When concern was expressed about not leaving in a hurry to go to Lazarus, Jesus used this situation to show His disciples **He had a deeper purpose in mind**. His timing was and still is divine. Lazarus was dead for *FOUR* days before Jesus made His way to Bethany. Many questioned why Jesus hadn't arrived sooner.

When Mary told Jesus she believed if He had arrived sooner, Lazarus would still be alive, Jesus **SHOCKED** many with His response, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* (John 11:25). **That is a very radical statement that Jesus would not dare make unless He was the Son of God!**

This statement shook Martha because Jesus was challenging her faith in a big way. She mentioned her belief in the resurrection on the last day, **but Jesus encouraged her to embrace a deeper understanding of His power over life and death**. Martha showed great faith as she responded, *"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."* John 11:27

Let's read John 11:28-35 to see how Jesus reminds us that God's TIMING is perfect, and through faith in Jesus, we can find hope even in the DARKEST moments of life.

READ

Read John 11:28-35 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

Leaders: The Gospel of John bookmark contains suggestions for additional key observation questions.

1. When Martha told Mary, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you" what did Mary do?
She got up QUICKLY and went to Him (vs 29).
2. Where was Jesus when Mary met Him?
Jesus had not entered the village of Bethany; He was at the same place where Martha had met him (vs 30).
3. Who went with Mary to meet Jesus?
The Jews who were with Mary comforting her (vs 31).
4. What did Mary do and say when she saw Jesus?
She fell at His feet and told Jesus that if He had been there her brother would not have died (vs 32).
5. How did Jesus respond when He saw Mary's grief and the Jews' mourning?
He answered with care and understanding. He was deeply moved in Spirit and troubled when He saw Mary's grief and the Jews' mourning (vs 33)
6. In verse 35, what did Jesus do because of His emotions? Describe the scene in your own words. Why is this important?
Jesus wept. He felt the sadness and pain of those who were grieving over Lazarus' death.

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will generate the best discussion amongst your students.

7. In verse 28, John notes that Mary “got up *quickly* and went to Him”. What does this show about her relationship with Jesus, even though Jesus did not come and heal her brother?
She quickly trusted Jesus for comfort, even when He didn't heal her brother. Without getting upset, she paid attention to Martha's message and went to Jesus, like a sheep listening to its shepherd.
8. Verse 33 tells us that Jesus was “deeply moved in spirit.” In Greek, this means He was angry. When can anger be a fair and right reaction to a tough situation, like 'Jesus' anger about Lazarus' death?
Anger can be a fair and right reaction when it is anger over sin, disease, brokenness, etc. of this world.
9. Why do you think Jesus was deeply moved in Spirit and troubled when He saw Mary and the others weeping?
Jesus was deeply moved in Spirit and troubled because He saw the sadness of those mourning Lazarus' death. It's possible He also sensed the heaviness of the impact of sin and death in the world.
10. What can we learn about Jesus through this story?
We learn that Jesus cares and feels deeply when others are in pain and sad. It shows that He is an all-powerful God AND fully human. He understands the emotions of the people.
11. Why do you believe Jesus cried, even when He knew He would do a miracle and bring Lazarus back to life? How does this show His strong love and care for us?
Even though Jesus knew He would bring Lazarus back to life, He still wept because He truly cared about Mary, Martha, and everyone who was grieving. His tears show His compassion and love for us. He understands our pain and emotions and wants to be with us in our struggles.
12. What does this show about God's Sovereignty (Him being in control of EVERYTHING)?
Jesus wants to reveal His glory and faithfulness in a bigger way than just healing Lazarus. Despite it not being the way they might have chosen, He can still show His power and God's faithfulness to them through this miracle.

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will resonate the most with your students.

13. When we come across someone who is sad or going through a tough time, how can we be like Jesus and show that we understand and care about their feelings?
14. How can you trust in, and rely on Jesus so that when hard situations happen you can find comfort in Him?
15. How does understanding that Jesus has power over life and death impact your view of who He is?
16. How does understanding that Jesus has complete control over everything bring you hope and strength?
17. Jesus' timing and plan may not be the same as ours, but He is still at work for His glory and our good. Can you give an example of how you had to learn to trust God's timing?
18. How have you faced pain and brokenness in your life? Are you experiencing it now? Ask Jesus to be with you. What would you say to Him?

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Have students listen quietly & pray as they listen to this reflection song:

“Hymn of Heaven” by Phil Wickham: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjB0mkj0XaM>

Spotify:





REVISED

The Gospel of John
Small Group Lesson 6
MS teaches this on 1.10.24
HS teaches this on 1.17.24

JOHN 10:24-33

LESSON 6



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Denial
Definition: Saying that something is not true.
- Rejection
Definition: Refusing a thought, idea, person or group

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, briefly please share a time in your life when you felt denied or rejected. Maybe there's a time you denied something or rejected something you later found out to be true. Please share with your students. We will see tonight how Jesus was denied and rejected by the religious leaders.

Ice Breaker Questions

Leaders: Choose 1 Ice Breaker question that you think will resonate the most with your students and have a few people in your group share their answer. Ice Breaker time should be brief; *not* everyone needs to share during this portion of the lesson.

1. Have you ever wanted to be friends with someone or be a part of a certain friend group, only to be rejected? Have YOU ever been the one who did the rejecting?
2. Have you ever strongly rejected something, only to later realize that you were completely wrong?

Rehearsing the Gospel-included on every 3rd lesson, as a refresher

1. What does the gospel MEAN?

Good news: Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Even when we feel rejected or denied in this world, the Lord is close and loves you.

2. What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead to conquer sin and death. Jesus came to seek and save the sinners, the outcasts, the sick, and the rejected. He did not reject us. John 1:12 says "Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believed in His name He gave the right to become children of God."

3. Why did He die for your sins?

Our sins are a big deal. They separate us from God. Jesus died so we can have a full life and be in a relationship with Him now and forever. We will never be denied or rejected by God if we put our hope and trust in His Son Jesus, and what Jesus did on the cross to pay for our sins.

4. What is grace?

Grace (def)- God giving me something I don't deserve. Receiving God's *gift* of love, even though I am a messed up and undeserving sinner. When we place our hope and trust in Jesus, God's grace allows Him to see Jesus' perfection when He looks at us instead of seeing our sins and failures

Pray

Open your time together in prayer.

REVIEW (5 MINUTES)-included in ever 3rd lesson, as a review

1. Who is John, the author of the Gospel?

John was the son of Zebedee. He was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus, but not just that, he was in Jesus' inner circle of three disciples as well.

2. What role does John play in the story of his Gospel?

As a disciple, John is an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel, he refers to himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23).

3. Why was the Book of John written?

John wrote his Gospel so that his readers would believe in Jesus- that Jesus was the Son of God and that they could have new life by believing in Him (John 20:31).

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

Tonight's story happened in winter, two months after the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus was at the temple in Jerusalem for the *Feast of Dedication*. It celebrated the rebuilding and rededication of the temple after enemies captured and destroyed it. The Feast of Dedication is still celebrated TODAY, it's known as Hanukkah.

Now, Jesus has just spoken the parable of the Good Shepherd. In John 10:11, He said, "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*" Here, Jesus was talking about what would happen to Him in the future- His death and resurrection. In this parable, Jesus explains His great love and how He WATCHES over and cares for His followers.

Now, how do you think YOU would respond if Jesus was talking to you about something that would happen to Him in the future? Well, when the Jews heard this parable, they had different opinions. Some believed in Jesus, while others thought he was crazy or even controlled by a demon.

So, before we read tonight's verses, let's pause to look at some helpful information.

First, John has repeating themes. Two of them are *denial* and *rejection*. Even the most "religious" leaders of that period *denied* and *rejected* Jesus MANY times. And now, we'll see this happen again in tonight's lesson. He presented Himself as the Son of God, but MANY did not believe Him.

Second, the Jewish leaders felt threatened by Jesus so they were looking for a way to kill Him. They believed He committed *blasphemy* which is saying something untrue or bad about God. This religious crime meant death by stoning or throwing rocks at someone until they die. The leaders were trying to trap Jesus so they could stone him.

Lastly, in John, this is Jesus' last teaching at the temple and His final public statement of being one with God. This is also His last invitation for people to believe in Him. This important moment happened about THREE months before He was crucified.

Let's see how Jesus responds to the religious leaders this time as we read John 10:24-33.

READ

Read John 10:24-33 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

Leaders: The Gospel of John bookmark contains suggestions for additional key observation questions.

1. Who is talking to Jesus?
The Jews (verse 24)
2. What did the Jews ask Jesus to do?
If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly (verse 24)
3. Why did Jesus say they did not believe EVEN THOUGH He showed them who He was?
They were not His sheep (verse 26)
4. What two things did Jesus say His sheep do?
Listen to His voice and follow Him (verse 27)
5. What does Jesus give and promise His sheep?
He gives them (a GIFT) eternal life. He promises no one will snatch His sheep out His hand or the Father's hand (verses 28 and 29)
6. In verse 30 what claim did Jesus make?
I and the Father are One
7. How did Jesus' Jewish opponents respond to His claim?
They picked up stones to stone him (verse 31)

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will generate the best discussion amongst your students.

8. Why did the Jews want Jesus to tell them plainly who He was?
They wanted to support for their desire to kill Him. If He publicly claimed to be the Messiah, they believed that was blasphemy and that was punished by death through stoning.
9. What did Jesus mean when He told the Jewish leaders they were *not* His sheep?
Just like a shepherd calling to his herd of sheep, Jesus is reaching out to His people. We have the choice to believe and listen to His voice, or not believe and be unable to hear Him.
10. Why do you think Jesus used the sheep and shepherd example to explain His point?
His listeners were very familiar with sheep and shepherding. Sheep are dumb animals, they wander, get into trouble, and are in desperate need of protection by their shepherd. Sheep have a very unique relationship with their shepherd. They can trust and follow their shepherd because they can learn to recognize their shepherd's voice.
11. In verses 28-29, what did Jesus mean that His sheep "cannot be snatched" out of Jesus or God's hand?
His sheep are held tight by Jesus and God the Father. It is impossible for any of His sheep to be taken from Him. Their eternal salvation will be fully protected IF they are followers (sheep) of Jesus (The Good Shepherd).
12. What does Jesus mean by "I and the Father are One"?
He's talking about the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are One. Jesus always does the Father's will.
13. Why do you think the Jewish leaders did not recognize who Jesus was?
They missed the signs around them. Possibly because they expected Jesus to come as something other than a sacrificial Lamb. They were looking for a fierce ruler and missed Him even though He performed many miracles and was a brilliant teacher.

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will resonate the most with your students.

14. Why do you think people are more likely to reject the truth about Jesus, rather than believe it?
15. Do you pretend to be something you are not to avoid denial and rejection? Explain
16. What is the worst thing that could happen if you are denied or rejected by your friends, teammates, classmates etc.?
17. The religious leaders had evidence to prove Jesus was the Messiah, but they didn't believe in Him. How has Jesus showed up in your life? Have you chosen to believe in Him? If not, what is stopping you?
18. How have you been rejected by others?
19. Jesus faced constant rejection by the Jewish leaders. He knows first-hand how hard rejection is. How does knowing that bring you comfort?

20. Even though you will face denial and rejection from others, how can you find comfort knowing that if you put your trust in Jesus to save you and believe that His death on the cross paid for your sins, you will never be denied and rejected by God?

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Pair up students in 2's (who do not know each other well) and have them spend 5-10 minutes sharing a praise & a prayer request; each student prays for the other student.



REVISED

The Gospel of John
Small Group Lesson 5

MS teaches this on 12/13

HS teaches this on 1/3

JOHN 8:31-36

LESSON 5



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Freedom vs. slavery
Definition of freedom: the quality or state of being free; not being imprisoned or enslaved
Definition of slavery: a condition in which a person is owned or controlled by someone or something

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, briefly give an example of a time when you felt stuck.

Ice Breaker Questions

Leaders: Choose 1 Ice Breaker question that you think will resonate the most with your students and have a few people in your group share their answer. Ice Breaker time should be brief; *not* everyone needs to share during this portion of the lesson.

1. Have you ever felt completely stuck, like there was no way out?
2. Do you sometimes ignore some sins and think they're not as serious as others?

Pray

Open your time together in prayer.

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

Our lesson tonight takes place in Jerusalem after the Feast of the Tabernacles. Remember, this feast was the week-long celebration in fall where people lived in TENTS made from branches and thanked God for the food and water He provided.

Once again, Jesus will teach us a spiritual lesson by using something physical.

Remember His use of food and water in our previous lessons? Well, in tonight's lesson, He uses physical slavery to teach about the spiritual freedom that can be found by following Him. Slavery was a common practice during this time period; therefore, Jesus's audience would have been very familiar with this topic.

Before we read tonight's verses, let's explore some key details.

First, disciple is a fancy word for someone who LEARNS from and follows Jesus. Jesus recognized that not everyone who said they believed Him actually did. Even if some Jews said they believed in Jesus, the way they acted didn't show it.

Next, in our reading tonight, you'll notice that Jesus said, "if you *hold to* my teaching," *hold to* is an important idea here. The Greek word for this means to *remain* and *abide* in God's teaching in the Bible. By spending time reading, memorizing scripture, and thinking about God's word, a Christ-follower can *hold to* Jesus and His teaching. The more time spent in the Bible, the more its truth will impact a Christ-follower.

Another important note is when Jesus says, "You will *know* the truth," the Greek word for "*know*" isn't like knowing a fact. It means understanding something or someone because of a personal experience or a close relationship. It's like the difference between seeing food and TASTING it OR knowing a person and being *best* friends with a person.

And last, the Jewish people were all descendants of a man named Abraham. He is considered the *Father of the Jews*. They thought being Jewish made them better than everyone else, and if they followed God's rules, they would automatically go to heaven when they died.

Let's watch for these key details in our reading and find out what Jesus teaches about true FREEDOM in John 8:31-36.

READ

Read John 8:31-36 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

Leaders: The Gospel of John bookmark contains suggestions for additional key observation questions.

Below are questions (and answers) to help guide you thru the Observation step:

1. Who was Jesus speaking to?
Jews that claimed they believed in Jesus (verse 31)
2. How did Jesus say someone would know if they really are His disciple?
If they hold to His teaching (verse 31)
3. If someone really is Jesus' disciple, what does He promise will happen?
They will know the truth and the truth will set them free.
4. How do the Jews in the crowd respond to Jesus' claim that they are not free (verse 33)?
They say that they are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves of anyone.
5. Were the Jewish leaders talking about physical or spiritual slavery? What kind of slavery was Jesus talking about?
The Jewish leaders were talking about physical slavery. Jesus was talking about spiritual slavery to sin.
6. In verses 34-35, what does Jesus teach about sin?
Jesus says that anyone who sins is a slave to sin. Slaves have no permanent place in the family, but a son will belong to the family forever.
7. How does Jesus say someone can receive freedom?
If the Son sets them free, they will be free.

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will generate the best discussion amongst your students.

8. Can someone think they're a Christian without truly following Christ?

Yes, it's possible. Going to church and being a good person doesn't guarantee being a Christ-follower. Only God can judge the heart. Being a Christ follower does NOT mean you will never struggle with sin; instead, it brings awareness, guilt, and a desire to live according to God's commands through the power of the Holy Spirit.

6- What does it mean to be a slave to sin?

Everyone is born with a sinful nature that naturally desires selfishness and sin. This makes everyone a slave to sin. Sin can look good and seem to lead to happiness, but it never satisfies. It causes hurt and emptiness that some people try to fill with more sin, becoming slaves to those actions, thoughts, or behaviors.

10. Who or what can we become slaves to?

The list is endless. Some examples are gossip, cheating, stealing, anxiety, fear of failure, the need for control, lying, people pleasing, romantic relationships, trying to be perfect, sexual sin, anger, unforgiveness, toxic thought life, addiction to gaming, snapchat, TikTok, or any substance such as food, alcohol, or drugs.

Living in freedom from the "need" to do these things is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. If we sin, then we are slaves to that sin. If we live in freedom, then we have the ability to live more like Jesus.

11. What does it mean to "hold to" Jesus' teaching?

It means to study and obey God's teaching in the Bible. By spending time reading, memorizing scripture, and thinking about God's word, a Christ-follower can "hold to" Jesus' teaching. This does not always mean you will be instantly set free, but more time spent in the Bible, and growing in relationship with Him, can lead to greater freedom from sin.

12. How does the Son set you free?

Jesus frees us from the eternal punishment our sin deserves. The crazy thing about Christian freedom is that it comes when we surrender to following God's plan for our lives. It might not seem like freedom especially when we tend to focus on all the rules, but trying to live freely without God leads to disastrous consequences.

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will resonate the most with your students.

13. Bad habits and desires can seem like "good" things but can actually lead to slavery. What are ways that sin looks good? What are ways those things cause slavery?

14. What are some ways to tell if you are a slave to something other than Jesus?

15. Christians have rules to follow and are not free to "find their own truth". Can you see how surrendering to God's desire for your life actually makes your life better? Give an example.

16. Have any of you experienced the freedom from sin that Christ is offering? If so, what sin, and how did He free you from it?

17. Jesus teaches us that our actions show our identity. What do your actions say about who you are and where your identity comes from?

18. What does it mean if someone is unwilling to *try* to seek God's help to give up something they are a slave to?

19. What is one thing you will do to “*hold to*” Jesus’ teaching more? (read your Bible, journal, memorize a verse, pray, listen to worship music, etc.)
20. Do you truly believe that even in the midst of your sin you are fully known by God and still fully loved by Him?

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Split up into your clusters (3-4 students & 1 leader) and every student share 1 praise & 1 prayer request and the person on the right prays over them.



JOHN 7:37-39

LESSON 4



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Lack of Contentment (Contentment is a lasting state of happiness, peace, and satisfaction)
Definition: Never satisfied. Always looking for something to make you happy, but never finding it.

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, briefly share with the students a time in your life when you felt a lack of contentment. What did it look like?

Ice Breaker Questions

Leaders: Choose 1 Ice Breaker question that you think will resonate the most with your students and have a few people in your group share their answer. Ice Breaker time should be brief; *not* everyone needs to share during this portion of the lesson.

1. Have you ever wanted something badly, and then realized it wasn't as great as you expected?
2. Have you ever been "dying" of thirst at school and your teacher wouldn't let you get a drink?

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

Tonight's lesson takes place in Jerusalem at a Jewish feast called the *Feast of Tabernacles*. At the end of the fall harvest, Jewish men living nearby had to go to Jerusalem for this eight-day Feast. Picture Thanksgiving on steroids. Families traveled for this joyous time and there were tens of thousands of Jewish people there.

At this point, you may be asking, "What's a *tabernacle*?" Well, in our story tonight, it's like a fancy word for TENT. Think of it as a shelter made from tree branches - something you would build if you had to spend a week in the woods and create your own place to stay. These Tabernacles (also called booths) were made from tree branches to live in during the celebration. This tradition reminded people of how God provided for them during a 40-year journey in the wilderness before they reached the Promised Land. In the Bible, our bodies are also referred to as tabernacles. They are temporary homes for our eternal soul.

And now we have water... yes, water is back as a key theme, just like the story of the woman at the well. We understand water is needed to live, but we don't often fear running out of it. In this story, the Jews were very aware of how desperately they needed water to survive. At the feast, they celebrated how God had provided water and asked for God to bless them with more water during the next rainy season.

Okay, back to tonight's story. Remember, Jerusalem was the hometown of the highly honored religious leaders known as the Pharisees. The Pharisees were very familiar with Old Testament Scripture, but sadly,

they didn't believe in Jesus or His teaching. They were so jealous and angry with Him that they wanted Him DEAD. Jesus' disciples wanted Him to go with them to Jerusalem for the 8-day celebration. They wanted him to become more popular and show off His miraculous powers. However, Jesus told his disciples that *His time* had not yet come, so he did not go with them.

Jesus had other plans. He went to The Feast of Tabernacles, however He went alone, quietly and in SECRET.

Jews in Jerusalem were on the lookout for Jesus. News of His teaching and the miracles He performed had spread, making Him the center of lots of gossip. In the middle of the feast, Jesus went to the temple courts and started teaching. *The people were in awe*. They were amazed at His teaching and the fact that He spoke openly, despite knowing that the religious leaders wanted to kill Him. They even tried to arrest Jesus but were not able to because *His time* had not come. **Many people who saw and heard Jesus' teachings believed in Him.**

On the last day of the feast, the priest performed an elaborate water-pouring ceremony that celebrated how God would provide *life-giving* water that leads to eternal salvation. **It is at this point that Jesus makes a claim that would have been SHOCKING or even absurd to His original audience.**

Let's explore His claim together as we read John 7:37-39

READ

Read John 7:37-39 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

Leaders: The Gospel of John bookmark contains suggestions for additional key observation questions.

Below are questions (and answers) to help guide you thru the Observation step:

1. On which day of the festival did Jesus speak these words?
The last and greatest day of the festival.
2. How does the Bible describe the voice Jesus used when he spoke?
A loud voice, imagine speaking to that many people without a PA system.
3. Who did Jesus say should come to him for a drink?
ANYONE. Not based on social class, religious background, race, morality, good works etc. (verse 37)
4. What did Jesus say would happen if thirsty people came to Him for a drink?
Streams of living water will flow from within them (verse 38).
5. Was Jesus talking about physical or spiritual thirst?
Spiritual thirst.
6. What did John say people would *later* receive if they believed in Him?
The Holy Spirit (verse 39).
7. When would the Holy Spirit be given?
After Jesus had been glorified.

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will generate the best discussion amongst your students.

8. During the festival, the people thanked God for water and prayed for His blessings to bring them more. They understood that in their climate, their survival depended on God providing rain. Why do you think Jesus chose to use physical water to help the people understand His purpose?
Jesus wanted His audience to realize they needed Him as desperately as they needed physical water. They would die without physical water and their souls would die eternally if they did not come to Him for living water.
9. Why was Jesus' claim shocking to His original audience?
The Jews attending the festival would have known he was claiming to be the Messiah. The Old Testament predicted the Messiah would come to rescue God's people. They would have also recognized that He was claiming to be God because only God could give living water.
10. Jesus offered the people a drink IF they were thirsty but not everyone believed in Him. Why do you think some people rejected His offer even though they witnessed His teaching and miracles?
Jesus was rejected for various reasons, usually tied to pride. Some were arrogant or jealous, they thought it was possible to find contentment without God. They wouldn't admit their sin and they thought they didn't need God.
11. In this story, Jesus said "living water," two of the exact words He used with the woman at the well. Do you think He was implying that living water would lead to eternal life?
Yes, John connects living water to eternal life. Those who choose to come to Jesus for living water receive the Holy Spirit. God's word promises that the Holy Spirit is an inheritance that guarantees eternal life.
12. In verse 39, John said that those who *believed* in Jesus would eventually receive the Holy Spirit. What steps did Jesus say were necessary to be a believer?
 - 1). Thirst – You won't believe in Jesus until you realize you have a need, just like feeling thirsty before getting a drink of water. Lack of lasting contentment is one of God's ways of telling you that you need Him.
 - 2). Come - When you realize that your needs cannot be fulfilled by anything on earth, you have to make the choice to come to Jesus for fulfillment, just like choosing to find a drink when you are thirsty.
 - 3). Drink – When you choose to come to Jesus and drink you admit that nothing in this world will make your soul content. You ask God to forgive you for trying to find satisfaction in something else and with the help of the Holy Spirit you choose to start living like Jesus.

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

Leaders: Do NOT feel that you need to cover all of these questions. We would encourage you to choose several questions that you think will resonate the most with your students.

13. Can you see how you sometimes seek happiness from people or things? Give examples.
14. Have you ever had a constant feeling that something is missing in your life, but you can't figure out how to make it right?
15. Do you think it is possible to feel truly content, if you do not believe in Jesus?
16. Do you realize you have a soul that will live forever?
17. Similar to the people listening to Jesus back then, every person must decide whether they'll come to Jesus. If you haven't chosen to believe in Him, what's holding you back?
18. Do you ever think that being a good person will automatically grant you eternal life when you die?

19. Contentment on earth grows out of a relationship with God. The best way to be in a relationship with God is to read His Word in the Bible. Are you *willing to invest time into a relationship with God?*

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Have a leader write down one prayer request from every student and assign each student to pray out loud over 1 of the prayer requests. Students are encouraged to continue praying over their assigned prayer requests during the upcoming week.



JOHN 4:16-30 & 39-42

LESSON 3



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Sexual Sin

Definition: Defying God's laws of sexual relations by engaging in sexual acts outside of marriage or engaging in sexual acts with someone of the same sex.

- Shame

Definition: Shame is a painful feeling of being embarrassed and humiliated because you know you did something wrong, someone else did something wrong to you, you made a mistake, or didn't meet the right standards.

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, briefly give an example of a time when you felt like an outsider because you were not good enough or as a result of past behavior. (Tonight's lesson covers the woman at the well. If you have an age-appropriate example of how sexual sin in your life led to feelings of shame, inadequacy, or feeling like an outsider, feel free to use that).

Ice Breaker Questions

1. Have you ever intentionally avoided someone because you felt embarrassed or ashamed of something you did?
2. Can you think of a time when you overcame feelings of shame or embarrassment related to a sin issue in your life?

Rehearsing the Gospel

1. What does the gospel MEAN?

Good news: Despite our past, the good news is that if we surrender our lives to Christ and are obedient to him, we are promised that both He and God will make a home in us. We may feel like an outsider to the world because of our inadequacies, but to Jesus we are enough, and we will never be alone (John 14:23).

2. What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead to conquer sin and death. Our sin is what separates us from God. Through Jesus' death on the cross we are now able to be in God's presence again (Eph. 2:13).

3. Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever. We may not feel loved in this world, but God loves us so much that He gave his son to die for us so that we could have eternal life (John 3:16).

4. What is grace?

Grace (def)- God giving us something we don't deserve. Receiving God's *gift* of love, even though I am a messed up & undeserving sinner. This is freely given and available to all. No amount of shame, guilt or past sin is too much for God's grace. (Rom. 3:24).

Pray

Open your time together in prayer.

REVIEW (5 MINUTES)

1. Who is John, the author of the Gospel?

John was the son of Zebedee. He was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus, but not just that, he was in Jesus' inner circle of three disciples as well.

2. What role does John play in the story of his Gospel?

As a disciple, John is an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel, he refers to himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23)

3. Why was the Book of John written?

John wrote his Gospel so that his readers would believe in Jesus- that Jesus was the Son of God and that they could have new life by believing in Him (John 20:31)

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

In our small group session tonight we're talking about a very unusual influencer. Here are four things to keep in mind as you read her story:

- The story unfolds in Samaria, a region of Israel that Jesus and his disciples visited as they were traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee. It's a journey that covers about 90 miles, kind of like walking from Milwaukee to Chicago. But here's the thing: usually, Jews preferred to take the long route, *adding an extra 25+ miles just to avoid Samaria*.
- **Now, the Samaritans have an interesting history.** The origin of the Samaritans dates back approximately 700 years earlier when the nation of Israel was defeated by Assyria. The poor Jews who stayed behind in Israel intermarried with foreigners who worshipped other Gods. This resulted in a group of people known as the Samaritans. Jews were prejudiced and angry that Samaritans had infiltrated their bloodline and believed Samaritans were "unclean".
- *Here's another twist:* the Samaritans only accepted the first five books of the Bible (with some changes,) but threw out the rest of the Old Testament. This was one of many things that deeply angered devout Jews.
- *Remember when we mentioned* earlier that the Jews would go out of their way by adding an extra 25+ miles to their journey just to avoid Samaria? Well, we now see in John 4 that Jesus, a Jew, decided to travel directly through Samaria. This reveals that He had a divine purpose in stopping at the well in Samaria.

Now let's get back to our unusual influencer. She is known as "the woman at the well," we don't know her actual name. Back in those days, women usually headed to the well for water either in the early morning or

evening in order to avoid the heat of the day. Plus, women went in groups, never alone. So, when Jesus meets a woman at the well in the middle of the day, all by herself, it's a clue that she was seen as a social outcast.

Jesus began his conversation with the woman by asking her for a drink of water. The woman is totally taken aback because Jews had this reputation for thinking they were way better than Samaritans. They wouldn't even consider talking to them.

Here's a quick paraphrased version of their conversation based on John 4:9-15:

Jesus: Will you give me a drink?

Woman: You're a Jew and I'm a Samaritan woman why would you ask me for a drink?

Jesus: If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Woman: I'm confused, you don't even have a way to get the water yourself. Who do you think you are?!?

Jesus: Anyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again but anyone who drinks of the water I give will never thirst again.

Woman: I want your water.

We pick up the rest of the story in tonight's Scripture reading. **Let's examine how this woman gained influencer status as we read her story in John 4:16-30 and 39-42.**

READ

Read John 4:16-30, 39-42 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

LEADERS: Here are the key questions you are going to want to hear your students answer, in order to be confident that they have observed the text well (these questions are also listed on the Gospel of John bookmark that students should have):

- What are the facts (who, what, where, when, how and why)?
- What exactly was said?
 - Any repeating words?
 - Any contrasting words?
 - Any promises from God?
- What was the historical & cultural context in which this was written?
- Put yourself into the verse and visualize (hear, feel, smell) what is being described.

The following are questions (and answers) to help guide you thru the Observation step:

8- What personal information did Jesus know about the Samaritan woman?

Jesus knew her painful sexual past. He knew she did not currently have a husband; he knew she had five husbands, and she wasn't even married to the man she was currently with.

2. How did the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus' knowledge of her personal life?
She responded by telling Jesus he must be a prophet because only a divine deity could have known about her personal life. This was a clear demonstration of Jesus' deity.
3. Who does the Samaritan woman believe is coming? How did Jesus respond?
She believed the Messiah was coming. Jesus responded by telling her that He is the Messiah. This is the first time Jesus personally declared he was the Messiah.
4. What did the Samaritan woman do after her conversation with Jesus?
She went back to town to tell people about Jesus.
5. How did the townspeople respond to the Samaritan woman's testimony? What do the people now believe after spending two days with Jesus?
Some believed and left town to find Jesus in order to invite him to their town. After Jesus stayed for two days, they believed that Jesus was the Savior of the world.

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

6. What does this passage teach us about who is welcome into God's kingdom?
It teaches that everyone is welcome in God's kingdom, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social status, moral standing, place of worship, and so on. The criteria for 'entry' are based on whether one chooses to accept Jesus' gift and surrender their life to Him, or whether they reject Him.
7. Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal that He knew about her adulterous choices?
Jesus knew that she would not thirst for living water unless she recognized her sin
8. Given the woman's background, do you find it surprising that the townspeople listened to her? What does this show us about the power of our influence?
Yes, it does seem surprising. It teaches us that God can use any opportunity, regardless of our background, if we are willing to influence others to follow Christ.
9. Isn't it fascinating that Jesus chose to reveal Himself as the Messiah to this particular woman instead of someone like Nicodemus?
 - o Why would he choose a sexually immoral, uneducated, socially outcasted, Samaritan woman instead of a prestigious, moral, highly educated, Jewish religious leader like Nicodemus?
She recognized her need because she knew she had nothing to offer. So-called outcasts and overlooked people, like the Samaritan woman, were often more receptive to the gospel than some influential leaders, like Nicodemus. Her being female and her non-Jewish background didn't affect her ability to be a powerful gospel influencer.

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

10. Do you take a moment to consider the events in someone's life before reacting to them especially when they are different from you or if they are considered a social outcast? What can you learn from how Jesus treated the Samaritan woman?
11. Do you feel burdened by shame from a past or current experience, such as a sinful act or sinful thoughts, sexual sin, pornography, or addiction? Remember, God loves and forgives you, even though He knows everything about you. Confess your struggle(s) to God and share with your leader or a trusted Christ-follower.
12. The Samaritan woman's sin created a heavy weight of shame, but it became her testimony; how can God make your past into your testimony?
13. Did you know that just as Jesus "had to" meet the woman at the well, He also wants to meet with you? Is there anything hindering your relationship with Jesus?

14. Do you realize that you are an influencer? In what ways do you influence your friends? List all the ways you can think of to influence others to desire to learn who Jesus is and what He offers.

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Go around the circle & everyone shares a praise & a prayer request...the person on your right will pray over your prayer request.



JOHN 2:13-19

LESSON 2



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Lack of trust
To doubt the honesty of something, feeling that someone cannot be trusted.
- Rejection
The dismissal of or refusal of a thought, idea, person, group.

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, briefly please share a time in your life when you felt rejected or that others didn't trust you even when you were speaking truth. We will see tonight how this very thing happens to Jesus during his ministry.

Ice Breaker Questions

1. Have you ever avoided doing something you knew you should do because you were afraid of being rejected by others?
2. Have you ever trusted someone with something important, only for them to take advantage of it or disregard its significance?

Rehearsing the Gospel

1. What does the gospel MEAN?

Good news: 1 John 3:1- "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" God has never and will never reject us. He calls us His children, His beloved.

2. What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead to conquer sin and death. We can trust what the Bible says. Even though He knew so many would reject Him, He loved you enough to do it anyway.

3. Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever. God loved us so much, He specifically sent Jesus to earth to die for our sins so we can live in eternity with Him forever. (John 3:16).

4. What is grace?

Grace is God giving us something we don't deserve. Receiving God's gift of love, even though I am a messed up & undeserving sinner. Grace is the love of God shown to the unloving, the peace of God given to the restless, the unearned favor of God.

Pray

Open your time together in prayer.

REVIEW (5 MINUTES)

1. Who is John, the author of the Gospel?

John was the son of Zebedee. He was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus, but not just that, he was in Jesus' inner circle of three disciples as well.

2. What role does John play in the story of his Gospel?

As a disciple, John is an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel, he refers to himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23)

3. Why was the Book of John written?

John wrote his Gospel so that his readers would believe in Jesus- that Jesus was the Son of God and that they could have new life by believing in Him.

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

In the second half of John 2, Jesus is traveling from Capernaum with a small group of people, to the temple in Jerusalem. *Jerusalem will hold a lot of significance throughout the book of John.* This travel and ministry group has not been together long. John tells us Jesus gathered up these followers in the previous chapter. These followers were among the few to recognize the significance of Jesus' first miracle at the wedding of a family friend.

In our reading tonight, it is said that Jesus visited this temple in Jerusalem every year for the Passover celebration. Passover is one of the holiest festivals for the Jewish people. This festival is held to remember Israel's rescue from slavery, the passing over of the angel of death, and the saving of their first-born children & animals, due to them putting blood of a sacrificed lamb on the doorposts of their homes. *(This sounds very similar to the Gospel message that the book of John is all about, doesn't it?)*

Let's continue...

John tells us that Jesus goes up into the temple "when it was almost time for Passover." This time period before the festival itself had significance to the Jewish culture as well. Many of the Jewish families would be cleansing their homes in preparation for the Passover gatherings. **Keep that in mind as we now find Jesus entering the temple.**

Going up to the temple is not like "going to church on another Sunday" and was not a quick in and out experience. It is said that Jerusalem can go from roughly 50,000 people to 180,000 people during Passover. *That's like taking the entire population of Green Bay and West Bend and jamming them all into Sheboygan!*

Then, most of these people were in Jerusalem to bring their sacrifices to the temple altar. Now you have roughly 180,000 people all trying to visit one large building covering roughly 1/10 of a square mile. These people have all brought or are buying animals for their sacrifices.

You can imagine the scene Jesus is walking into... IT IS LOUD, BUSY, AND CROWDED!

Jesus responds to this scene by driving out all of the animals and kicking out the merchants selling them. This is not a quick process as you can imagine with all those people and animals in the way. Jesus is creating quite a bit of a scene and people couldn't help but notice what was going on. *Then, he declares the temple His "Father's house," which fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah. (See Malachi 3:1).*

Let's see how this all plays out as we read John 2:13-19.

READ

Read John 2:13-19 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

LEADERS: *Here are the key questions you are going to want to hear your students answer, in order to be confident that they have observed the text well (these questions are also listed on the Gospel of John bookmark that students should have):*

- What are the facts (who, what, where, when, how and why)?
- What exactly was said?
 - Any repeating words?
 - Any contrasting words?
 - Any promises from God?
- What was the historical & cultural context in which this was written?
- Put yourself into the verse and visualize (hear, feel, smell) what is being described.

Below are questions (and answers) to help guide you thru the Observation step:

- Where was Jesus going?
The temple in Jerusalem
- What does Jesus see when He enters the temple courts?
A place that looked like more worldly business was being conducted than Godly business. We are to be in this world, but not of this world. (Romans 12:2, 1 John 2:15-17, John 17:16)
- How does He respond to the activities of the temple?
He drives out the animals, tells the merchants to take their doves out, dumps the money on the ground, and turns over all the tables.
- Making a whip out of cords is not a quick task. Does anyone appear to be trying to stop Him?
No, it may suggest that some of the people there were not in agreement to what was happening either. It is said the High Priest allowed the merchants to enter the temple courts to do their business. Not necessarily the activity one would expect to see inside the gates of a place of worship and prayer.
- What did Jesus say in the temple that made this visit stand out even more?
First time declaring the Temple as being His Father's house, and claiming to be the Son of God
- What do the people demand of Jesus here?
A miraculous sign to PROVE His authority.

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

- What is the significance of Jesus cleansing the temple on this visit? What other cleansing was going on during this time?
He was cleansing His Father's house and restoring the purity & holiness of the temple; a place of welcome, worship & serenity was turned into a bustling marketplace that distracted people from focusing on God, and impeded God's intended purpose for the temple. The Jews were also going through a several day purification ritual in preparation for the Passover

Interpretation continued...

- There's a common theme we will discover all throughout John... over and over again we see Jesus confronted by the Jewish people demanding signs and miracles to prove He is who He claims to be. (verse 18: "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do this?") What "signs" does Jesus give that He is who He said He is?

His very appearance in the temple declaring it His Father's House is a fulfillment of prophecy. (Malachi 3:1) It would be blasphemy if it wasn't true (the act of offense of speaking about God or sacred things in a way that violated or misused something that is regarded as sacred). Additionally, Jesus said (v.19), "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days," which pointed to His resurrection, proving He's the Son of God.

- What was the temple He was going to raise in 3 days? What was this foretelling?
Jesus is referring to Himself. He was to become our sinless/spotless sacrificial Lamb AND raise from the dead 3 days later, as only God could do! Jesus and God are one and the Jews missed it! God was standing right in front of them, and they did not even recognize Him!

- What does this event lead to?

The religious leaders being so scared and upset with Jesus, they set out to kill him

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

- How are you like the people in the temple? What miraculous signs are you looking for in your life?
- What signs might you have missed that God is standing right there with you the whole time?
- What worldly things or desires are you allowing into your temple that might be keeping you from experiencing a deeper relationship with God?
- Do you truly believe John when He tells us that God sent His Son into this world to be your sacrificial Lamb? To save you and bring you salvation?

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Prayer journal idea: Provide every student with a notebook that becomes their "prayer journal" and have them spend 10 minutes writing out a prayer. *If you choose to do this, please turn in your receipt with your name on it for reimbursement.* When they are done writing, they give their "prayer journal" to their small group leader who is their 1:1 leader. Throughout the next week, small group leaders pray over the prayer requests and write back a prayer to the student (in the student's prayer journal), similar to a PenPal situation. Prayer journals can then be used each small group night.



JOHN 1:29-34

LESSON 1



INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

Common Struggles

- Lack of understanding

Definition: you either do not or cannot see something in a certain way.

Leaders: To tee up Ice Breaker Questions, briefly share with your students about a time in YOUR life when you did not fully understand something, but you did what you felt was right anyway. How did it turn out?

Ice Breaker Questions

1. Have you ever done something wrong, without realizing it was wrong at the time?
2. Have you ever messed up to the point where you felt that what you did was unforgivable?

Rehearsing the Gospel

1. What does the gospel MEAN?

Good news: Jesus is enough. He accepts you not based on how smart you are, but because of His death on the cross and your trust in Him. It's not about your intelligence.

2. What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead to conquer sin and death. Jesus has already won the victory. He has already figured this out. You can trust Him.

3. Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever. He doesn't ask us for perfection, He asks us for faith to believe in who He says He is. Acts 26:18 "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a plan among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

4. What is grace?

Grace (def)- God giving us something we don't deserve. Receiving God's *gift* of love, even though I am a messed up & undeserving sinner. We all make mistakes and do things we shouldn't do. But remember, Jesus loves us anyways.

Pray

Open your time together in prayer.

REVIEW (5 MINUTES)

1. Who is John, the author of the Gospel?

John was the son of Zebedee. He was one of the 12 disciples of Jesus, but not just that, he was in Jesus' inner circle of three disciples as well.

2. What role does John play in the story of his Gospel?

As a disciple, John is an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel, he refers to himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23)

3. Why was the Book of John written?

John wrote his Gospel so that his readers would believe in Jesus- that Jesus was the Son of God and that they could have new life by believing in Him.

BACKGROUND INFO (5 MINUTES)

Read this section out loud, word-for-word.

The book of John was written by one of Jesus' twelve disciples. The disciples were a group of men Jesus invited to travel and minister with. It's true Jesus helped the masses, ministered to hundreds, and blessed the crowds. But did you know that He chose 72 disciples, invested in 12, but ultimately only allowed 3 people to truly be a part of the heartbeat of his ministry? **John was in the inner circle of Jesus' three closest disciples (Peter, James, and John) and had a front row seat to all the miracles and teachings.**

Many believe that the purpose of John's writings was to lead the masses, help them believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and bring glory to God. *But here's the thing about John - he also has this knack for turning everyday occurrences into deep spiritual insights. It's like he can take a regular event and help you see it in a whole new light.* And he often compares belief with unbelief and light with darkness.

One question to keep at the front of your mind as we read through John is: what deeper truth is he trying to show us about Jesus?

Last week in the large group lesson, we learned about the three outrageous claims John makes about Jesus in the beginning of Chapter 1. **Jesus is eternal. Jesus is with God and is God. God became human.** These are all truths that we continue to see examples of throughout this book. The readers, along with the people of that time, were often faced with evidence of these truths. We witness moments when others are confronted with the evidence of who Jesus is and watch as they make their choices to either deny or accept these truths.

John's ministry begins to gain traction as he prepares the hearts and minds of the people for the arrival of Jesus. This is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (a foretelling of something that will take place in the future) and another sign the Jewish people *should* have been able to recognize.

Now get ready as we get to see the power of Jesus! *This light that Jesus provides SHINES in the darkness - it's like flipping on a light switch.* Jesus walks into your heart and boom, there's light! Your spiritual eyes squint from the bright light because your dead heart has been in darkness all of its existence. The power of Jesus is clearly stated - "the darkness has NOT overcome [the light]."

In tonight's verses, we get a glimpse into how the people of Jerusalem respond to the arrival of Jesus. Let's read John 1:29-34.

READ

Read John 1:29-34 out loud.

Suggestion: have everyone read these verses silently 1-2 times before they are read out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

Observation (WHAT does the text say?)-10 minutes

- Who is John referring to when he says “Look, the Lamb of God”?
Jesus is the Lamb of God. John adds that Jesus is the one who takes away the sin of the world.
- How does John know the man is really Jesus?
John says “the one who sent me” told him that the man who sees the spirit on and the spirit remains, is the Son of God.
- How does John the Baptist describe the man who comes after him?
He says: “A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.”
- What role does John the Baptist play in relation to Jesus starting his ministry?
John coming before Jesus and speaking of Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy in Malachi where the Lord stated, “He would send someone to prepare the way.” John not only prepared the way for Jesus but also baptized Him. John did not fully understand what was ahead, yet he was the first example of a true believer.
- What clear statement does John the Baptist give about Jesus?
John says that Jesus is the Son of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Interpretation (What does the text MEAN?) -10 minutes

- What does John mean by “A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me”?
John was a very popular and well-respected prophet. He was known as a man of God. In order for another to surpass him, the other would have to be God. Jesus was the Son of God. John was giving evidence of this before Jesus’ ministry even began.
- What does it mean that Jesus is the Lamb of God?
In Old Testament times, a perfect, spotless lamb was used as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. God sent Jesus to Earth to be the ultimate perfect, spotless Lamb, to be sacrificed for the sins of the people once and for all.
- Why was it required that God sent Jesus to Earth to be the ultimate sacrificial Lamb?
Because mankind is not perfect, and we can’t save ourselves. Our eternal future rests in our belief of who Jesus really is.
- What deeper spiritual truth is John teaching us?
John is teaching us that we need Jesus’ perfect blood and His death and resurrection to save us. His sacrifice was our substitute for the judgment we deserve.
- How is Jesus being the Lamb of God good news for us?
Instead of us having to suffer eternal death for all time, we can trust Jesus and His death can count for ours, and we can be saved.
- What do you think are the implications of John the Baptist’s declaration in John 1:33 that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit?
Jesus is the Son of God. And there is also God the Holy Spirit. John is showing Jesus will give and send the Holy Spirit to each believer.

Application (HOW should I apply these truths to my life?) -10 minutes

- If Jesus is the Lamb of God that needed to die for the sins of the world, which means that all people sin, why do you think you need Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice?
- What darkness is in your heart, or what sin are you struggling with currently?
- We often have blind spots. These are areas of our life where we are not putting Jesus first. We don’t see the impact of our sin. We think we know everything, and therefore we believe we’re better

than God. In what ways do you need to fully trust in Jesus? Where are you struggling to put Jesus first? What areas of your life do you feel stuck in the darkness of your sin?

CLOSING PRAYER IDEA/SUGGESTION

Pair up students (who do not know each other well) in 2's and have them spend 5-10 minutes sharing a praise & a prayer request; each student prays for the other student.