

🔍 that you may believe

that you may believe the teachings

that you may believe the signs

that you may believe the light

that you may believe the i am s

Jan 15.....Bread of Life
Jan 22..... Light of the World
Jan 29..... Door of the Sheep
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Pastor's Introduction

I took a class in college on public speaking. One of our assignments was to give a persuasive speech. In a persuasive speech, you begin with a thesis, which is something you want your audience to believe or do. Next, you support your thesis with arguments that undergird your thesis. I have no idea what the subject of my speech was, so it must not have been very impactful! The apostle John wrote his Gospel as a persuasive speech. His intent is to convince his reader to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. All the stories he includes are in support of his thesis. At the end of the Gospel, he writes, "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31)." Beginning Sunday, September 11 we will begin a new series through the Gospel of John entitled "That You May Believe" that will conclude in May 2023.

The Gospel of John is an incredible story of the life and mission of Jesus Christ. John is written differently than the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). They are written as a synopsis, basically in chronological order, of the events of Jesus' life. John is written thematically. As we study through the Gospel of John, we will highlight these themes and study the book according to the themes. We will begin with the theme of light and darkness. Then we will identify the seven signs given by John. After that, we will study the teaching discourses of Jesus, followed by His "I AM" statements. At the end of the series, we will examine the passion week and the forty days following Jesus' resurrection. As John states, all these themes and stories were included so that you may believe. My prayer is that this series will point people to Jesus and that they would believe in Him as Savior.

Ed. TG



Participant Guide for Jan 15, 2023

Bread of Life

John 6:22-51

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

This lesson transitions us into the fourth theme of John's Gospel. The 1st theme was "The Light." The 2nd theme was "The Signs." The 3rd Theme is "The Teachings." The 4th theme is the Seven "I Am" statements of Jesus.

The "I am" statements are unique to John's gospel. As first-person statements by Jesus they form a significant part of His self-revelation. These statements are important for two reasons. First, a number of them make significant predications about Jesus by using metaphors (e.g., "I am the bread of life," 6:35). Second, the phrase "I am" is used in the Old Testament as a description of God Himself¹

¹ Roy B. Zuck, [*A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*](#), electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 180.



Apply

1. Share a time when you had a severe craving or desire for something. So much so you thought you would die if you didn't get it. Maybe that perfect meal, in the perfect setting, maybe that sexy new vehicle you had been dreaming about, maybe that new home that would set you up for the rest of your life. Now share a time when you made the leap to fulfill the desire and found that it fell way short of fulfilling anything more than a short-term satisfaction.
2. Read the passage for today. What does this tell us about the deep, yet practical teaching ministry of Jesus and His ability to take simple practical examples and turn them into eternal truths?
3. Read v. 29. Discuss the importance of this statement.
4. Read vs. 35. Jesus introduces two terms that are essential to the understanding the remainder of today's passage. What are they?
5. Read vs. 37-40. This is Jesus' explanation of Salvation. Someone share how they understand what Jesus is articulating.
6. A key connection to the OT here is the phrase "come down from heaven. Jesus ties this to the manna provided by God in the Exodus narrative. What was Jesus trying to communicate through this connection.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated?**

- ◆ Meditate on v. 37-40. Pray and ask God for total understanding of salvation. Make sure this is what you are trusting in. Practice how you can share this truth in your own words with someone who needs this truth.

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Participant Guide for January 22, 2023

Light of the World

John 8:12-20

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

Today's discussion revolves around a key theme in John's Gospel. Light vs darkness. Take a moment to review the following passages to orient yourself on the foundation of what the theme illustrates.

John 1:4-5, Eph. 5:8-14, John 3:17-21, 1 John 1:5



Apply

1. Think of a time when you were in a dark place and suddenly a light came on. Talk about the process of adjustment to the light. Now talk about the benefit of the newfound sight.
2. V.1-8 was the story of the woman caught in adultery. Scan that discussion. Where was Jesus speaking? Who was the crowd that was gathered? Now read vs. 12-20.
3. V.12 Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." What did the Pharisees clearly understand this to mean?
4. Read vs.13-18. What is happening here?
5. Read v. 14-18. Jesus begins by tearing apart their legal testifying argument. What do you think the feelings among the pharisees were after this proclamation of Jesus? Discuss the escalation of emotion and how it plays into Jesus' role of being the light.
6. Read vs. 19-22. This truth elevates the contention to an extreme spiritual confrontation. Where have the emotions of the pharisees gone now? Why?
7. Pick a couple of people to play the pharisees. Have a little heated discussion about Jesus' comments. Now skip down to vs. 59. Any doubts about whether they were clear on who Jesus was claiming to be when He said I am the light of the world?
8. How does this "I Am" statement set the stage for Jesus' preaching ministry moving forward?

Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**



- ◆ Discuss the spiritual benefit of having Jesus as your light. List reasons you are thankful for this I Am Statement

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Participant Guide for January 29, 2023

Door of the Sheep

John 10:1-10

Highlight

Action Step:
Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

The next two weeks are both intricately connected with the eastern cultures understanding of the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep. Yet they hold very different information about Jesus and His role concerning Israel and the church. We will attempt in our study to be clear how to apply in proper context.

As a preparatory passage, read Ezekiel 34.



Apply

1. Have you ever been in a noisy room full of people hardly able to discern one voice from another yet, if your loved one cried out in need, their voice would be instantly discerned from all other voices? Share such an experience and tell why you think this is possible.
2. Jesus refers to himself as the gatekeeper or the door to the sheepfold. He also quickly contrasts himself to all other gatekeepers. Notice in v. 8 he uses the word “are” thieves and robbers. This is a clue as to whom he is referring to. Any ideas?
3. Read v.9. “Enters by me will be saved” This is a clear statement of the role of THE door. What is Jesus proclaiming here?
4. *What does vs. 3-5 and 9-10 reveal as a truth for those who enter through “THE door”.*
5. *What might be an indication that you have never entered through “THE door”*

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ List reasons you are thankful for this I Am Statement

Spend some time meditating on today’s passage and listen for the true shepherd’s voice.

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Participant Guide for February 5, 2023

Good Shepherd

John 10:11-21

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:

Our discussion today continues from last week's understanding of the shepherd/sheep relationship, However the focus moves from role of gatekeeper to role of shepherd for those who entered though the gatekeeper.



Apply

1. Who in your life would you refer to as a trusted voice? What is it about them that gives you peace and trust in their voice?
2. Read vs. 11-13. Discuss the differences between the owner of the flock and a hired shepherd.
3. Read v. 14-16. What shift in salvation history is this referring to? What spiritual benefit is added to those who receive the good Shepherd?
4. Read vs. 17-18. What is Jesus referring to here?
5. Read vs. 19-21. The Jewish leaders are still conflicted. Discuss what might indicate they might be changing their minds concerning who Jesus is?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Talk with your family and friends about the depths of God's love for you in the gift of His Son.
- ◆ List reasons you are thankful for this I Am Statement

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Participant Guide for February 12, 2023

Resurrection

John 11:1-27

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes: We now come to the most climactic miracle of Jesus' earthly ministry, the resurrection of Lazarus. For this reason John chose to record it as the seventh sign in his book. The resurrection is climactic for this reason:

If Jesus Christ can do nothing about death, then whatever else He can do amounts to nothing. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). Death is man's last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26), but Jesus Christ has defeated this horrible enemy totally and permanently.

Take some time before your discussion to read John 11:1-27 aloud in class. Listen specifically for two concepts.

1. Believe – pisteuo – to trust in, rely on, commit to a truth. The same belief required for salvation. The words "I believe" are in the perfect tense, indicating a fixed and settled faith. "I have believed and I will continue to believe!"
2. The Glory of God – doxa – a greatness and wonder so awesome that we have no choice but to praise him within and without.

These are the keys that open the eternal truth of Today's discussion.



Apply

1. Discuss a time when you have questioned why God did not intervene in a terrible situation. Express some of those questions and how it made you feel. How did you reconcile your understanding of God's character and your confusion concerning it in the midst of the circumstances at the time? Or did you?
2. Read John 11: 1-4. Really think about what Jesus doesn't say.
3. Revisit question 1. How does this change your thoughts on your reconciling process?
4. Read vs. 21-27. What light does Jesus shed on the NT truth of the resurrection?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13 How does Jesus teaching help you in regard to thinking about death? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:18. Ask for someone to articulate how this lesson can be used to understand true comfort in the most difficult times.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Think about a friend, coworker, or loved one in the midst of dire circumstances and encourage them with these words.

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Participant Guide for February 19, 2023

Green Light Conference



Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**



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Participant Guide for February 26, 2023

Way, Truth, and the Life

John 14:1-7

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Have you ever argued with your GPS while driving? Even though it tells you the way to go, you believe your way is better. How did the GPS's way conflict with your way? How does your reliance on the GPS's directions change based on your familiarity with where you are? In what ways are we guilty of having the same inconsistent dependence on God in our lives? What are some of the driving factors behind our spiritual inconsistencies?
2. Continuing to think about the GPS, how is it a source of truth? In general, is it a trusted source of truth? How is that trust earned?
3. Is the Bible a trusted source of truth? How was that trust earned? Jesus says that he is the truth. Can you believe Jesus when he says that he is the truth but not believe that the Bible is true? How are these two beliefs in contradiction with one another?
4. The exclusivity of believing in Jesus for salvation and going to heaven is a foundational doctrine of Christianity. Why are the exclusivity claims of Christianity offensive to our culture? Why is our doctrine of salvation critical to our faith?
5. How does this passage support our claim for the exclusivity of Christ, and how would you use this passage to share the gospel with someone? How would you explain what Jesus means when he says he is the way, truth, and life?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Jesus commands us to believe in him, and we believe in God. This week, examine if you're putting the same trust in Jesus for your daily life as you are your eternal salvation.

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Participant Guide for March 5, 2023

Vine

John 15:1-8

Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. Have you ever tried to plant a garden or grow something? How did it go? Did everything you planted sprout or grow? Have you ever planted something that sprouted but never produced a product? In what ways is a plant that sprouts but never produces fruit *more* frustrating than a plant that never sprouts at all?
2. "I am the true vine" is the last of Jesus' "I am" statements in John. As we know, John is intentional with everything that he writes. Why do you believe John saved this "I am" statement for last? How are Jesus' words here preparing the disciples for his impending departure?
3. Jesus says he is the "true vine," which implies that there is a "false vine." What (or who) is the false vine? Read Isaiah 5:1–7 and 27:2–6. Who are these two songs about? How is Jesus shifting their trust from Israel to himself?
4. Read verse 6: According to Jesus, what happens to the branches that do not produce fruit? Should Jesus' words scare us? How does this passage influence how we view a profession of faith where fruit does not follow?
5. Verse 8 says that the Father is glorified by the fruit of his disciples. Glorified to whom: nonbelievers, believers, or both? How does the fruit of a Christian glorify God to an unbelieving world? In what ways is Christian's lack of fruit detrimental to an onlooking nonbeliever? What are some ways Christians are guilty of displaying a lack of fruit or rotten fruit? How do we put aside our pride to bear good fruit to advance the kingdom of God?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, examine your life for fruit. What are the examples of fruit? If you find no examples, consider Jesus' words in verse 6 and pray for God to stir your heart to bear fruit.

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