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**THE BOOK OF**

**JOHN**

**TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS**

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# JOHN 1:1-5

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 1:1-5 (NIV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week enjoy some one-on-one time with Jesus, and allow Him to speak to you through prayer and meditation in His word.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...and the Word was God."

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## MESSAGE

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The gospel of John is a powerful book. As Scripture, holy and inspired, it is a book that goes to the roots of our relationship with Christ. For many believers, this book introduced them to Christ. It is a short book as measured by some, but one that brings an intimacy that few other parts of Scripture can come close to. It is a book filled with doctrine and emotion, facts and spiritual wonderment. Most of all John is a book that cannot be ignored.

The message we hear from the outset is that the beginning is an important part of our foundation of knowledge. In these first few verses we are reminded that, "Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." Yes, these are verses that we have heard many times; too many for some in that we have let the impact of them pass us by. Let's take a closer look and remind ourselves what impact these verses have on life itself.

Through Him: This means Jesus was THE CREATOR!  
(See verse 1 also.)

ALL: This means everything was created by Jesus.

In Him was Life: We are DEAD without Jesus.

As we live our life each day it is very easy to think we are in control and that we have something to do with eternity. We do have something to do with eternity: we have a Creator who desires to live it for, through, and in us. We need to be reminded that WE are dead and HE is alive. He is our life and our light. We have to give up this notion that we have the ability to "help" God perform His will, and instead we must remind ourselves that He has created us as the vessels chosen to do His will.

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**JOHN 1:6-18**

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**THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE****John 1:6-18 (NIV)**

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" 16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

**QUOTE FOR THE WEEK**

"...he came only as a witness to the light."

**PRAYER FOR THE WEEK**

This week consider yourself a witness for the light. Ask Jesus to be the light through you, and allow only His light to shine (and nothing else) through your life.

**MESSAGE**

As we began our review of John, we focused on Jesus as the light. Today I would like to focus on John as the witness of the light. We see clearly in several verses this week (and will see again many times) that John was very clear about his purpose in life. He knew he had a calling from God, and it was simple; tell people, "I am not the Messiah, but Jesus is, and He is about to show up." What is great to see here is that John had taken his calling and fully embraced it. He was in a position that God's power was in him and flowing through him, and because of that he was seen as a great man and a prophet to those he encountered. Talk about peer pressure! How do we react to praise and glory in our life? Is it drawn in, added to, and pushed back out? Or do we understand what we have been called to and simply allow Jesus to use us as His vessel of communication?

John had a simple message yet an enormous task, announcing the immediate coming of the Messiah. John knew exactly where to obtain the power, humility, and strength to carry out his task: from God alone. (Read verses 15 and 16 two or three times and see God's love flow through John.) Today we are in the same situation as John. God has given us each a calling. Jesus desires to be the power to ensure that calling is fulfilled. He needs us to be His vessel of grace. We are told in verse 16, "From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another."

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## MESSAGE

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It is not about us doing God's will and His plan in our life. It is about us entrusting our lives to Jesus so He might live out His will in our bodies which we have entrusted to Jesus. By entrusting our entire being to Christ, the Holy Spirit lives and works in us allowing us to be God's very presence in the lives of those we encounter. John was a beautiful example of one who entrusted his all for the sake of Jesus and was used in a mighty way to proclaim Jesus to the world. We too have that same calling today, each by the power of Jesus in us working His grace so others may see Him alone.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 1:19-28

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 1:19-28 (NIV)**

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." 21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" 24 Now some Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.~

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"I am not the Christ."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week re-read the first chapter of John and remember the verse at the top of this email. Acts 17:28, "For in Him we live and move and have our being." Ask God to draw you to Him as you release the things of this world.

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## MESSAGE

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John continues to be questioned by the priests and Levites as we continue in this first chapter of the Gospel of John. Remember these were the church rulers who had authority both in the church and in daily life. They continued to hound John with questions and would not accept his answers. John finally answered in two separate ways to make it clear to all. In verse 20 he says, "I am not the Christ," and then in verse 23 states, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" The first statement may have been a relief to the church rulers as John was attracting quite a following and yet was not part of the inner circle of rulers.

At the same time the second comment may have been a concern, because John was now claiming to be the herald of the Messiah, the Christ, the one person for whom the Levites and priests were waiting, but John's Christ would not be from their inner circle either. Through this time John was focused on one thing: being the servant of God and the vessel of God's message. He had zero focus on his own needs, issues, or ambitions.

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## MESSAGE

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He was totally satisfied with what God was doing with him and unconcerned about the outcome. How did John do this amazing thing? Did he have a greater power than we do? Was his life one that was given something we do not have? No, in fact John simply acknowledged the very same thing Jesus wants us to remember. It is stated in verse 14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John allowed God His proper and necessary place in John's life, indwelling and in control.

Today we weigh many risks in life. The one risk with the greatest reward and NO chance of failure is to allow Christ to dwell in our life and allow HIM to control our very being. Too often we make the decision to bring Christ into our life and then inch by inch, day by day take pieces back into our own control. God's desire is to be in control of our all.

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# JOHN 1:29-34

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 1:29-34 (NIV)**

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...I testify that this is the Son of God."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week quietly seek God, and ask Him to reveal His gentle Spirit to you in this very busy life.

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## MESSAGE

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Finally, after all the repeated inquiries, John can show the world what he has been talking about. After being hounded by the priests, praised by the crowds, and generally under the spotlight, he can show the world who he has been putting in the forefront: Jesus Christ. The Messiah has now arrived. God has even granted John the wonderful task of baptizing Jesus. John is fully satisfied that he has fulfilled this portion of his calling. While John continues to tell others about Jesus, we will see that throughout the next few years the story is all about Jesus, not John, just as John had said from the beginning. The same is true for us today. We have been given gifts, talents, and opportunities. We have the secular and the sacred in life to deal with. We have a family, a job, social activities, church duties. In fact, we have very full lives. Yet in spite of all this or through all this or however you wish to view it, the task of the believer today is no different than it was for John. What was John's duty? To do God's will by the power of God.

We have the same set up today as John did then: live life by the power of God. Jesus has not only saved us for eternity, he has saved us for today. Remember, it is the power of Christ that saved us from death, and it is the power of Christ that lives in us. We are, as John was, simply the vessels God has chosen to accomplish His will. Let's allow Him to do that by putting our undivided confidence in His will for our life and then resting in it.

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# JOHN 1:35-42

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 1:35-42 (NIV)

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" 37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Look, the Lamb of God!"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask God to continue to reveal Jesus to you and those you encounter each day.

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## MESSAGE

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At this point, Jesus begins recruiting his first disciples. This is a great story to watch unfold. John, his first real disciple, points out Jesus to two of his (John's) own disciples. What we can see is the perfect response from well "trained" disciples. The immediate response of both of these disciples is to leave John and follow Jesus. I can guarantee you that John is NOT disappointed. This is exactly what was intended to be: John disciplined men to follow Jesus, NOT himself. This is lesson one for all of us to learn. We are in the business of discipling people to Christ, and not to ourselves, our church, a program, or anything else. We are to disciple people to Christ alone. We should be concerned when we see others discipling people to themselves or their program or ministry. This is NOT God's plan. We are to point people to Christ and Christ alone.

The second thing these disciples do is tell family and friends. These verses do not say they all were evangelists, it simply says they told other people. Again, this is what a disciple of Jesus wants to do, to tell others. What a great example John is; first he disciplines people to Jesus and then these disciples not only follow Jesus but also urge others to join them. Great examples for us today!

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# JOHN 1:43-50

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 1:43-50 (NIV)**

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." 44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." 50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"You shall see greater things than that."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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: Spend some time this week simply listening to God. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you in a special way that allows you to listen to His plan for living through you, showing you greater things.

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## MESSAGE

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The first disciples have been called, and Jesus is on to recruit more. Nathanael is shocked to find that Jesus was able to describe events surrounding Nathanael that had occurred while Jesus was not physically there. From that, Nathanael knew Jesus to be the Messiah. The response of Jesus is the same today as it was to Nathanael; Jesus simply let him know that much greater things shall be seen. When we first experience the saving relationship with Jesus, we are in awe, ready to give everything for Him and to follow in everything He asks. Yet for most of us our life tends to return to normal. We slowly allow the old ways to take back the newness of our relationship with Christ. We desire to see those greater things and yet they seem to fade away instead.

In his book "Not I, But Christ" Jason Henderson describes it this way:

"Of course, we are familiar with the gospel as the forgiveness of our sins and the saving of our souls by grace through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. But after coming to Christ for salvation, I was told to live my life for God in the best way I could, with the help\* of the Holy Spirit.

This is quite familiar language to many of us, but the concept of "living our\* life for God" is actually quite foreign to the gospel that Jesus and the Apostles preached. That might sound as strange to you as it once did to me, but try to suspend judgment until we have looked at a handful of Scriptures.

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## MESSAGE

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The apostolic gospel was not simply a gift of forgiveness followed by a self-improvement plan with the help of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it was a self-replacement plan—the destruction of one life or nature and its substitution with Another—the life of Christ. As we will be looking at in some depth, the Scriptures unanimously testify that we were crucified with Christ, and He is the risen life of the believer.

Much of the body of Christ has a comprehension of the blood of Jesus releasing them from their sins. But what I didn't have was an understanding that the cross of Christ released me from myself\*."

[\*Emphasis mine. Go to [Cross Eyed Publishing](#) for a free download of the full book.]

Today we need to be like we were at the time of our new birth in Christ, entrusting all to Him and nothing to the flesh, allowing the risen Savior to flow through us, not "help" us. It is HIS life, not our own.

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# JOHN 2:1-11

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 2:1-11 (NIV)

1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the

bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." 11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...and his disciples put their faith in him."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask God what relationship focus with Him He has intended for you to experience this week. Rest in Him and allow Him to bring it to you.

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## MESSAGE

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:So far we have seen John herald the coming of Jesus, baptize Jesus, and point to Jesus as the one and only Messiah. Next we saw Jesus gathering His disciples. Now we come to the point where Jesus is about to give a physical sign of His relationship to the Father. A wedding is taking place and, following the customs of the day, it is a great celebration. However the host either miscalculated the number of expected guests or a few extras showed up at the last minute. Either way they were out of wine. Mary the mother of Jesus has discovered the need and knows how to solve the problem. She alone among mankind has had the opportunity and privilege to be at the side of Jesus for some 30 years. She not only knew the true identity of her son, she was fully accepting of it. Mary was one who had a relationship with God that flowed directly from her total submission to the Father which began very early in her life.

Jesus' initial answer was to note to Mary that the issue was not a concern to neither Mary nor Himself, yet He also knew that it was the concern (or desire) of the Father to manifest His power, so He responds appropriately. This was an opportunity to show the power of the Father working through Jesus. The Father desired to show the world that because of the relationship between the Father and the Son, the Son had control over the world we live in. The simple (to God) act of turning water into wine is a small and simple proof text to the power that the Son has because of His relationship with the Father.

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## MESSAGE

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The value of this action is seen in verse 11, "...and his disciples put their faith in him." We talked previously about how Jesus told Nathanael that he and the others would see much greater things. This was simply the first and a very minor example of God's power. As we shall see many times in the book of John, the power of the Father working through His Son has far more reaching consequences than simply turning water into wine.

Jesus did the will of the Father, and the disciples responded by believing. They then grew in their relationship with the Son. It is all about relationships; the miracles are simply an added bonus!

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# JOHN 2:12-25

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 2:12-25 (NIV)

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. 13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." 18 Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." 20 The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. 23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. 24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. 25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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: "Then they believed..."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week surrender your relationship to Jesus; ask Him to fully control all you are and desire.

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## MESSAGE

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In just a few days the narrative goes from turning water into wine to chasing the money changers and merchants from the temple. Many have used this passage to discuss righteous anger, others to show the confrontation between Christ and the Pharisees, drawing conclusions about the meaning and intention of rebuilding the temple in three days. While it seems clear that this is a reference to the resurrection of Christ, it also seems to me that rebuilding the temple would be a very simple task for someone who actually created the Universe, much like turning water into wine.

However I would like to consider two other items in this passage. First it seems very peculiar that the actions of Christ only produced a mild request by the temple leaders asking Him to prove His authority in the matter of clearing the temple. I wonder why the Jewish leadership did not arrest Him then and there and accuse Him of capital crimes. This was their temple, under their rules and their control! This would have avoided a lot of future problems for the leaders. I suppose it was too early in His career to give Him much credit, and they simply treated Him as a nuisance. More of these encounters would soon change their attitude.

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## MESSAGE

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The second item that piques my interest begins earlier in the chapter where we see how the existing relationship between Jesus and the disciples was strengthened by the miracle of the water to wine. Here we see people believing in Jesus BECAUSE of the miracles He was performing (and His standing up to the religious authorities). These people believed BECAUSE of the miracle not because they had or desired a relationship with Jesus. They saw something that would save them from their slavery to the Romans and the Jewish leaders, not someone who held their very soul in His hands. Jesus was not inclined to defend Himself to these believers or to the authorities. He knew that the Father alone needed to be obeyed and never defended.

I believe God saves all those who call on Him, and all who call on Him call for very different reasons. I am seeing more and more though, that for those who call on Him because they desire a relationship, He responds with a real relationship, a relationship that gives more than simply salvation or eternal life. He gives them a relationship with the Creator of the Universe, one that pales in comparison to all other relationships and even to life itself.

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# JOHN 3:1-15

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 3:1-15 (NIV)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." 9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week seek to listen to the Spirit and not the flesh. Ask God to direct your thoughts each day as you mature in your relationship with Him.

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## MESSAGE

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: As we begin this third chapter of John we continue to see the principle of relationship, not signs and wonders, as the basis for belief and understanding. Earlier we saw Jesus clear the temple of the money changers and merchants and then have a very tense discussion with the temple leaders. Now one of these leaders wants to hear a little more about what Jesus has to say. Being a bit concerned about how he might be viewed by his associates, he approaches Jesus at night, hoping that he can have a private discussion, not a public one. This is a great step towards relationship yet the first words out of his mouth are about how he is sure Jesus is from God because of the miracles that Jesus had performed.

Jesus attempts to help Nicodemus understand that it is not the miracles but rather the relationship with God that brings salvation. It is the Spirit giving birth to spirit. Yet Nicodemus is stuck in the earthly world of miracles and proof statements. He has yet to move out of the earthly world of words and theories into a true relationship with God. This is the case today as much as it was 2000 years ago when the Pharisees had reduced the relationship God had intended with His people to a set of rules and regulations. It is easy to follow rules and regulations and difficult to have a relationship. It is much more difficult unless that relationship is with the God of the Universe and He provides the power and authority (via His Holy Spirit) to have AND SUSTAIN that relationship.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus is patiently trying to show Nicodemus (and you and I) that all relationships **MUST** begin first with the ultimate relationship: one with God Himself. God as the Creator of the universe began that relationship in eternity past, and it has transcended time through the work of Jesus during His death, burial, and resurrection. It remains today though His Spirit living our lives. God lives through and in us for a purpose. That purpose is to have the ultimate relationship with Him and to share that relationship with others.

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# JOHN 3:12-21

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 3:12-21 (NIV)

12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 “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. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds

will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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“...Light has come into the world...”

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask God to reveal His light to your very soul. Give up your life so that Christ might abide in you.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus continues to patiently explain to Nicodemus (and again to us) how a relationship is needed, not a focus on the flesh or this world. In this passage we see the most quoted scripture in the Bible, John 3:16, “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.” While this is a most awesome and foundational truth, for many it clouds the balance of the message. Many focus on the next verse and God's condemnation of the world, or man's self condemnation, or they focus on the future and not today. They focus on this world or their flesh, not on Christ and a spiritual relationship with Him.

For many it is the place they both begin and end their relationship with Christ, a simple fire insurance policy, a relationship with God Almighty is not even a consideration. Today I would like to look at the Light. Verse 19 reads, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world...” This is the focus many of us continue to miss. We live in and are a part of darkness. We have one basic need: Light! Christ is that light. We continue to believe that we can produce light outside of God, or that we can help God produce light as if we have some capability or power or intellect that would be of benefit to God!

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## MESSAGE

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In his book *The Lie and The Light*, Jason Henderson says it this way: "And as Christ, our life, is revealed, it is in this glory that we are found and learn to abide. The Light teaches us the Life of God that resides in the soul of man and works in us to conform us to His image. This is so much more than Christian religion; this is Christ Himself. "We still (as Nicodemus did) think it is all about ourselves or this world we live in. That is the last thing it is about. It is about CHRIST and CHRIST alone. We need to lay aside our lives so that Christ might be our life and only then will we be at peace with ourselves... AND GOD!

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# JOHN 3:22-36

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 3:22-36 (NIV)

After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized. 24 (This was before John was put in prison.) 25 An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. 26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." 27 To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' 29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

30 He must become greater; I must become less. 31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33 The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"He must become greater; I must become less."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask God for His light to be revealed to you in the midst of the darkness of this world we live in. Allow God to become more and allow Him to make the flesh become less.

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## MESSAGE

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: One of the greatest struggles I have is that of instant maturity. It seems to me that I should be a perfect Christian once I became a Christian. My relationship with Jesus has entitled me to many things, but instant maturity does not seem to be one of them. In theology they talk about this in context of positional and progressive sanctification. Not one to dabble too greatly in theology, I would like to take a moment to once again see what scripture has to say. In the current passage we see John's disciples once again concerned that more people are following Jesus, and John again reminding them that that was the plan from the beginning.

. His response in verses 29-31 is a pleasure to consider as John describes his relationship with Christ: "The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less. The one who comes from above is above all..." Once again I would like to quote Jason Henderson from his book *The Lie and The Light*: "There is the objective finished work of God in Christ, and then there is the subjective experience and conformity to that work as Light shows us what is real. But do not be confused – once you are born again, nothing other than Light is necessary to bring you into alignment with what He has done.

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## MESSAGE

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.Nothing other than the revealing of Christ can conform you to His image. The only reason that you and I do not fully occupy, experience, enjoy, and express the finished work of the cross is because in the absence of His Light we are still defined by the Lie. But in the Light of His appearing, faith begins to catch up with God's finished work. In other words, what the cross made real begins to appear and feel real to your soul. You realize that you have not only come to know something different, but you have come to a different kind of knowing. This is a knowing that does not come from you but rather is given to you. Every other kind of knowing is fine for everything other than spiritual reality.

But to "know the things that have been freely given by God" (1Co 2:12), you must come to see by His Light. The natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit. They must be revealed (1Co 2:14). But if we are willing to part with the Lie, God is present to reveal His Son. If we will suffer the loss of all that we wrongly thought to be "good for food...pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise" (Gen 3:6), the Light will show us the fullness of our salvation. We will see the finished work of the cross, walk in the truth, and live free from the Lie."

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# JOHN 4:1-26

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 4:1-26 (NIV)**

The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "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." 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." 16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." 19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." 25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask God to allow you to see His will for your worship. Bow before Him and allow His Holy Spirit to be your worship.

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## MESSAGE

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It is a great story of the love and compassion of Jesus; it shows us His care for ALL people and His very reason for coming to earth.

He is greater than the namesake of the well, Jacob. Jesus explains to the woman and others that He is in fact the Messiah they seek.

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## MESSAGE

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Many great truths are packed into these few paragraphs. I would like to focus on verses 23 and 24 which say, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." Jesus had just spent the last few minutes gently explaining to the woman that it was all about God, not Jacob, not the water, not her past, but about God and her relationship with God. God desires the same relationship with us, one that is based on spirit, NOT on the flesh. Oh, how we get confused today. We wander from church to church looking for the perfect service that suits OUR needs. We search each week for the perfect preacher, the best music, the most popular kids' program. We want worship that serves our needs and lifestyle. God desires a relationship with us that is spiritual, not worldly. Yes, we need to be part of a church. YES, it needs to teach truth. Foremost we need to see that our relationship with God is one of spirit. Once we do that we can see what plans He has for us right where He has placed us.

This week ask God to reveal His Spirit to you as you worship Him with the Spirit He has given you. Seek His face in the pews of the church where He has placed you. Stop wandering and looking for what excites your flesh and instead seek His Holy Spirit. This week worship God in Spirit and truth right where you are.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 4:27-42

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 4:27-42 (NIV)**

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony..."

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36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor." 16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."~

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week pray for those away from their families. Pray that they seek and are open to the Holy Spirit as they live each moment in spiritual joy with Jesus.

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## MESSAGE

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We continue to see the story of the woman at the well unfold and come to a conclusion. The conclusion: many believed. What is interesting is the way they believed. A couple of chapters previous we saw that there was a discussion among the disciples of John that Jesus was gathering more disciples than John. We saw that not only was Jesus teaching and bringing many to Himself, but also His disciples, who were the ones actually doing the physical work of baptism. Here we see that the testimony of the woman caused many to believe in Christ.

Remember our comment from last week? Worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth? The same continues to apply here; our salvation comes from the Lord Himself. It is a spiritual salvation. It may be a friend, or brother, or even a stranger who delivers the message we hear, but it is Jesus who brings about our salvation, not man. It is a Spiritual event. While our physical lives may be changed or impacted, our salvation is a spiritual event that is caused by our acceptance of God's revelation. Jesus reveals Himself to us, we accept Him, and a spiritual birth is completed.

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## MESSAGE

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We now have the ability to worship God spiritually which we did NOT have prior to salvation. The flesh has died (see Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." We now are fully owned by Jesus. Just as the Samaritans said, "...now we have heard for ourselves..." we too have heard and have been given this new life, a spiritual life that supersedes this flesh we live in on this earth.

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# JOHN 4:43-54

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 4:43-54 (NIV)

43 After the two days he left for Galilee. 44 (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) 45 When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there. 46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. 48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." 49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed.

51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour." 53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed. 54 This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week pray for those traveling that they may be focused on their relationship with Christ as they are engulfed in the processes of travel and business.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

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## MESSAGE

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Once again we see Jesus out with the people, talking and being with them in their circumstances. His ministry was to be with people and share the Father with those He encountered. Miracles and signs were only a small portion of His message. Jesus was interested in a relationship with those He met and talked to. He knew that with a relationship they would come to believe who He was and thus come to the Father. Today, even as when Christ walked physically with people on the earth, many are not convinced by a relationship; they want more. We see throughout both the Christian and non-Christian worlds a search for the miraculous. People are on a desperate search for something to help them "feel" their belief.

Jesus makes it clear here and in many other scriptures, that HE is the miracle, not the physical acts of greatness and indescribable power that He had access to. He wants us to know that HE alone is the power, and HE alone is the source of our relationship. While many continue to seek signs and wonders, those who have developed a relationship with Him see HIM as the miracle, sign, and wonder of this and all ages. Seek the miracle of Christ in your life this week, and He will show you a relationship that no other can bring.

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# JOHN 5:1-9

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 5:1-9 (NIV)

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. 3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. 5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” 7 “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” 8 Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week pray for those traveling that they may allow Jesus to heal their loneliness, pain of separation, and anxiety. Pray for those at home who miss a spouse or parent, that each will allow Jesus to heal their emotions with HIS joy.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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“Do you want to get well?”

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## MESSAGE

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The question is simple and so is the answer, or so should be the answer. Jesus asked the man at the well what appeared to be a very simple question. For someone who had waited for thirty-eight years to be healed we expect a very short response time with a very simple answer, “YES!” Maybe “please” might be added as well. What is the answer Jesus received from the man? It was more of an excuse of why he was unable to get well: he did not have access to the waters at the appropriate time. Maybe this man had given up all hope; maybe many others had asked him the same question and he had tired of it. But now the only person who had a real answer was here, and the man did not recognize it so he gave the only answer he knew: an excuse of why he had not been healed.

We too do this same thing every day. We are asked by Jesus if we want to be healed, and get rather than a simple “yes” accompanied by complete trust in Him we begin to give the excuse as to why we cannot or have not been healed. Jesus is the power of ALL our healing. He is the one who controls the power and the process. Ours is simply to allow Him to heal. Too many times we try to help, and simply get in the way. He has not only the power, but the desire to heal, mental, physical, emotional, spiritual... all of our pain. We simply must allow Him to take care of it, and the only way to allow Him to care for it is to give it to Him completely, holding back nothing to ourselves.

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# JOHN 5:8-15

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 5:8-15 (NIV)**

8 Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, 10 and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." 11 But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" 12 So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" 13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. 14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week pray for those you know who are struggling with their relationship with the Father. Pray that God's revelation be seen by their eyes. Ask God to reveal His will to them in their lives.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Who is this fellow who told you to pick [up your mat] and walk?"

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## MESSAGE

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Last week we discussed the question, this week let's chat about the follow up. The man who was healed had very little concern about who healed him; he was simply joyful that he had been healed. The religious rulers of the day had a slightly different agenda. They did want to know who had healed him, not so that they too could be healed, but so they could find out who had authorized someone to work on the Sabbath. Now carrying a simple bedroll was not exactly what God intended when He asked the Israelites to not work on the Sabbath. His intention was to allow for His people to rest in Him; to remember that their lives were in His full control, if they so allowed.

The rulers of the day began to think up many minor rules and infractions to "show" whether a person was working or not. What was the reason for this? The bottom line was so that with the power of the flesh (man) they could believe (and feel) like they were righteous. They had forgotten that God alone was righteous, and they simply needed to submit the flesh to God. The Sabbath was to be a reminder of God's perfect provision, not a set of rules. Christ knew this and also knew healing (or even carrying your bedroll) on the Sabbath was not an affront to God.

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# JOHN 5:16-30

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 5:16-30 (NIV)

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. 17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...the Son can do nothing by himself..."

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. 24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. 25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask your spouse to pray for you. Ask them to pray that you will see God's will and God's power, and that you will allow the flesh to be put aside and yielded to God.

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## MESSAGE

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In this passage we see the power of the Son and the relationship between the Father and the Son. The simple story we have looked at over the last few weeks has been the religious rulers and their reaction to the miracle of Jesus. We finally see their real concern: Jesus was calling Himself equal with the Father, and this they could not understand or put up with. The real message though is a bit further in the passage. In verse 19 Jesus says, "...the Son can do nothing by himself," and then verse 30 expresses the amazing summary of their relationship, "I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."

This is most important for us to see. Jesus relied **ONLY** on the Father to do the Father's will and **NEVER** sought to please Himself, only to please the Father. We too are in the same position; we are to do **NOTHING** outside of what the Father (through His Son and Holy Spirit) empowers us to do. It is never the flesh that will please the Father, only the power of Christ alone. So when we seek to please ourselves, we use the flesh, and what is achieved is not of God but of ourselves. When we allow Christ to work in, through, and with us, we have the power of the Father, giving glory to the Father.

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# JOHN 5:31-47

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 5:31-47 (NIV)

"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. 32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. 33 "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. 35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. 36 "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me."

39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life. 41 "I do not accept praise from men, 42 but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. 43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? 45 "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. 47 But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week pray for those who are away from family. Ask our Father to comfort them with His peace alone. Seek this week to find someone who needs God's peace, and pray with them for God's peace in their heart.

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## MESSAGE

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Prior to this passage, Jesus yields his all to the Father with the statement that the Son can do nothing by himself. In this passage, we see how intimate that relationship is with the Father as Jesus declares to the crowd that the Father HIMSELF testifies as to their relationship. He also added for the benefit of the Jewish leaders that Moses also testified about Him. One of the most difficult things in life is to believe without the facts to back up our belief. As our society has grown more complex, belief has become even more difficult to find. In the days Jesus was on earth as a man, the Jewish community held strong to the scriptures; it was foundational to their belief, it was the recorded testimony of God Himself.

The anger in these rulers came when Jesus pointed out that he (Jesus) held testimony to who he was from the two most important authorities in scripture. According to the scriptures, which the Jews taught and believed were the basis of all life, the authority of Jesus came directly from the Father and Moses. The Jews of Jesus' times had done what many of us do today, confusing the foundation of scripture with what scripture is teaching. From the very beginning the purpose of scripture was not a means unto itself, but instead a means to an end, and that end was a personal one-on-one relationship with the Creator. There is no difference today from 2000 years ago when this book was written.

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## MESSAGE

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We many times confuse the impact, importance and foundation of scripture. Scripture is here to show us Christ Jesus, The Father, and the Holy Spirit so that we might enjoy a personal relationship with them. We are simply to open our life to Christ and HE will draw us to Himself. The Scripture He has provided allows us to communicate and grow together with Him and those around us. Just as the scripture shows us His salvation, it is HIS power that saves us. As we grow, the scripture continues to show the power, and He continues to provide the power working in, through, and with us.

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# JOHN 6:1-24

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 6:1-24 (NIV)

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), 2 and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. 3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. 4 The Jewish Passover Feast was near. 5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. 7 Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" 8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, 9 "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. 12 When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."

13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. 14 After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. 16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, 17 where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. 18 A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. 19 When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. 20 But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." 21 Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. 22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week draw away by yourself and enjoy the nourishment of time alone with Jesus.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Jesus...withdrew again to a mountain by himself."

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## MESSAGE

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Here we see two of Jesus' most talked about miracles: one done in public and the other in private with his disciples.

Between the times of the miracles, Jesus retreats for some alone time with his Father. The first miracle was feeding 5000 people with only 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread with leftovers to boot. Then Jesus shows the disciples his true relationship with the Father by walking on water.

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## MESSAGE

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My question is, "Why the retreat to the mountain?" The passage states that it was because he knew if he stayed the people would try to make him king by force. I have no concern over that statement and believe it certainly is the reason since that is what scripture states. But contemplating the passage, it seems to me we are able to see once again the depth of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Jesus knew the mission and the plan; he also knew the people did not yet understand the plan in full. He knew they were looking for a victory in this world, not in his. Jesus knew that a political victory was NOT the will of the Father and so he needed to do what was necessary to carry out the Father's will.

Being alone with God the Father was the best way to make it happen, so Jesus withdrew from the crowds. This is the crux of our life as well: we need to withdraw from that which is NOT of the Father. We cannot focus on the politics of the day or concerns for our well-being. Instead we must become one who allows the Father to live in and through and with us, allowing His will to be done.

# JOHN 6:25-59

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

### John 6:25-59 (NIV)

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." 28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." 30 So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" 31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

41 At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

42 They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" 43 "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. 44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. 47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." 59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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BY DAVID HEWETT

This week please pray for the families at home without their spouses, children or parents. Reach out and call someone who is without their family and encourage them in the Lord.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

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## MESSAGE

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This verse is not usually quoted as a “Christmas” verse, but I think it is actually a very important part of Christmas. The passage we are now reading is the discussion of Jesus as the bread of life. It became a very difficult concept for all who listened to Jesus and a lightning rod for the Jewish leaders. Jesus was talking to the crowd about the miracle of the meal they had eaten the day before and was working to have them understand that He came not to save a physical world but a spiritual one. The problem develops even further when the crowd asks what God requires of them, thinking they could do something to get this meal each day. Jesus was trying to bring them back to their relationship with God. The question from the crowd was, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” They had become so confused by the Jewish leaders of the day and their revision of God’s plan from a relationship to a set of rules, that they had no other questions they knew how to ask. Their frame of reference was, “What are the rules that will give us what we want?” Jesus explains it all with the phrase, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” That is the sum and substance of our work here: to believe in Jesus.

At Christmas time we think of baby Jesus. Yes, he was what the Father sent to us. It is a special time and we need to continue to understand the impact of that gift. The gift was fully paid for and was all we need. No reciprocal gifts are needed, no additional effort on the part of the recipient- not at the point of salvation or any time thereafter. Now THAT is a gift!

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# PSALM 1:1-6

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **Psalm 1:1-6 (NIV)**

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous..."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week pray that God will open your eyes to HIS Word. Pray that you will put aside the pleasures of this world and seek God alone, so that you might prosper as the righteous man in Psalm 1. Continue to pray for those who are now leaving family after spending the holidays together. Pray for families without their spouses or parents and longing to see them soon.

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## MESSAGE

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**My favorite Psalm is Psalm 1. I believe it gives us great insight into the actions and activities of life. Psalm 1 describes the actions of a righteous man and the results gained from those actions:**

**Actions:**

- Do not walk with the wicked
- Do not stand with sinners
- Do not sit with mockers
- Do delight in the Law of the Lord
- Do meditate on God's Law day and night

**Results:** Whatever he does prospers!

Meditating and delighting in our Savior seems like a great start for the New Year ahead. I look forward to "talking" to all of you each week.

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# JOHN 6:60-71

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 6:1-24 (NIV)

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" 61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" 71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week allow yourself to rest completely in the arms of a perfect and loving Father.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

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## MESSAGE

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In the first part of chapter 6 we saw many comments by Jesus that were hard to understand. In fact the disciples themselves commented on the "hard" teachings, and some of those who had investigated the claims of Jesus had begun to fall away. The facts and claims of Jesus have been difficult for many people since the beginning of time. There are various reasons why they are hard to understand, but the bottom line is the ego and the flesh. The flesh of man causes confusion and does not allow many to understand or accept what Jesus has to say about Himself. For many of the Jewish leaders of the day it was about a loss of power and position. Today those same issues are what many of us struggle with. The flesh is a powerful tool that warps the mind of man in opposition to God.

This is also why many consider the quote for this week a "hard verse." We have grown up and become accustomed to having power over our life, and God has granted that to us. No person is required to believe the claims of Jesus. He has brought them before all mankind and allowed us to make a choice. At the same time it is required of us when we choose Him, that we let go of the flesh and its decisions and allow "...the Father to enable..." Again this is hard for us to grasp as we have so long been taught that WE have the power and WE have the "right" to decisions, and we do. At the same time we need to forgo that power and right and allow the Father to enable us to come to Jesus, so that we might love Him and accept His plan. Yes, a very "hard" concept, but one with perfect power and ultimate peace.

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# JOHN 7:1-13

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### THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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#### **John 7:1-13 (NIV)**

After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. 2 But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, 3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. 4 No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." 5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him. 6 Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.

8 You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come." 9 Having said this, he stayed in Galilee. 10 However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. 11 Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?" 12 Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." 13 But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

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### PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week ask the Father to allow HIS timing to rule in all actions and activities of your life.

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### QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"... for me the right time has not yet come."

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### MESSAGE

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When is the right time to be involved, to make a comment, to challenge a friend, or speak out against (or for) a topic or comment? This is a dilemma for most of us on a daily or even hourly basis. We live in a world that tends to believe that NOW is the time, and you should stop waiting and do what YOU want... right NOW. The culture, media, and business worlds we live in stress our rights to an opinion, and tell us that there is no better time than the present. The deeper the issue the more we struggle with the decision of what we should do. Jesus had many of those same decisions to make. When should he confront the leaders of the day? When should he perform a miracle for the crowd? Our passage today shows a time when his life was being threatened, and he was laying low, waiting for the Father to give direction on the next activity he was to be involved in.

His own brothers taunted him with the need to perform a miracle in public. What is Jesus' response to the pressure, the push to do what others wanted? It was simple, "I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come." Jesus was confident of not only who he was but also when he should be doing specific activities. Jesus was totally at rest in the Father and knew the Father had a time and a place where all was to be accomplished. We too need to have that same confidence in the Father, to know when and where we are to be and what we are to do and say. There is only one way to have that confidence: by allowing Jesus to be THE power of our lives. Simply stated, Jesus is our life and the flesh has been replaced. The flesh will fail us every time; the Holy Spirit never.

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## MESSAGE

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So let's allow Jesus to be our life and stop trying to live out our hope and dreams on our own, and instead let Him live His through us. God is okay with silence and even patience, a couple of ideas that have been left behind by this world we live in today.

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# JOHN 7:14-24

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 7:1-13 (NIV)

Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. 15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" 16 Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. 17 If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. 18 He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. 19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up..."

20 "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?" 21 Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. 22 Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. 23 Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? 24 Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, I seek to honor You this week by fully resting in Your arms and allowing Your Son, Jesus, to live the life He has claimed...mine.

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## MESSAGE

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Last week we discussed the issue of waiting on God's timing as we live out our daily lives. We discussed how the only successful way to do this is to allow Jesus to be our life source and leave the flesh behind. Jesus continues to show us the application of this core principle in this week's passage. In verse 16 Jesus is very direct about the source of his own teaching, teaching that "amazed" the leaders of the day (who were considered the expert teachers). Jesus clearly stated, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me." So here we have Jesus waiting until halfway through the Feast to even show up, and then we get another lesson. He teaches NOT his own lessons and opinion, but that of his Father.

Jesus goes on to ensure we know the reason for this in verse 18 when he says, "He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him." Let's look even closer at this statement, "He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him." This seems to imply that if we do anything for, of, or by ourselves there is something false about us. In other words, whatever it is we are doing for ourselves is NOT for the Father. How can it even be possible that ALL we do is for the honor of the Father? The same way John has been showing us through this gospel: by allowing JESUS to be our life.

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## MESSAGE

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We need to remember the truth of Scripture, "...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me," (Galatians 2:20) and we need to allow Jesus to live that life. We must stop attempting to do ANYTHING ourselves, because we simply cannot; only HE can.

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# JOHN 7:25-44

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 7:25-44 (NIV)

25 At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? 26 Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? 27 But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from." 28 Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, 29 but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." 30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. 31 Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?" 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. 33 Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...streams of living water will flow from within him."

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35 The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? 36 What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?" 37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. 40 On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "He is the Christ." Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? 42 Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" 43 Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. 44 Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week let Your will be accomplished in my life, not my will.

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## MESSAGE

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There is so much to absorb in this great passage. First we have the reminder about the relationship between Jesus and the Father in verse 29, "...I know him because I am from him and he sent me." Jesus had no misunderstanding of his position or his mission.

We see in this passage many who heard Jesus teach come into a personal relationship with him by believing in Jesus and what he has taught them. And then that great passage in verses 37 and 38 which we have heard so many times, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

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## MESSAGE

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Look closely at the last half of the verse: "...streams of living water will flow from within him." We have the very Spirit of God himself as our life. It is the power of Christ that is our life as believers in Jesus. There is no need for the flesh; it is all God himself. Jesus has promised us the same relationship with the Father THROUGH Him. Jesus is our life, our power and our substance, nothing else is our concern. The paradox is that if we are to let him live this life, he is the only power to allow us... to allow him to live it.

So our prayer needs to be, "Lord, not my will but yours. Jesus, not my power but yours." In Matthew 26:39, just prior to his crucifixion, Jesus says, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Jesus says that he came to glorify the Father, and he chose the Father's will to allow that to be accomplished, and we need to allow our lives to be lost in His will, not our own.

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# JOHN 7:45-53

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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**John 7:45-53 (NVI)**

45 Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?" 46 "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared. 47 "You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. 48 "Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49 No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"No one ever spoke the way this man does..."

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50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, 51 "Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?" 52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee." 53 Then each went to his own home.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, thank you for your Son and that he speaks for us. Draw us near to you through your son Jesus Christ.

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## MESSAGE

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What a difficult time to be a Jewish leader. The Romans had the people under a law and rule they detested. The common man was happy neither with the ruling council nor the Romans' constraints, and now this newcomer shows up with a voice and message that stirs the community. The message he brings is about the prophet that they themselves believed was coming, the Savior who was to release them from this Roman government and free them to rule themselves under their own set of laws - laws that were begun centuries ago. But something was not quite right. This new teacher did not come from the right town. He was not trained as they were in the Law and its very specific rules. He seemed to have his own understanding, or even a relationship, with Law and the Scriptures. It was almost as if he knew the texts better than they did. Yet at the same time the crowds were anxious to hear what he had to say, anxious to understand why his message had such hope and transparency. They were all thirsty for these living waters he talked about.

The leaders had sent some of their own into the streets to put him in line and bring him before the true rule makers. When these guards returned to report, it was as if they too had been caught in the man's spell. Once again the rulers were looking not at the relationship their Father sought; they were more concerned about themselves and their hard-earned status. Jesus had come to bring a relationship with Yahweh, and since he had such an intimate relationship with the Father, he alone could bring that to everyone. To each of those who said, "No one ever spoke the way he does," one of two reactions occurred: an amazement and desire to enter into a relationship with the Father, or a rejection of that relationship. It is as simple as that: we either accept what Jesus says or we reject it.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 8:1-11

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 8:1-11 (NVI)

1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...neither do I condemn you."

7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week we thank you for your Son, Jesus, and for his completed salvation in our lives. We pray that your living streams of water continue to flow in our lives. We thank you for your great salvation bestowed on us.

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## MESSAGE

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This passage is familiar to many of us. The day before this encounter the Pharisees had a very difficult time with the behavior of Jesus at the Feast. As we discussed in a previous week, he was a latecomer; late according to the people, but according to the Father he was right on time. Then he spoke to the crowd in such a way that the local leaders were losing their grip on their flock. A new day has dawned, and now the Pharisees have a perfect opportunity to have the truth of Jesus be exposed. A situation arose that would clearly show whether or not Jesus understood the Law of Moses and whether he was able to accurately judge what should be done to the transgressor. A woman had been caught in the act of adultery, and they were ready to enforce the Law and stone her to death. With Jesus in their midst, a perfect opportunity is provided to see how well he knew the Law.

"Jesus, what should we do?" Their question was asked in an almost mocking tone, attempting to get him to stumble in his response. Quietly Jesus begins to write in the sand, and soon all the accusers leave without executing their plan and without a word of condemnation. In the end, Jesus assures the woman he is not there to condemn her and invites her to repent and live her life for him. Today many of us continue to focus on the sin and the punishment for sin in our lives or in the world around us. Christ has resolved that issue FULLY; it is over, and we are no longer condemned for what we have done... or will do. Jesus simply wants to have a relationship with us. As he told the crowd the day before, "...streams of living water will flow from within..." Jesus came not to condemn but to save. We need to allow HIS life to be those streams of living water and empower us to a life of his joy. This will only be accomplished by allowing HIM to live in, with, and through us.

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# JOHN 8:12-27

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 8:12 - 27 (NIV)

12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me." 19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." 20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.

21 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." 22 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?" 23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." 25 "Who are you?" they asked. "Just what I have been claiming all along," Jesus replied. 26 "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world." 27 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, we thank you for bearing witness of your Son. Today we give you all the glory for what you have done in our lives.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus continues his dialogue with the leaders of the day, a dialogue they were very frustrated with and would not or could not accept. In this passage he tells them one of the reasons for their consternation with His words and actions. He made it clear that he (Jesus) had come at the direct request and power of the Father. Jesus had come with spiritual power and they were looking for a mere physical power. In verse 18 he states, "I am one who testifies for myself..."

You can almost hear the same words the Father directed Moses to proclaim when asked how to describe to others who He was. Moses, the prophet these leaders revered with great awe, knew the "I AM who I AM" yet they could not allow this Jesus to have any part of this authority or kingdom they had set up in their comfortable world. And why could they not accept this relationship? They had abandoned their own relationship with the Father generations ago and replaced it with a man-made set of rules, rules that had come from the father of lies.

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## MESSAGE

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This was not a pleasant accusation, and the leaders did not take it lightly. For this and other similar comments, they wanted to kill Jesus and according to their rules they had every right to because what he was saying was not true...or so they thought. Jesus is now letting them know by their own set of rules that he had the witnesses to prove who he was; they had chosen not to listen to that witness. The witness? None other than the Father himself! And then he proceeds to let them know that he has two witnesses, both the father AND himself, which held the same standing.

In their minds you could not be a witness for yourself, but Jesus was trying to show them his relationship with the Father was such that he could be a witness. In verse 14 He says, "...if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going." The leaders who were arguing with him did not even know where he came from in an earthly sense (they argued Galilee when it was Bethlehem, the exact place it was supposed to be according to the scripture they quoted) much less where he came from eternally. Our joy today resides in the fact that we know where Jesus came from and we too have a relationship with the Father because of our relationship with Jesus.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 8:28-42

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 8:28-42 (NIV)**

28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." 30 Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him. 31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word.

38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father." 39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. 40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week we praise you for what you have done, we give all glory to you and ask that you continue to reveal yourself to us and allow us to acknowledge you. May you power our every thought, move, and emotion.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...He has not left me alone..."

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## MESSAGE

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One of the greatest fears of this earthly vehicle we live in is loneliness. Few and far between are those who have no care or concern about being alone. Much of the busyness of today's world is a desperate attempt to keep from being alone. Jesus has offered a foolproof method of insurance that we never have to be alone; it is simply the ability to have a relationship with him. Yet what is more exciting is that he also offers not only the promise, but also the method and the power to have that relationship.

Look at the relationship he has with the Father. Starting in verse 28 we hear Jesus tell the leaders of the day (and us), "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." And then he continues in verse 42 with the method he uses to please the Father "I have not come on my own; but he sent me."

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus relied on the power and direction of the Father to come and to live this life on earth. That is the same way we are able to live this earthly life, by the power of the Father made possible through the sacrifice of the Son and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We have to stop assuming we have the power to do **ANYTHING** of value, because only Christ can do that.

We let go once when we bought that “fire insurance policy” and accepted Jesus as our Savior, but now we want to help him out and make sure he does not have to work too hard. It is time to do as Jesus did: rely 100% on the power the Father has supplied to us. Release the future to **HIM** and **HIM** alone, because if we release our tomorrows we can certainly release today.

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# JOHN 8:42-47

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 8:42-47 (NIV)

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth

for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week make us silently sit before you, in patient anticipation of your voice.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"The reason you do not hear..."

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## MESSAGE

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The message to the religious leaders of the day was a harsh one. Jesus basically tells them that they do not love him or hear him because they do not belong to God. By a direct statement, Jesus tells them since they do not belong to God; they must belong to the devil. The issue of hearing God is an important one. It really has two major impacts in our lives. The first is our initial hearing of God. God reveals himself to all men, as Scripture reminds us on many occasions. While many people struggle in that initial listening stage, salvation comes to those who listen and surrender. Those people who do not listen are Jesus's audience in this passage; they continue to belong to the enemy. For many believers, after that initial call from the Lord, the listening stops and the talking begins. We now have this wonderful relationship with the God of the universe, and we are eternally grateful for what he has done for us. Our lives are changed, and we now have a freedom and joy never seen before. Our next step?

We must show our appreciation by serving Him. We must now think of what it is He wants us to do. So we begin our thinking and wondering process. We look around at our talents and skills. We ask our friends and new Christian brothers what we might be good at. We begin this great list of activities and responsibilities, and we present them to God and say, "Here are my goals, my ideas for you to consider, the wish list of ideas from which you can choose my life's goals." Just as we began our relationship with our faithful Father, we need to continue it...by listening. He does not need our ideas or input on what we should do next. He needs the ears of our heart. God is patiently waiting to tell us exactly what we should do next, and we are too busy talking to him to hear what he has to say. Our responsibility after salvation is the same as before: LISTEN to the voice of God and respond to it. We can only listen when we have our mouths closed and we allow God to speak to our very being.

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# JOHN 8:48-59

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 8:48-59 (NIV)

48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" 49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." 52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"I am not seeking glory for myself..."

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54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. 55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." 57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today we yield to you and ask that we may rest deeply and peacefully in your power and care each day.

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## MESSAGE

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The discussions begin to take a very heated tone. The religious rulers of the day have now said Jesus was not only a liar but also demon-possessed. Jesus delivers a simple rebuke, but in reality it is a lesson that penetrates to the heart and soul of every man. Many think that lesson is in verse 51, "I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." While that is a very life changing and powerful statement, it is only one part of this short passage. It is the comment the religious rulers determine to argue and debate with Jesus for the balance of the passage. The religious rulers wanted to argue about never seeing death because they had not come to the point of salvation; eternity was a concern to them. We do not have that problem as believers in Christ; we know what eternity has for us. Unfortunately we sometimes get confused as to how it all works in this place called earth.

As believers we understand that we have the power to live life here on earth through the power of Christ, and that as a follower of Christ our desire is for Him to live our lives and NOT the power of the flesh or the might of the enemy. At times we get confused about this process and attempt to take things into our own hands, and live the life we think best, not the life Christ has planned for us. Within this process the big issue we struggle with is who gets credit. For this discussion let's use the word "credit" as a substitute for "glory," since none of us are so arrogant as to want "glory," right? However, if we look carefully at the world we live in, the most important thing seems to be who does get the glory. We are in a constant tug of war with each of us desiring the proper amount of "credit" no matter what the situation. When we watch TV or movies, it is about the "credits."

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## MESSAGE

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We see in business, politics, home, and even church an almost constant acknowledgment of "credit" or arguing about who really deserves "credit" for some accomplishment, no matter how big or small. Jesus had "rights" to all sorts of credit/glory as he stood before the religious rulers of the day. Jesus had left His place in heaven, set aside his authority and power, and had to his "credit" creation itself, yet these rulers gave him ZERO credit and in fact gave him negative credit.

Jesus's response is, "I am not seeking glory [credit] for myself..." So how did Jesus live out this life on earth? Jesus gave ALL the credit/GLORY to the Father, because he knew that is where the credit should be, and because he knew that is where there is power. Today the power and the credit are still the Father's so that we can live our lives and give HIM all the glory for all he does through us each day.

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# JOHN 9:1-12

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 9:1-12 (NIV)

1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...we must do the work of him who sent me."

7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. 8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." 10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded. 11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." 12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week bring your will to our minds and allow us to hear your voice and walk in your footsteps with your power.

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## MESSAGE

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We live in a very confusing world. How our time should be prioritized has become one of the most frustrating and difficult things we must face. Solutions abound both from this world and the church. Books have all the solutions we could ever want if we had the time to read; four easy steps to tranquility; balancing fun, fitness, and faith; finding your way; etc., etc. We are not at a loss for help in this dilemma, yet so many of us are still frustrated and unfocused. Jesus also wanted to teach his disciples about what their time should be spent doing, and he was a living, walking example for them as well as for us. He taught them to pray, to meditate on scripture, and to talk with the Father. He showed them the important things of life. Mostly he taught them about their relationship with the Father, one he had and wanted them to have as well.

That relationship resulted in our quote this week from John chapter 9, "...we must do the work of him who sent me." Let's be clear, the work is the RESULT of our relationship; our work does NOT create the relationship. As we grow in our relationship with the Father, we begin to see clearly what our work with him entails. The Father continues to work IN, WITH, and THROUGH us as we are shown His will daily. Paul reminds us of this same promise in Colossians 1:29, "To this end I labor, struggling with all HIS energy, which so powerfully works in me." [emphasis mine] Yes, we must do the work of the Father just as Jesus did. The wonderful part is that the Father grants us HIS power to do HIS will.

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# JOHN 9:13-34

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 9:13-34 (NIV)**

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided. 17 Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 19 "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" 20 "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. 21 But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, we come before you today and ask for YOUR power to be OUR life. Reveal yourself to us and allow us to see you and you alone.

22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. 23 That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." 24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." 25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" 26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" 28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus was with the disciples and came upon a man born blind. With the disciples present, Jesus healed the man of his blindness. As the religious rulers of the day questioned and accused the man whom Jesus healed, they made a great deal out of two things

First was the fact that the healing was done on the Sabbath, and work of any sort was prohibited on the Sabbath. The second is that they were anxious to know exactly how he was healed, the process and procedure used.

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## MESSAGE

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The man grew weary of their questioning and finally, in verse 33, made one of the most powerful and insightful comments in this passage, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." This is a lesson for all of us. Power comes from God alone. While we may see many acts of man here on earth, the only thing we should be focused on is what God can do and is doing.

Our personal lives and the lives of those around us need to have a focus on the Father and what he is all about. This world has a false power that does nothing but confuse and discourage. The only real power is from the Father and that is the power we need to live by. Reflect on His power as we move into this week and the daily activities the world will place before us, then gently relax and allow the Father's power to work in, through, and with you.

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# JOHN 9:35-41

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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**John 9:35-41 (NIV)**

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Lord, I believe."

38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." 40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" 41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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This week let your prayer be a simple one, "Lord, I believe," and trust Him with this week: one day, one hour, one moment at a time.

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## MESSAGE

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Throughout chapter nine we have seen the religious rulers of the day focused on what Jesus had done wrong. They believed the fact that Jesus was healing on the Sabbath was a sin and were calling him out on it. They made quite the spectacle of interviewing the man who was healed and his parents and confronting Jesus with this offense. What was the attitude of the man healed? After he had been interrogated by the religious leaders, he had a conversation with Jesus. The question from Jesus was simple, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Having just received his sight, this was a very important question to this man, so he asked, "Who is he, sir?"

Jesus went on to explain that He (Jesus) was in fact the Messiah. The man who was healed had no hesitation. His reply was immediate, "Lord, I believe." His belief was rooted in the understating of what Jesus had done for him; he once was blind but was now able to see. The question from Jesus to the man born blind is the same one He asks each of us, "Do you believe I am the Messiah, the answer to all of your questions?" Our faith is also simple. We need to look to Jesus and understand what He HAS done for us and how that carries us to eternity. While we are here on earth what he has already accomplished in the past is what works for our today and our tomorrow. Nothing more is needed, simply to say, "Lord, I believe."

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 10:1-6

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 10:1-6 (NIV)

"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...because they know his voice."

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4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, allow us to hear your voice.

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## MESSAGE

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I have heard that the way a government agent is trained to determine if a piece of currency is counterfeit is NOT by having them look at counterfeit bills, but by spending 100% of their training time on looking at genuine bills. By using this method they know the real thing so well that they can immediately spot a fake. Jesus uses the example of how sheep know the voice of a shepherd so well that they will only follow that shepherd, never another. The emphasis Jesus is trying to make is about both the sheep and the shepherd. They know each other so well because they have a very close relationship. As a believer we can be assured that Jesus knows our voice, and He wants us to know His as well.

We need to simply allow His voice to be in our ears constantly. Time in the Word of God and prayer are two great ideas. The one thing I have found in my own life is that it is much easier to hear the voice of God if I spend less time talking. For many people, prayer (and even reading of the Word) is time to inform God as to what He needs to be doing. More listening and less telling makes for a greater intimacy with God. Another great way to hear God's voice is time with believers who also have an intimate relationship with Jesus. Sometimes that may take the form of just listening together, not solving the world's problems. This week take some time to listen to Jesus with a few of His followers.

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# JOHN 10:7-21

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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**John 9:13-34 (NIV)**

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father —and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life —only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." 19 At these words the Jews were again divided. 20 Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?" 21 But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Thank you, Jesus, for the relationship you have provided me. Draw me closer to you each day.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...have it to the full."

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## MESSAGE

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If we took a survey of all believers and asked who thinks God the Father and Jesus the Son have the greatest (and closest) relationship possible, I think most would vote a very strong "Yes." If we then asked those same people if they wanted to have the same type of relationship with Jesus, their answer would also be a big, "YES!" The great news is that we have that same relationship, and it is Jesus who is the power behind it. Below is the story of the sheep and the shepherd, and Jesus takes the time to explain in even more detail. In verse 14 and 15 we read, "...I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father..."

We have the same relationship with Jesus and the Father as Jesus has with the Father! What a great privilege to be one of the sheep in Jesus' flock. Look carefully at the last half of verse 15, "...and I lay down my life for the sheep." What is important to remember is that it is not something we strive for or work hard at; it is what we have received upon salvation. After salvation it is about resting in that relationship with the Shepherd and growing in the intimacy we long for. HE is our rest.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 10:22-42

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 10:22-42 (NIV)

22 Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." 31 Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"And in that place many believed in Jesus."

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34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? 35 If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken – 36 what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. 38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." 39 Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

40 Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Here he stayed 41 and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true." 42 And in that place many believed in Jesus.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, draw me unto your will and allow your face to shine upon me.

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## MESSAGE

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This chapter gives us first the great example of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and then ends with a powerful conclusion, "And in that place many believed in Jesus." From the man healed of blindness to the religious leaders of the day to each and every individual we all are faced with the same question, "Who is Jesus?" Why do we have to face this question? Simply stated, our eternity AND our life on earth depend on it.

The barrier confronting the religious leaders of that day is the same that confronts each of us now. Our response to the statement of Jesus determines our future, both the immediate future and the long-term future - often referred to as eternity. A simple short verse, verse 30, is the declaration that divides believers even today, "I and the Father are one." With this simple statement Jesus has declared himself God.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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## MESSAGE

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We all have one choice in life: to believe or to reject. Many (but not all) of the religious rulers of the day rejected it, but as we see in verse 42, many others believed.

In plain and simple words Jesus claims to be God. This is a place of rejoicing for those who believe, and a place of rejection for those who do not, but without question a place of decision-making for all.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 11:1-16

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 11:1-16 (NIV)

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." 4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." 5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. 7 Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." 8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...so that you may believe."

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. 10 It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." 12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. 14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today grant us the eyes and heart to see our relationship with you and the intimacy you desire to have with us.

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## MESSAGE

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Chapter 11 is the amazing account of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Once again in this chapter we will see people given the choice of what they will believe about Jesus. Throughout the book of John we have seen that Jesus is in perfect alignment with the Father. He does absolutely nothing without the power of the Father or outside of the Father's will. His message to us both in this Gospel and throughout his life is that we too have this ability and that is why he has come, to give us that same relationship with the Father.

As the passage begins we see Jesus once again aligned with the Father's will. When he is notified of the illness of Lazarus he has two considerations as he determines what to do. The first surrounds his close relationship with Lazarus. As we will see later in the chapter he was so taken by the death of Lazarus and the impact on Martha and Mary that he wept. The second consideration is the impact of going back to the area where he was recently the subject of an attempted stoning. While either of these could cause Jesus to make a decision to either NOT go at all, or to go immediately and use his powers to heal Lazarus, neither of these is the decision Jesus makes.

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## MESSAGE

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He knows the will of the Father is to show a group of people that in fact it is the Father who has sent Jesus, and the Father has planned an event that will give them MORE than ample evidence that he and the Father are one. The simple statement of Jesus to the disciples, "...so that you may believe," displays his compassion for his disciples.

It is also a reminder for us that the claims of Jesus were not his own, but were evidence of his relationship with the Father. Our Father desires the same relationship with us, through his Son, Jesus Christ.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 11:17-29

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 11:17-29 (NIV)

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. 21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"I am the resurrection and the life."

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24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." 28 And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Jesus, this week I ask for you. My prayer is for all of you to be all of me.

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## MESSAGE

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Many of us have much the same problem as Martha: we have not allowed knowledge to make its way from the brain to the heart. We know all the right things, but we refuse to believe what we know. Scripture is memorized and prophecies "understood." By our own power we have committed our lives to Jesus, but to entrust the daily events of life into His hands seems to be too hard. Martha is complaining to Jesus that her brother would not have died if Jesus had come earlier. Jesus tells her that Lazarus will rise again only to have her quote "theology" to the Creator. Just as He does with us, Jesus explains that He alone is resurrection and that He alone holds our lives today and forever.

Jesus being the resurrection is an important concept to understand. Jesus is trying to help Martha (and us) understand that He does not merely have the power to bring Lazarus back to life, but that in fact Jesus IS THE resurrection (and the Life). Many times today we ask for parts of Jesus. We pray for His ability to forgive, or His ability to love, or some other portion of who He is. What we need to ask for is HIM...period. Lazarus did not need the power of Jesus' resurrection; he needed JESUS, because Jesus is resurrection. This life we live today needs to have Jesus as its life. Paul repeats this (as do many other Bible authors) with the words of Galatians 2:20, "...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." What a mighty Savior, who is our very life!

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 11:30-44

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 11:30-44 (NIV)

30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. 32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. 35 Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Lazarus, come forth!"

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." 40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, reveal yourself to me, open my eyes to you.

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## MESSAGE

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Before Jesus made the powerful statement above He had to address Martha one-on-one and also the crowd that was there. He needed to clarify His purpose. He had just discussed with Martha His power over death and tried to help her understand that He had power over both today and forever and that this power was not merely theory. Yet just a few minutes later she needed convincing that the stone covering the grave should be removed. Martha was worried about the stench of a body being dead for four days; Jesus was reminding her that this was a trivial issue given His authority over life and death.

With regard to the rest of the crowd, Jesus needed to be sure they understood the reason for the resurrection of Lazarus. This was not an act of power, pride, or ego. It was the will of the Father to show those who had questioned the relationship between the Father and the Son. Listen to the prayer of Jesus to the Father in verses 41 and 42; "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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## MESSAGE

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Once Martha knew the reason for this resurrection, that she and others would see the glory of God, and the crowd saw the relationship between the Father and the Son, the simple yet profound and powerful statement could be made, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he did.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 11:45-57

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 11:45-57 (NIV)

45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." 49 Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." 51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...many of the Jews...put their faith in Him."

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52 and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. 53 So from that day on they plotted to take his life. 54 Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples. 55 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. 56 They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?" 57 But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, we thank you for your Son and the salvation you brought to us through Him. We ask for your will to be done today in our lives.

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## MESSAGE

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At the beginning of this chapter we discussed the issue of this being a point in time where all must make a decision on the claims of Jesus. We have a choice: believe or NOT believe. As we read the final verses of this chapter we see the choices that people make. Each one of them (and us) is confronted with the exact same exposure, though we see vastly different responses. In verse 45 many of the Jews respond in a positive manner to the works of Christ. They have seen the relationship of the Son to the Father and responded to the fulfillment of the Scriptures they knew so well.

Later we see the Gentiles without the advantage of the Scriptural teaching and history of the promised Messiah respond to Jesus in the same positive way and accept His salvation. We also see at the conclusion of this chapter the plot to crucify Jesus become top priority for the ruling Jewish leaders of the day. And why is this their response? The same reason most others fail to accept the truth of Jesus and His relationship with the Father: because they cannot let go of what they have in this world. . Verse 48 quotes the Jewish rulers saying, "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

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## MESSAGE

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The egos of man were not able to submit to the will of God Almighty, the Creator of all. This is just as true today. Ego is the dividing line of acceptance or rejection of Jesus.

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## TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 12:1-12

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### THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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#### John 12:1-11 (NIV)

Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

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### PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today let us rest in your will, knowing that you have our lives in your hands.

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### QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial."

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### MESSAGE

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It was quite a day. Just days away from the biggest holiday of the year, the plot to kill Jesus is in full swing. Jesus is gathered with his disciples, family and friends, including Lazarus, the man he had just raised from the dead, to enjoy a dinner together. Mary, in an effort to honor Jesus, begins to wash his feet with an expensive perfume. Judas decides this is a poor decision and indignantly calls her out. Sounds like a typical family gathering in America today: ego, selfishness, and misunderstanding are the foundations of communication at these and many other gatherings.

Let's look closely at a few words of Jesus in response to Judas. Verse 7 says, " 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.' " I believe we need to be reminded that God does have it all planned. That's right, he has it ALL planned. He has both the big things like keeping the universe in order and the little things like what happens in our lives today all fully planned out. What is our responsibility?

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## MESSAGE

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We are to simply rest in His mighty will and power, allowing him to work in, through, and with us, just as Mary did when she washed his feet with the perfume. He has the plan and the power to take care of it all. This leaves no worries for us. If we look closely we see Mary as she allowed God to work through her not only accomplish the service she thought she was intending to do (washing Jesus feet) but also please the crowd by allowing the entire house to be filled with the fragrance. This one simple act would produce a cherished memory for all gathered, something that will be desperately needed in just a few days when they mourn the death of Jesus.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 12:12-19

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 12:12-19 (NIV)

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" 14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, 15 "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"At first his disciples did not understand all this."

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16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him. 17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, close my mouth and open my ears to hear your will today. I pray that your Holy Spirit work in, through, and with me. I pray your will be accomplished, not mine.

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## MESSAGE

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The frustration of the religious rulers grows and their plot to kill Jesus continues as the masses now are enraptured with Jesus and want to make Him their king. In these few verses the plot unfolds which will lead to the trial and then ultimately the murder of Jesus. During this time many things are happening that do not always seem to connect. The crowd wants to lift Jesus up to a political position in hopes that He will save them from their Roman captors and heal them from their infirmities. Through all this the disciples seemed a bit confused and not fully aware of the ultimate plan. A plan that Jesus had spent the past three years working to explain to them. I believe this shows us a great deal about how God works with us on a daily and lifelong basis. While we all expect to be totally changed (and we are) upon salvation, frustration sets in when we do not understand God's will on a specific day or topic. This is where maturity matters.

God has certainly saved us by His grace, but daily He is maturing us by His sanctification. The interesting part about the Christian life is that this maturing process comes in many different speeds, times, and places. This seems to be a major frustration for humankind, especially in today's fast-paced world. Just as the disciples needed to remember, we also have to realize that God alone is responsible for this process. Our responsibility? We are to rest in His power and allow His will to be accomplished in our life. The best way to do that is to open ourselves to Him on a daily (moment by moment) basis and ask Him for HIS will to be done in our life. His desire is to be the functional life source delivering His will through our lives.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 12:20-36

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 12:20-36 (NIV)

20 Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." 22 Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. 23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. 27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Father, glorify your name!"

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29 The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

30 Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. 31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. 34 The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" 35 Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. 36 Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week we ask your Holy Spirit to work in our lives so that YOU will be glorified.

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## MESSAGE

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Last week we looked at the disciples' comment that they did not understand all that was happening. They were still growing and learning. After three years of being with Jesus daily they still had much to learn. Jesus of course understood their need and thirst for knowledge. He also realized that it was through Him that they would receive understanding. Over the next several chapters we will see Jesus bringing to the disciples (and to us!) some of the deepest understandings of our relationship with Him, the Father, and the Spirit.

We will see how tightly woven the Godhead really is. We will see how they are not only integrated with each other, but also desire to have us just as integrated with them. And best of all how they supply the needed elements to create that unity. In this week's passage Jesus begins by showing the fundamental issue for both Him and us: All of life is meant to glorify the Father. The whole purpose of the life of Jesus and every action He took was to glorify the Father. Here He was, just hours before his crucifixion, and His sole desire was to glorify the Father, not Himself.

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## MESSAGE

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What an amazing dialogue. We see Jesus asking the Father to glorify the Father's name. And what does the Father do? He speaks it so all can hear. WOW! While I know we all want that audible voice, Jesus made it clear that HE and His spirit are present with us just as He is present with the Father. What we tend to forget and the reason we long for that audible voice is that it is all about the Father NOT us. We live in an "it's all about me" society.

Unfortunately both inside and outside the church. Our only purpose is to glorify the Father, all else is simply wasted. And the great news is that just like with Jesus, the Father is our power to glorify Him. It is easy as we read John to see how the Father, Son, and Spirit are tightly woven. It is also clear that we have that same relationship with them.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 12:37-50

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 12:37-50 (NIV)

37 Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" 39 For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: 40 "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." 41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. 42 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. 44 Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

47 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. 48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. 50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today I praise your name. I acknowledge that you alone are worthy of my praise. Today, in all I do, may YOU be glorified.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...for they loved praise from men more than praise from God."

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## MESSAGE

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Earlier in John we discussed the issue of the ego being the dividing line between acceptance and rejection of Jesus. This idea continues to be obvious in the current passage. We see how many of the Jewish people and leaders have begun to believe and accept Jesus. We also see that many believe but remain unwilling to openly confess their belief. Why? They are afraid of the other Jewish leaders. They do not want to be excluded from the synagogue. Sounds like ego to me: we all want people to like us and think we are important. What is fascinating is the simple way Jesus brings the point out. His comment in today's language might sound like, "You prefer to have men like you over God liking you."

That is quite a crazy idea when put in these terms. In our minds we typically want to be liked either by those who are important in the world or those whom we most want to love us. And the bottom line? Why would we want anyone's approval more than the love of God? He is the "most important" and the most desired to have love us. Yet here we are looking for the praise of men and neglecting to acknowledge, glorify, and praise the God of heaven and earth, the One who will praise us if we allow all glory to be His. Once again we see Jesus reminding us that all He says and does is simply what the Father has asked Him and not one iota more. He knew the value of God's praise versus man's praise.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 13:1-17

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 13:1-17 (NIV)

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. 2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today I praise your name. I acknowledge that you alone are worthy of my praise. Today, in all I do, may YOU be glorified.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...for they loved praise from men more than praise from God."

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## MESSAGE

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This week we explore a passage that hits deep in the heart of many people: the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus. Today we have seen a resurgence of this example in sermons, quotes, retreats, and now even in weddings where the bride and groom express their love and devotion for each other. Jesus told the disciples this was being done for them as an example. Yes, it is an example to live by (being a servant) though sometimes we forget a couple of aspects of this passage.

The first is the security of a servant. Jesus desires for us to act like a servant, using His power to love and care for others. What we forget are the BENEFITS of being a servant. A servant has no worries about putting a roof over his head, everything being fully supplied by the master. A servant has no worries about meals and clothes, again all supplied by the master. We do see the example of Jesus' actions of a servant.

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## MESSAGE

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We need also to see His POSITION as a servant: He relied solely on the Father for His daily needs. This is the same desire and expectation Jesus and the Father have for us today. We have a position in Christ as believers, and we sometimes forget the benefits that go along with that position. We feel as though we have to work hard to solve the problems associated with life.

Jesus has shown us by the way He relied solely on the Father that this is not the case. Christ alone is our strength, NOT merely our source of strength, our ACTUAL strength. When we realize (and allow) our position in Christ to be the rule of our life, life becomes as the Father designed, a life of rest in Him. We will take up the second idea next week.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 13:1-17

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 13:1-17 (NIV)

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, open me today to your voice. Allow my silence to welcome your voice.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"... nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him."

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## MESSAGE

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This week we continue to explore the same passage we looked at last week. As mentioned, this is a passage that has been recalled in many ways by many people over the years. The message of servanthood is not new to the pulpit. Being servants of Jesus Christ is a big part of our relationship and understanding as believers. Today, though, I would like to explore the other example Jesus quoted in the same passage, that of the messenger.

While we discussed last week the role and position of a servant, the messenger is one that seems to be misunderstood by many. One of the first concerns of some is to say, "I cannot be a speaker or missionary or evangelist. I am just not a messenger (speaking) type of person." The other extreme is those who believe they have the gift of being a messenger and love the attention the pulpit can bring to THEM. I think we need to look more closely at the understanding Jesus was trying to give us.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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## MESSAGE

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I do not think the concept of professional speaking was the discussion; Jesus was trying to remind us of our daily relationship with the Father. He commented over and over in the book of John about how He only said what the Father told Him to say. THAT is the job of a messenger. To say ONLY what the Message-giver has instructed us to say. Being the messenger is not about being a preacher or an evangelist, it is about bringing to others the message Christ wants to deliver to those you encounter. It is about saying only what Christ wants you to say to EVERYONE you encounter every day. How is this possible?

This happens by allowing CHRIST to speak through you, not speaking yourself. If this is the process used, then the attention does NOT come to the individual bringing the message, it goes to the One who sent the message. Again, how do we make this happen? The most fundamental action is the one most of us neglect: listening to what the Message-giver is saying. Please be careful....this does not mean telling the Message-giver what you want Him to tell you to say. It means ignoring the flesh, listening to the Message-giver, and then allowing Him to talk through His servant and messenger: YOU!

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 13:18-30

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 13:18-30 (NIV)

18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' 19 "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. 20 I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." 21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." 22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. 23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"... nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him."

24 Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." 25 Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. 27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, 28 but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. 30 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, open me today to your voice. Allow my silence to welcome your voice.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus had just finished washing the feet of the disciples and relating to them the example He had shown. He described how it was the same relationship He had with the Father that they could also have with both Him and the Father. This is a great visual lesson for both the disciples and for us. The dark hours were drawing nearer. We see how Jesus operates knowing that His time on earth is coming to an end. We will see many lessons of relationship in the next several chapters, lessons on how relationships are intended to function, not on how so many of us today try to function in our relationships with others. These will be examples of openness, trust, compassion, and truth. They will show us how the Son, Father, and Spirit relate and how we are a part of that relationship.

While we struggle for accomplishment in life, Jesus was busy showing what was foundationally important: relationship. As the final hour draws nearer, Jesus confronts Judas and plainly tells him that he should do what he has intended to do. This is a difficult passage for me as Jesus is telling Judas to fulfill Scripture by betraying Jesus to the religious leaders. Why would someone tell a supposed friend to betray him? Because Jesus knew the will of the Father and wanted ONLY the Father's will to be done. While the short term would not be pleasant, in fact as unpleasant as anyone could imagine, He knew the long term was glorious, and this is what the Father had established.

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## MESSAGE

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In the midst of this difficult conversation Jesus reminds the disciples of their relationship to the Father, "...whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." This is reinforcement of the example of the relationship ties that He had already discussed with them.

Our salvation, our very life, is based on relationship, and that relationship **STARTS** with Jesus and from there continues to the Father, the Spirit, and all those we encounter.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 13:31-38

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 13:31-38 (NIV)

31 When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. 33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." 36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." 37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, open my eyes to you and allow my flesh to be diminished by your power working in my life. May YOU be the love I allow to work in and through and with me each moment.

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## MESSAGE

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Much focus in this passage is on the comments to Peter about denying Jesus. While we all want to believe we would not respond this way, we all know that, in fact, we have done so. Why did Peter and why do we act in this manner? Once again it goes back to relationship. Peter, just like us, was still growing in relationship with Jesus. While three years of daily time with Jesus allowed much growth, the relationship was still very much in the early stages. Jesus was continuing to show Peter how that relationship could and would grow. While we can focus on Peter's failure, remember it was said in the midst of a bigger lesson of how to live each day. Jesus had instructed the disciples, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Exactly how does this work? Let's go right back to just a few hours and a few days prior to this event and see what Jesus had been teaching the disciples.

- John 5:19 "...the Son can do nothing by himself..."
- John 10:9 "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." The purpose of Jesus is to be the life of every believer. HE is our life.
- John 10:30 "I and the Father are one." The life source of Jesus is the Father.
- John 10:38 "...the Father is in me, and I in the Father." The closest of relationships.
- John 14:10 "...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

As we have seen over and over in John (and will continue to see), Jesus used ONLY the power of the Father to live His life. This is the way He expects us to live and to have the ability to love, by allowing only the power of the Father, through His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit, to live our lives for us. We MUST give up our flesh and its desires and allow Jesus to be our life moment by moment.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 14:1-14

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 14:1-14 (NIV)

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"I am the way and the truth and the life."

8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. 12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, reveal yourself to me. Make me to see your will and rest in your faithfulness.

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## MESSAGE

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While there is deep revelation in this short passage, I would like to look carefully at one concept: Jesus is the life. He tells the disciples (and us) that if they have seen Him they have seen the Father. He continues by saying, "...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." Then Jesus says, "...I am in the Father and the Father is in me..." Jesus is in His final days on earth with the disciples, and after three years is continuing to show them what the relationship between them is all about. It is about the Father doing HIS work. This is the joy of salvation: God is in charge. Just as Jesus laid down His life at the request of the Father, we are to lay down our life (flesh) every day, and allow JESUS to be our life. If this is how Jesus did it, what makes us think we can do it by ourselves?

Jesus was not here to do His will in His earthly power. Rather, He was here to have the Father work through Him. He says it very clearly, "...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." These are the words of Jesus about how HE lived on this earth. He is asking us to do the same, allowing GOD to do HIS work in us. The Father receives glory when the world sees Jesus, not us. Remember, the disciples lived with Jesus almost daily for three years and it was on the eve of His crucifixion that they were just beginning to get it. So too with us; we need to allow the power of Jesus to be our life. Remember it is NOT a self-improvement plan, but it is a self-replacement plan: Jesus takes over completely.

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## JOHN 14:15-31

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

**John 14:15-31 (NIV)**

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." 22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. 25 "All this I have spoken while still with you.

26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. 28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30 I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, 31 but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. "Come now; let us leave.

## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today have your place in my life. Allow me to hear your will and your Spirit clearly. Let not my will be done, but yours.

## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...for he lives with you and will be in you."

## MESSAGE

In the earlier part of John 14, we were told of the intimacy of the Father and the Son when Jesus says in verse 10, "...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." This last part of the chapter explains the details of the intimacy with God that we have available to us. Jesus tells us that the Father has given us a counselor, the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit will live both with us and in us. He also reminds us of the true power in our lives in verse 19 where He says, "Because I live, you also will live." I find it interesting that.

He says this just hours before His crucifixion. Jesus ends this passage much as He began it. In verse 31 he says, "...but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me." What is amazing about this is that He is talking to us. During this short passage He has shown us what an intimate relationship we have with THE FATHER, THE SON, and THE SPIRIT. We talk about the theology of the Trinity, and we try to understand the implications of this fantastic union, and what.

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## MESSAGE

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He has told us in this passage is that they are all right here with us, desiring to live our very life for us. Just a few hours prior to His separation from the Father at Calvary, Jesus says the world must learn.

Yes, we must learn that the only command worthy of obeying is that from the Father; and the Father and the Son and the Spirit all speak in unison. Additionally, all are living in, with, and through us. Let's let them have their rightful place.

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# JOHN 15:1-8

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 15:1-8 (NIV)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...apart from me you can do nothing."

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Jesus, thank you for your full and complete salvation. Thank you for the daily power you deliver to me. Today I rest in your arms.

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## MESSAGE

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"I am the vine; you are the branches." This passage is one of the most quoted and favored from the book of John. It is a beautiful description of our relationship with our Savior. What can be any closer than a vine and its branches? The description is one of Life giving life. The important thing for us to see in our lives today is that it is Jesus giving life; it is the original Life that continues as the life of the believer, not the believer as the beneficiary, but the conduit. Yes, we do benefit as a child of the King, but it is a benefit of HIS power and HIS life working in us, not us usurping HIS power or strength. What is the action Jesus has told the disciples over and over again in the last few chapters? To have faith in Him and to love Him. These are the responsibilities of the chosen. Place yourself in the arms of Jesus, and trust Him for your life. Even as a branch cannot live without the vine, the believer cannot live without Christ. If we look even closer it shows us that the VINE is the source and the daily substance of life.

Without the vine, the branch has no value. Too often we believe the vine is there to give us branches some value. Not so. It is there because it (the vine) is our value and our life. Remember the context of this: Jesus has been talking to the disciples for some time now, with the cross looming closer. Just prior to this, He made the following comment in John 14:10, "Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." It is the same with us and the Son...Jesus is LIVING IN US and doing HIS work. We are simply the branch from which HE produces fruit. We are the vessels of His holy power; we are NOT the power. He lives in us and works through us so that the Father is glorified. Today, allow Jesus to do His work in your life, let the vine work through your life.

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 15:9-17

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 15:9-17 (NIV)

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"This is my command: Love each other."

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14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today allow your Son to be my life. Allow my self to die and you to be glorified.

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## MESSAGE

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Remember where we are in history as these comments are being made. Jesus, having just had the last supper with His disciples and knowing that He was about to be arrested and crucified on the cross, is giving the disciples one of their last face-to-face discipling sessions. He has spent much time on the relationship they have with Him and the Father. His repeated message can be stated as, "I am in you and you are in me. I am in the Father and He is in Me. The Father loves the son and the Father loves you. You are loved by me and by the Father." A great love fest! He has also made it very clear that the power to love comes from Him and the Father alone; they are THE source of the power of love. Yes, He has asked for their love, but it is a redemptive love, a love that actually flows from Him, one that only requires acceptance. So what is the message for the disciples? "Love each other." Once again back to the source. Can they do it on their own? Not any more than you or I can. He wants them to understand that He will give them the power to love. How?

By the message He has shared in the last two chapters. To summarize, "Because I live in the Father and He lives in me. I and the Father are one just as you and I are one." We can love each other only through the power of Jesus, because we are one with Him. We continue to die to self and allow HIM to live. That is the meaning of "I in Him and Him in us." It is NOT that we are getting any better; He is allowing the flesh to die and taking on everything we allow Him to take. Loving others is the biggest command. Why? Because only He can do it, and when we love with His love, others will see Him and HE will be glorified.

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# JOHN 15:18-27

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 15:18-27 (NIV)

18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. 24 If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. 25 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.' 26 "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...you do not belong to the world..."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today allow us to hear your Spirit moment by moment. Let us not fear this world since you have overcome this world and chosen us out of it. Thank you, Father, for your protection.

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## MESSAGE

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The betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus was drawing closer and closer. As the time approached Jesus was focused on serving the needs of the disciples. And what was their need? To know what was coming. Jesus knew that they had now come to rely on Him and that He would no longer be there in a physical way. This was going to be difficult if they did not know the final plan. So He reminds them of the plan. The first half is not so fun: the world will hate you. Wow. I am not sure if that is how I would kick off a pep talk. Jesus knew that they would very soon see the world's full hatred of Jesus. They had seen the public outcries and the attempted stonings, so they knew Jesus was hated by many. What they did not yet realize is the extent of this hatred and the brutal suffering that Jesus was to go through. Jesus needed to tell them about this hatred, because they too would face this same issue.

This bluntness was an important first step in helping them understand how life would be. Jesus reminds them that the reason people will hate them is because they hate Him and therefore hate those who stand with Him. They hate Jesus because He pointed out their sin. He also showed them a path of forgiveness, but they did not want to admit to their sin. Jesus does not leave the disciples to wonder still about their condition amongst the hatred of the world. He lets them know right away, that the Counselor will come when Jesus leaves. This Counselor will come to be with them and the Counselor is from the Father, just as Jesus is from the Father. This is one more reason we have seen in previous chapters the emphasis of Jesus and the Father being one. He now relates this same concept to the Counselor and the Father. And we are one with them... just as he was telling the disciples.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus reminds them in verse 19, "As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." [emphasis mine] For us this is a vivid reminder of the love of Jesus. He chose us OUT of this world.

We should feel strange and unfamiliar with this world... it is not our home. He wants us to feel comfortable and rested in HIS arms, HIS world, which is far from here.

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# JOHN 16:1-4

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 16:1-4 (NIV)

1>All this I have told you so that you will not go astray.2They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.3They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.4 I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"All this I have told you so that you will not go astray."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today allow your Son to be my life. Allow my self to die and you to be glorified.

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## MESSAGE

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Told us what? That seems to be our cry, "Wait a minute, tell me one more time what I am supposed to know!" Jesus had just finished telling the disciples in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." [emphasis mine] I would often like to think He said, "... apart from me you can do some things, or some fairly good things, or be a pretty good example of Christ, or..." Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately) He said we can do NOTHING. Galatians 2:20 comes to mind, "...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Jesus wanted the disciples to know this because He knew the trials they would soon face.

. He wants us to know it because He knows the trials we will face, and HE is ready to carry every burden and be our fullness. David, the King and psalmist, says it throughout his writings. "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." Psalm 57:2 KJV. This theme is repeated over and over in both the Old and New Testaments. God's plan has never wavered; He has always desired to be our all. Today we need to allow Him to be our all.

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# JOHN 16:5-16

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 16:5-16 (NIV)

5"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'6Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief.7But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.8When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:9in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you..."

11and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.12"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.14He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.15All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.16"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, thank you for your wonderful Son and your glorious Holy Spirit. You have made me who I am, and I desire to be yours and yours alone.

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## MESSAGE

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This is one of the few passages where we see a direct picture of the Trinity including the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in unison. The Son is with the disciples, and He soon leaves to return to the Father, but does not leave the disciples alone. He will send the Spirit to be with them. Read carefully and meditate on what Jesus says to the disciples: 12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you." John 16:12-15

Jesus knows the disciples cannot comprehend all they will need to know and is now explaining not only how they will hear, but gives them great insight into the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Remember back to the previous chapters and the many times Jesus has said to them, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." We are a part of this marvelous relationship! What can we say to express our joy and thanksgiving to Jesus for this wonderful gift? "Here I am, completely yours. Live in, with, and through me!"

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# JOHN 16:17-33

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 16:17-33 (NIV)

17 Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" 18 They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying." 19 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?" 20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. 23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me."

24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. 25 "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." 29 Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30 Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." 31 "You believe at last!" Jesus answered. 32 "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. 33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Thank you, Father, for your Son and your Holy Spirit. Father, most of all, thank you for never abandoning me.

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## MESSAGE

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I have a feeling that most of the disciples missed this statement from Jesus. I know I have passed it over many times. While we talk about how Peter and others denied Jesus, and many of us can relate the times in our lives when we too denied our savior, Jesus has a very interesting perspective. Those closest to Him on this earth left Him, He was at the lowest point that anyone could be in life. Even in this time, what was the foundation of Jesus' life? The Father! Why?

Jesus was TOTALLY allowing the FATHER to live His life, just as He had been telling the disciples over the last days. Jesus was the ultimate servant when He laid down His life, and had always trusted the Father with His life. Jesus could provide for our salvation, and live His life for one reason only: He abided in the Father and the Father abided in Him. Over and over He told the disciples this is the only way they will survive.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus, abandoned by ALL His friends and family, beaten and crucified, KNEW the Father was still there. Luke records the last words of Jesus in Luke 23:46: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

This was said just after He cried, "Why have you forsaken me?" Yet He knew the Father was still with Him; He was never abandoned. So, too, we are never abandoned by the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit.

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# JOHN 17:1-5

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 17:1-5 (NIV)

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"I have brought you glory on earth..."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, thank you for your Son and your Holy Spirit. We worship and adore you and give you all the glory.

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## MESSAGE

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Throughout scripture we see the glory of God being the fundamental "issue" of life. We are told, "The heavens proclaim the Glory of the God." We see God's glory in the very nature that surrounds us. Hymns sing out of God's glory and creed after creed proclaims God's glory. Here we are able to see two things in Jesus' life. First He came to glorify the Father, and second He (the Son) was to be glorified. Jesus was one with the Father, just as Jesus wants us to be one with Him and the Father, while allowing the Father to be glorified, not ourselves. Read these five verses and allow your heart to sing GLORY to our creator. After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. John 17:1-5 Our risen Savior is one with the Father and the Spirit that we might have eternal life and that we might be one with them.

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# JOHN 17:6-19

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 17:6-19 (NIV)

6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. 12

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...so that they may be one as we are one."

While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. 13 "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, thank you for accepting me into your glory. I pray today that you be glorified in my life. Let nothing I do shine, only your light. Allow me to be your vessel to those I encounter today.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus wants us (that is you and me!) to be in the exact same relationship with Him and each other as He is with the Father. WOW! We hear it but we really do not understand it. This is the most amazing part about our position as believers. WE are one with Jesus just as He is one with the Father. Did that sink in yet? YOU have the same relationship with Jesus as Jesus has with the Father. Our problem in life? We think we only need that relationship when we need it, which we think is when we are not strong enough or smart enough or \_\_\_\_\_ enough. WRONG! We need it FOR OUR LIFE. That is the intent. We have heard Jesus say.

He did NOTHING apart from the Father, and that is how we are to live: NOTHING apart from the Father. It is all about HIM, not US. That is our big mistake; we are worried about what WE will do, how WE will be impacted, how WE should respond. Jesus has said it over and over, let Him do it. We need to understand it is really all about HIM anyway, HIS glory and HIS majesty. We are simply the vessels of clay He is delivered in on this earth.

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# JOHN 17:20-26

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 17:20-26 (NIV)

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"... in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

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24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25 "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, speak to me today and allow me to see your will, your plans, and your work in my life.

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## MESSAGE

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During the last two weeks we have seen Jesus pray for Himself and the disciples, and now we see Him praying for us. What is even more amazing is that the prayers are all the same. Jesus' first prayer is to glorify the Father. The next prayer is for the disciples and all future believers to have the same relationship with the Father and Himself as the Father and Jesus have. Chapter 17 is an amazing story of relationship. In the first part of the chapter Jesus reminds us of His relationship with the Father which began before the world. Next He reminds the disciples (and us) that we are not of this world, and finally we see in these last few verses of chapter 17 that Jesus is in us in the same manner He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. THAT is relationship. We talk about how the married couple is one, but that is simply a shadow compared to the relationship between the Father and the Son and between us and the Son and the Father.

Too often we let the daily struggles of this world become our focus. Jesus wants us to understand the reality that HE is to be our focus. Our relationship with Him is the most important part of life; the rest is merely background noise. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus He allows us to see that He is in fact our very life. (Remember the verse on top of this email each week, "For in Him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28) As we allow our relationship to grow we find Jesus living in, with, and through us, and while the daily struggles are still there, as we allow Him to hold those, our life becomes more restful. As we grow in Him we also find our earthly relationships growing.

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# JOHN 18:1-14

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 18:1-14 (NIV)

1 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. 4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" 5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) 6 When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." 9 This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) 11 Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" 12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him 13 and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. 14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today allow me to see your world, not this shadow I walk on today. Jesus, allow your spirit to work in and through me today, and let nothing of this world be of concern to me. Let your will be done.

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## MESSAGE

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Two very powerful thoughts are brought out in these verses. The arresting party, fully armed, comes for Jesus, with their guide, Judas, leading the way. Before they have the chance to look around, Jesus steps forward and asks them who they are looking for. They respond, "Jesus." He replies, "I am he." Immediately, they literally fall to the ground. The mere spoken words of Jesus stun them. Not really mere words since the words come from the Creator of the universe. These words take me back to the encounter Moses had with God at the burning bush. When asked who he should tell the Pharaoh sent him, God replied, "I am who I am. ...say..., 'I am has sent me to you.'"

While here on earth Jesus took the prerogative to cloak his Deity and the Father was still in Him, just as He has reminded us throughout the book of John. Next we see the continued relationship of the Father and the Son. Just as the Father was in and worked through the Son, the Son was willing to do only what the Father willed. Jesus allowed the Father's will to be the only will of His life. When Simon Peter foolishly tried to kill the servant, Jesus reminded him that the reason they were there was to do the Father's will, "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

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## MESSAGE

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We will later see Jesus reminding Pilate of this very thing when He tells him that His army and servants would defend Him if His kingdom was of this world.

We too need daily, in fact moment by moment, reminders that we are not of this world. We are of the same world as Jesus!

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# JOHN 18:15-27

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 18:15-27 (NIV)

15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, 16 but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. 17 "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." 18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. 19 Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. 20 "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together.

I said nothing in secret. 21 Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said." 22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded. 23 "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" 24 Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. 25 Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." 26 One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today we rest in you. Today we seek your face alone. Draw us into your rest as we put our very being in your hands.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"He denied it, saying, 'I am not.'"

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## MESSAGE

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As followers of Jesus we have many emotions and feelings and many circumstances in which we have to respond. When we respond with the flesh we make mistakes; some that appear to be good ideas and those that are obviously poor ideas. In a very short window we see Simon Peter make a mistake of commission when he foolishly tries to protect Jesus by drawing a sword and attempting to kill one of the servants who was with the arresting party. A few hours later, his flesh fully in control, he denies any relationship with his Savior. We see at the end of this book the famous questioning of Peter by Jesus of his love for Jesus.

Peter's maturity and relationship with Jesus is shown as he is consistent in his reply, "Yes, I love you." "If you love me, feed my sheep," was the request of Jesus. Peter was able to tell Jesus that he was going to feed His sheep, because now he had matured to understand the lessons from the eve of the crucifixion. He understood the only way to feed Jesus' sheep was to allow Jesus to work in, with, and through him. Peter's flesh had failed him that night in the garden and outside in the courtyard, but now face to face with Jesus after the resurrection, Peter was trusting Jesus for everything.

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## MESSAGE

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The focus of the book of John has been our relationship with Jesus. Jesus tells us over and over again that it is the same relationship He and the Father have. Simon Peter was a passionate man ready to serve,

but failed when he focused on what HE could do rather than allowing Christ to work in him. Those last words with Jesus show us how much he had matured in a few short weeks.

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# JOHN 18:28-40

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 18:28-40 (NIV)

28 Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. 29 So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" 30 "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." 31 Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. 32 This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. 33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" 34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" 35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"My kingdom is not of this world."

36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." 37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." 38 "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. 39 But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" 40 They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, this week I thank you for truth. I praise you for being the only truth and how you allowed your Son to show me truth. Today draw me into your kingdom.

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## MESSAGE

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One of the most difficult things for believers to live out is their understanding of where "home" really is. Jesus knew it from day one until His crucifixion. He knew that this life on earth was a temporary assignment from the Father. For us it is a difficult understanding. We are constantly told how important this world is. We are reminded of what powerful and important people by whom we are surrounded.

Both the world and the church remind us of the importance of each activity and event we encounter. Jesus knew He had a single mission on this earth. It was the same mission He had as the Son of God and the Creator of the earth. It was to glorify the Father! Jesus understood that the way to glorify the Father was to have an intimate relationship with Him and to allow the Father's will to be done.

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## MESSAGE

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Jesus was very clear and confident, not arrogant, but confident when Pilate first began to question Him on His place in life. First He tells Pilate that His (Jesus') kingdom is NOT of this world, and second He makes it clear to Pilate (and all those listening) that He came to this world to testify to the truth. What was the truth? He had been telling it for many years now; every gospel account records it in various examples and stories. The truth is very simple. Jesus was implying: I AM just as the Father is. Jesus came to testify about the Father and the glory of the Father as well as His relationship with the Father.

He is equal to the Father and was there at creation. He also testified that the type of relationship and intimacy He had with the Father is the same type He wants us to have with Him and the Father. Now that is some truth! What is our responsibility? Believe it, and allow Jesus to act upon it. It is a great relationship we have with our Savior. For us as well this time on earth is simply a temporary assignment. God wants us to focus on our relationship with HIM, which is the eternal assignment. Live today in the kingdom God is in; HIS!

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TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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# JOHN 19:1-16

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 19:1-16 (NIV)**

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe 3 and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. 4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." 5 When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." 7 The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." 8 When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid

9 and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." 12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." 13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. 16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today I acknowledge your sovereignty over my life. Today I rest in you knowing that you have all things in your hands. Today I thank you for what you have done and what you intend to do in my life. Thank you, Father, for your love for me.

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## MESSAGE

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Most of us have no problem reading this quote from Jesus as He talks to Pilate. It is easy for us to understand that the Father and Jesus are as one and therefore God alone is in control of the Life of Jesus.

What makes it even easier to consider is that just a few verses earlier Jesus told Pilate that if His (Jesus') kingdom was of this world His servants would have prevented His arrest long ago.

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## MESSAGE

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Now let's transition to today. Do we understand that God alone controls our life? Is the fact of God's deliberate and intentional sovereignty of our lives deeply understood and acted upon? Now is not the time to debate free will and lots of other theology. Now is the time to review our relationship with our Savior, Jesus. Now is the time to consider what the Creator of the universe wants in our life. The answer is simple and has been told to us over and over in this precious book of John. **RELATIONSHIP!** Jesus, The Father, and His Holy Spirit **ALL** want a relationship with us, an intimate one. They desire to bring you and me to a point of peace and rest. They want **US** to see how **THEY** have control of our lives and the daily situations in which we are involved.

We see in this passage a comment by the rulers of the day who hated Jesus, "We have a law..." That was their excuse for not wanting the actual act of the crucifixion to be done by their hands but by the Romans. Jesus had a different comment, one about relationship, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above." Why? Because He had a relationship with the Father who is in charge of **EVERYTHING**. The Father desires that we let go of the grip we hold on our life and allow **HIM** to work in, with, and through us, allowing **HIS** perfect will to be accomplished.

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# JOHN 19:14-27

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 19:14-27(NIV)

14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. 16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. 19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: jesus of nazareth, the king of the jews. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"We have no king but Caesar."

22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." 23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24 "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did. 25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, you are my KING. Draw me near to you, and allow me to rest in your love and grace. Thank you, Father, for your precious Son and your Holy Spirit who dwells in me. Allow your will to be accomplished in my life.

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## MESSAGE

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While none of us would be quite so bold as to say it out loud, our actions tend to scream, "I have no king but MYSELF!" The flesh is a powerful and deceitful thing. Combined with the enemy and the world we live in, it is a power that is impossible to overcome by simple self-discipline and determination. Yet this is what we are taught day after day both in the world and in many churches. Try harder and it will get better, read the Bible and pray 12 minutes a day, follow these 6 steps and your life will turn around.

Work hard and all will all be okay. This is the same system used by the religious rulers that crucified Jesus 2000 years ago. While God put in place a relationship with His people and gave them a set of practical tools to live amongst themselves, it was always about relationship. God desired a relationship with His creation, His children. God wanted His children to have relationship with Himself and each other. He has set the perfect plan; His children many times choose to ignore it.

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## MESSAGE

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When we abandon or ignore our relationship with God, our relationships with others suffer along with it. As we read this passage just before the actual crucifixion, the rulers of the day show us how ignorant they were about their relationship with their Creator. We have a tendency to follow the same path. The law, the rules, self-effort are all the ways man wants to reach out to God. The way God has ALWAYS reached out to man is through relationship. From that time in the garden with Adam and Eve through the entire history of man, God has had one approach to His creation: reaching out to them in relationship.

And since that beginning each of us has had the same choice: to accept that relationship and live in it, or to take it into our own hands and create some sort of "work" to grow the relationship. Our work does not grow our relationship with God. Our relationship with God grows as we allow Him to live HIS life in, with, and through us. Ask yourself, "Who do I have as King of my life today?"

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# JOHN 19:28-37

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 19:28-37 (NIV)

28 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...so that Scripture would be fulfilled ..."

32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," 37 and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today I ask that your will be done in my life as you have planned from eternity past. Thank you for fulfilling your will in my life.

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## MESSAGE

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Many in the church today (and for many centuries previous) have focused on the importance of Scripture. The focus from some has been on how accurate it is. Word for word it is the message of God and is pure in its verbiage. Each word has been breathed by God Himself into the author's pen. There are no errors. While all of this is true, at times this can cause us to focus on the Scripture as a mechanical process. Scripture is not a mere mechanical process; it is one of the several ways God brings us into relationship with Himself. He does this by showing us over and over how He has been directly involved in the lives of all individuals since He created them, so involved that He can point out day by day, year by year, century by century that what He has said is true.

. As we wind through our short lives, we can find joy in the fact that God has made His statement about our life and what it is to be, though it may not be recorded in the Scriptures. He will fulfill our destiny and His plan for our life. At the cross Jesus knew the plan that the Father had intended for Jesus while on earth, and Jesus knew when it was over. So in the exact manner that God had foretold in Scripture, Jesus gave up His spirit with those simple words, "It is finished," and the guards simply "changed" the prescribed method of ending a crucifixion and left Jesus' legs intact and pierced His side. Scripture was fulfilled. God's will was done.

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# JOHN 19:38-42

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 19:38-42 (NIV)

38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, thank you for your perfect plan. Thank you that you have included me in this plan. Today I am yours to be used as a vessel of your perfect plan.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders."

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## MESSAGE

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This short passage tells a lot about us ... AND the purpose and plans of God. Joseph of Arimathea is to some a very minor player in the biblical accounts. We find in other Scripture that he was rich, a member of the council, and able to approach Pilate. So he was an important man of the day. Do we condemn him for his inability to be more open about his relationship with Jesus? Many times today we preach about those who are unable to tell their bosses or others about how deep their relationship with Jesus is. Let us not forget that just a few hours ago some of Jesus' closest disciples had outright denied they even knew Jesus! Once again we are able to see how God works...in HIS ways. God used Joseph for God's duties and plans. There was a need to place Jesus in the proper tomb. God had prearranged a plan with two very important officials who were as opposite of the disciples as anyone would imagine.

Nicodemus, as you may remember, was the Pharisee who came to Jesus at night because he was afraid of what his fellow Pharisees might say or do to him. Here we have two men, important in the Jewish ruling council and in the business world of the day, yet a growing love for Jesus was in their hearts. God used even these imperfect followers to carry out His perfect plan. A few of the disciples had scattered and the rest had no means to take care of the situation at hand. In fact, most had given up and gone home, either physically or emotionally. Joseph and Nicodemus knew what they were to do, and God had given them the position, power, and wealth to do it. Their assignment was to give Jesus the "proper" burial that was planned by God Himself. Does this give us a reason to hide our relationship with Jesus? No, it is just an example of the growth we are all experiencing in our relationship with Jesus; some theologians call it the grace of sanctification.

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# JOHN 20:1-18

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### **John 20:1-18 (NIV)**

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. 11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Jesus said to her, 'Mary.'"

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today I come before you with an open ear and a closed mouth. Allow me to simply listen to you.

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## MESSAGE

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Mary had looked directly at Jesus, yet did not recognize Him. The simple pronouncement of her name provided instant recognition. The scriptures often use the example of the Shepherd and the sheep telling how the Shepherd knows the voice of the sheep, and the sheep know the voice of the Shepherd. This is our relationship with God; we are to know His voice.

How did Mary know Jesus' voice? She had had years of relationship with Jesus which caused her to know His voice. Communication is a foundation of relationship building. Communication is done in many ways, but face to face, voice to voice is always the one that communicates the deepest. The tone, inflection, and other specific characteristics make it powerful and accurate. It is through the voice of God that we more clearly see our Savior Jesus.

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## MESSAGE

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What is the first requirement for communication? Listening. Mary had to do more than look and see. She had to LISTEN. This is the same truth we must learn. Over and over we complain about our inability to hear God, and we cry out to God seeking His wisdom, power, and relationship, but what is the one thing most of us fail to do? LISTEN.

How often is your prayer simply a request with your preferred answer stated to God Almighty? We all need to consider our listening skills. Open the scripture not to read, but to listen. Pray to God not to tell or talk, but to listen. He is anxious to tell us HIS heart. We need to stop talking and start listening.

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# JOHN 20:19-31

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 20:19-31 (NVI)

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." 24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, today I thank you for your PEACE: Jesus.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Peace be with you!"

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## MESSAGE

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The crucifixion was complete, the empty tomb still reeling in their minds, and suddenly Jesus appears to the disciples. The first words, which are immediately repeated, and then repeated the following week when Thomas is with them, are, "Peace be with you!" Throughout history peace is the most desired state. It can be absence of war and conflict, or absence of worry and pain, and it can be a physical or emotional state. What God wants us to see is not absence of something but the presence of something: JESUS! JESUS is our peace.

Jesus speaks these words just prior to saying to the disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." During the time Jesus spent with the disciples He made it very clear that He (Jesus) was one with the Father, and that they (the disciples) were one with both Him and the Father. This has been one of the major themes throughout the book of John. Jesus now takes the next step in their relationship. He is giving them their assignment, to go to the world and let everyone know what they now know. The important thing for them to know about this assignment is that although He will not be physically present, they still have a relationship with Him, one that transcends the physical

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## MESSAGE

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. He is in them as they are in Him, and this is what He is explaining when He says, "Peace be with you." HE is the peace that is with them. There is no other true peace. All other peace is short-lived or a false sense of security.

Jesus and Jesus alone was their (and is our) peace. Yes, He is leaving physically, but this is a good thing because He is remaining IN them as is the Father and The Spirit. What a wonderful God we serve!

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# JOHN 21:1-14

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 21:1-14 (NIV)

1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. 6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. .

8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father; I come to you seeking transformation. May YOUR will to be done in my life today. Put aside my flesh, and be my life.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"...but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus."

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## MESSAGE

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We are saved by grace; it is not something we work for or have any power in, it is something we simply accept. Our growth in Jesus is also something that is of grace. Theologians use the word "sanctification," which is about being set apart. It is also a process, a process fueled by grace. Sanctification is our growing relationship with Jesus. We are maturing in the relationship and learning new things each day. We have seen this in the disciples and others in these last few chapters of John, and we see it in this passage. Jesus begins a discussion with the disciples from the shore while they are out on the sea fishing.

While they were only 100 yards from the shoreline they did not recognize who was talking to them. Maybe because they could not see that far, or maybe because they still were learning to hear the voice of Jesus. When did they recognize Jesus? When they saw something happen that was different from the normal. Mary had earlier recognized Jesus from His voice alone. She had grown very close in her relationship with Jesus, and He was standing right next to her talking. The disciples still had room to grow (as we all do) to clearly hear His voice from a distance.

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## MESSAGE

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God has different methods for each of us to draw close enough to hear His voice, some more dramatic than others. They had just finished fishing and caught nothing and now Jesus asks them to drop the nets again (granted, on the other side of the boat, but not moving the position of the boat to a new location), and the result? More fish than they could handle! They too were growing in their relationship with Jesus

They were also beginning to see what their life would be like now that the relationship with Jesus was going from physical to spiritual. They were out and about, doing their normal activities (fishing), and God was intervening in a supernatural way. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we will see Him take the normal and move us to His agenda, which is far from normal. Enjoy the transformation Jesus is taking you through each day.

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# JOHN 21:15-25

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## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

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### John 21:15-25 (NIV)

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!" 20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?")

21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" 24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. 25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

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## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

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Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you for allowing me to be in Him and Him to be in me.

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## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

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"Feed my lambs...Follow me!"

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## MESSAGE

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I believe the entire book of John can be summarized with the above two quotes. Jesus came to this earth to redeem His own. He came that we might have life and have it abundantly. The plan is simple: follow Him. The process is even simpler: allow Jesus Christ to be your life. Jesus has told us that we are in Him as He is in the Father. He has made this a wonderful and abundant life. He has given us His very life so we might live our life by Him and for Him. What happens when we follow Him and place our very being in Him?

We feed His sheep. He is alive and powerful inside our very being. He works with, in, and through us to allow the Father's will to be fully accomplished through us, feeding His lambs while we are on this earth. We tend to be so wrapped up in the physical, financial, and emotional that we have no room for the spiritual, which is real life anyway. We are IN Christ and He is in us. This is the message John received from Jesus. With this we can follow Jesus and allow Jesus to feed His lambs through us, His precious vessel.