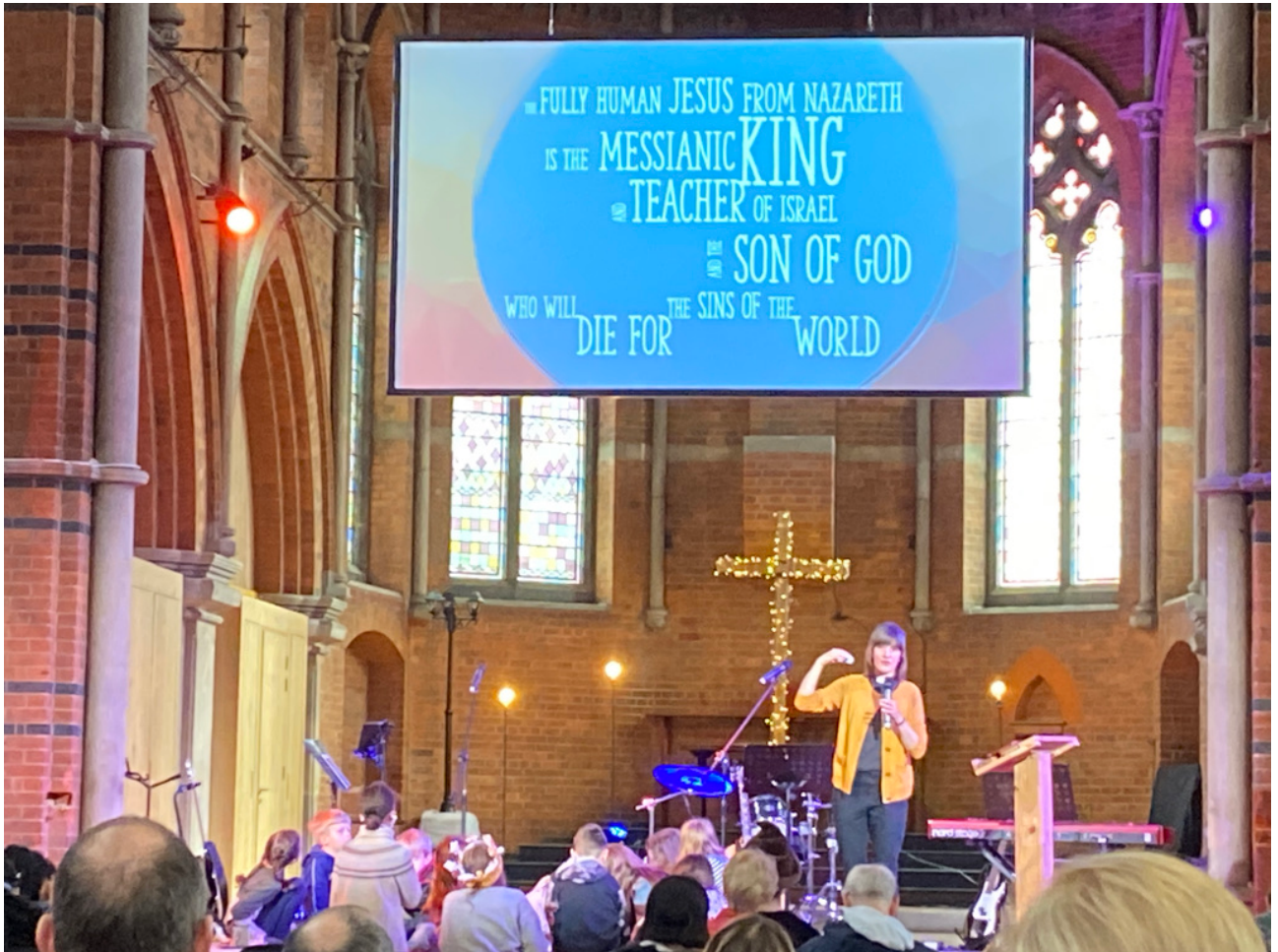


## STUDY NOTES FOR OUR SERIES IN JOHN



### Finding Jesus: John 1.35–51

**Welcome:** We begin our series in John with the testimony of how the first disciples came to be, the stories of how they first decided to follow Jesus. In your groups go round and briefly share the stories of when you each first decided to follow Jesus.

**Worship:** *Find some slow/soft worship music to play in the background alongside a time of reflection and prayer.*

We have just detailed our own moments when we first felt the call of Jesus to follow Him. Take some time now to remind yourself in reflection and prayer of that moment and thank God for both it and the ways in which he has confirmed that call since.

**Word:**

Read John 1.35-51

In verse 19 of chapter one John the Baptist is asked 'who are you?' – but he is quick to make it clear that they shouldn't be asking about him but about the one whose way he is preparing. Look at the following verses & take time to note what they say about Jesus – verses: 23, 29, 33-34, 38, 41, 45, 49, & 51.

Why is the question 'Who is Jesus?' the most important question we could ask?

Looking at verses 35-36 – how is this an example in action of the statement in John 3.30?

When John the Baptists disciples first encounter Jesus they are interested and wish to know more, but rather than ask John who had already told them truths of Jesus before so would likely have answers, they instead went to Jesus himself going to journey with him. What does this teach us about how we should pursue a deeper faith for ourselves?

In v.38 They refer to Jesus as 'Rabbi' (Teacher ), but later in v.41 Andrew when speaking of Jesus says "we have found the Messiah" ( Christ ). As they spent time with Jesus and pursued relationship with Him, their understanding of Him deepened and their appreciation for who He is grew. What are some of the ways your understanding of the character and nature of Jesus have changed throughout your relationship with Him?

In v.43 Jesus witnesses to Phillip for the first time and commissions Phillip to follow Him, and yet only 2 verses later Phillip himself is witnessing to Nathanael, with no significant time having passed. Is this a good model for evangelism, can we begin to witness without having complete understanding of Jesus?

Re-read v. 51 as well as the account of Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28:12. How, if at all, does the Genesis passage influence or affect how we should interpret this moment in John 1?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know

God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## **Finding Joy: John 2.1-12**

**Welcome:** What elements make for a good party?

**Worship:** Luke 15.7 expresses the joy that there is in heaven when one comes home – the angels are having a party. God is bringing us home and welcoming us into an eternal party. Read out loud together psalm 100 as a moment of praise to the God who invites us home and into his eternal celebration.

**Word:**

Read John 2.1-12

Going a bit deeper or in preparation beforehand you may find this interesting to read: <https://www.psephizo.com/biblical-studies/reading-and-preaching-from-john-2-a-conversation/>

If you listened to one of the Sunday sermons share what you reflected on from listening!

John is full of symbols – what is significant about the third day & why might this help us understand the passage (verse one)? And in what ways is this a fulfilment of John 1.51?

Does it surprise you or not that this was Jesus' first sign – why/why not? (Chapters 2-12 are sometimes called the Book of Signs – these are above all signs of who Jesus is and of the life Jesus gives).

What was going on in this passage for the following people: Jesus' mother, Jesus, the servants, the disciples, the master of the banquet and bridegroom?

Jesus saves the wedding family from the cultural shame of running out of wine. What is so difficult about shame and how does this reflect more broadly on Jesus' whole ministry (Romans 3.23)? How does this ministry characterise what we see of Jesus throughout the gospels?

The image of wine comes up in different ways in John – see 6.55 & 15.1 – what connections can be made?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## **Finding Answers: John 3.1-21**

**Welcome:** How has coming to Jesus made you brand new? OR How does knowing Jesus change you as you live your life here in West London?

**Worship:** Have a time for quiet worship, play this together:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rZ8k9m2hwo>

OR: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEenBiBh9IA>

**Word:**

Read John 3.1-21

This week here are a few different suggestions to mix up your sessions:

1. If most people listened to a sermon, why not have a go at the Swedish Bible Study Method in the picture below.
2. OR have a listen to this:  
[https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/conference\\_media/you-must-be-born-again/](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/conference_media/you-must-be-born-again/) and pause to discuss as you listen.
3. OR watch The Chosen series 1 episode 7.

If you choose either 2 or 3 consider providing some paper for people to draw or make notes of the things that God is highlighting to them.



**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## Finding Satisfaction: John 4.1-26

**Welcome:** What brings you satisfaction?

**Worship:** Take in turns to go around and give one-word prayers as the leader reads the following:  
 God I thank you for...

God please be close to...

God help me with...

God I pray for the country of...

**Word:**

Read John 4.1-26

What contrasts can you spot between the encounter of Nicodemus and that of the Samaritan woman? What do those contrasts say to us?

In making the simple request of asking for a drink Jesus does four significant things:

1. Breaks the social taboo against talking to women.
2. Ignores the 500-year-old hostility between Jews and Samaritans.
3. Jesus humbles himself to need her service.
4. He elevates her self-worth.

What surprises you most out of these four and why? Which do you find hardest to do in relationships?

One of the key aspects about evangelism is breaking barriers. What are some ways we can break barriers with those around us in order to have chances to share the gospel with them?

What is the likelihood others will approach you to start conversations where you can share the gospel with them?

What was the Samaritan woman's reaction? How did she perceive Jesus' request? What does this tell us about Jesus' intention?

Looking at verses 10-13 we see Jesus highlighting that he himself is a gift. For this woman she would have understood the Torah to be the gift of God to the people – but Jesus claims he is the gift – giving living water. How would you describe the gift of Jesus to your next door neighbour today?

What does this passage teach about worship?

Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=el7dzoNV3IY> – it is a fictional take on the encounter – where can it help us fill in some possible gaps that might have happened?

What will you take from this passage today?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## **I am the Bread – John 6.25–59**

**Welcome:** What is it about Jesus that makes him hard for people in bible times and people today to 'get'?

**Worship:** Go around and speak out different names and characteristics that we know of God. For example, 'redeemer', 'the great I AM', 'healer', 'miracle worker', 'king', 'lord' etc until you run out of ideas. Finish by thanking God for who he is and what he revealed of himself by sending Jesus.

**Word:**

Read John 6.25–59

What is the crowd's motives in seeking Jesus (v.26–27)?

What does v.28 suggest is the crowd's sense of their own ability to meet God's standards?

Compare Jesus' answer with what Paul says in Romans 3:28. Why is the identical teaching from Jesus & Paul so hard to get our heads round?

Would you rather be set some challenge to make you right with God [eg the 12 labours of the Chiswickite], or be told that you can only be made right through humble faith?

**I only need a sign and I'll believe...**

What sign had the crowd just experienced? (6:1–15) Was it enough for them? (v.30)...

Why do you think their minds went to the account of Moses in Exodus 16:11–36 after this miracle? What role did Moses play in Jewish life at this point? How does



the remainder of this passage contrast a) Jesus and Moses, b) the Israelites in the desert with those who trust in Jesus? (vv30-59). Nb: who does Jesus point attention to in v.32.

v.37b is a **litotes** '*a figure of speech in which something is affirmed by negating its contrary*'. eg 'A citizen of no mean city' = a citizen of a very important city... So it means: those who come to me I will certainly keep in preserve [Carsons]

How does the context of verses 38-40 back up that interpretation? If you have put your faith in Jesus what then will Jesus do for you and why?

Eternal Life:

Look through the passage for references to 'eternal life' [Gk: *zoe aionios* - *the life of the age to come / resurrection life*]. Find all the verses which say what we have to do to never hunger/thirst/gain eternal life.

On a scale of 0-10 how outrageous are these claims Jesus is making about himself?

**Witness:**

How could this passage influence our witness? Remember to pray for our contacts and friends.

## I am the Light – John 8.12-20

**Welcome:** *How much do each of these features affect your sense of identity (if at all)?*

*The chemicals, that we are made of*

*The family that raised us*

*The name that attracts us*

*The experiences that shape us*

*The vocation that defines us*

*The illness that constrains us*

*The legacy that lives beyond us*

**Worship:** Light a candle and print out some verses from the bible about light – hand them out and whilst some quiet worship music is playing take some time



to ponder quietly what it means that Jesus is the Light of the world. Finish with a prayer of thanks.

**Word:**

Look at Exodus 3:13-14: How does the LORD God (Yahweh) define himself?

Contrast this with Jesus' testimony about himself in John 8:49-59 (esp. v.58)

Read John 8:12-20

What springs to your mind when you read the word 'I am the light of the world'?

Did the talk on this passage change your perspective on that at all?

Where was Jesus when he said these things (v.20)? (cf 7:37). From the talk on Sunday:

What was the Feast going on in the temple commemorating? (cf Ex 13:20-22)

what would have been happening in the temple area at the climax of the Feast?

How does knowing a bit about the context of the passage help us understand what the original hearers would have heard Jesus to say?

How did that light help the Israelites in the desert (Ex 13)?

What claims is Jesus making about himself then in that context?

How might you need him to be a light in your life this week?

**Reflection:**

The light in Exodus 13 enables the Israelites to travel even in the night. How does life seem to you at the moment? Is your journey taking you into a spiritual 'night time' experience? Do you embrace that or fear that? Are you being called to keep travelling through that night, or rest up?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## **I am the Gate – John 10.1-10**

### **Welcome:**

What gives you security in life?

### **Worship**

### **Word**

Read John 10.1-10

What different roles are played by the shepherd in the city sheep pen (vv 1-6) and the isolated pen (v 7-10).

Think again from v.1/v.10 what dangers faced sheep at night-time? and compare with 1 Samuel 17:34-35?

Does this change your mental image of what a shepherd would be like? If you were casting a popular film star to play 'shepherd' who would you pick?

Both Moses and David were shepherds. Read Ps 78:70-72: Why do you think shepherding was good training for leadership for them?

### **Good?**

The word we translate as 'good' [*kalos*] suggests 'noble' rather merely 'a very nice man'. Contrast the good shepherd of v.11-13 with the shepherds talked about in Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Ezekiel 34:1-4. Who were those shepherds? Why do you think Jesus talks about himself as a shepherd? What claim does that mean he is making about a) himself, and b) about the leaders of his day?

How many ways can you find in which the shepherd is good (v.11-15)

### **Know my voice**

How do the sheep recognise the shepherd?

When have you sensed the shepherd talking to you?

Look at the table below. Which of these ways of hearing from God are currently in your experience and see if you can find 1 or 2 you'd particularly like to grow in to...

	Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly	I'd like to grow in this more
Memorised Scripture (verses I've learnt the Holy Spirit can bring back to mind)				
Familiarity with Scripture (I know the gist of what it says and where and the Holy Spirit can easily direct me to a passage)				
Regular study of Scripture (I've learnt how to use bible study tools to help me quickly find God's will and way)				
Devotional study of Scripture (i open it praying for God to speak to me)				
Listening to the word preached (sermons/ podcasts I listen to)				
Direct impressions in my mind when I am worshipping or praying ('pictures/words/verses')				
Prophetic words I have received from the Holy Spirit either directly or through someone else				
Words of wisdom/ knowledge a friend speaks to me inspired by God to draw on their experience/thinking and apply it to me.				
My conscience seems to be extra alert				
Circumstances seems to speak to me				
My dreams				

And finally...

What would it take to grow in these areas of hearing God? cf. Ps 25:14, Ps 66:16, Ps 119:9-16; 1 Cor 14: 1?

**One to take away** - How much of a price are you prepared to pay - in terms of time / study/ purity / seeking to be able to hear from God? What would it take to

make you think it was worth it? *Perhaps start by coming to Soaking Prayer one Sunday night :-)*

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## I am the Good Shepherd - John 10.11-33

For this session why not have a look again at the Swedish Bible study method and use it here:

SWEDISH BIBLE STUDY METHOD

 <b>WOW</b> WHAT THINGS STAND OUT TO YOU IN THIS PASSAGE?	 <b>QUESTION</b> WHAT THINGS DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?	 <b>SURPRISE</b> WHAT THINGS IN THE PASSAGE SURPRISE YOU?
 <b>YEP!</b> WHAT THINGS IN THE PASSAGE DO YOU AGREE WITH?	 <b>WHAT?!</b> WHAT THINGS IN THE PASSAGE DO YOU FIND HARD ?	 <b>DEJA VU</b> DOES THIS REMIND YOU OF OTHER SCRIPTURE?
 <b>THAT'S ME</b> CAN YOU NAME SOMETHING LIKE IT FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE?	 <b>ACTION</b> WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO AS A RESULT OF THIS PASSAGE?	 <b>SHARE</b> WHAT CAN YOU SHARE WITH SOMEONE ELSE FROM THIS PASSAGE?

• PRAY THAT GOD WOULD SPEAK TO YOU THROUGH HIS WORD.  
• READ A PASSAGE. SPEND 10-15 MINUTES ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS (BY YOURSELF). IF YOU ARE IN A GROUP, AFTER THAT TIME, DISCUSS WHAT YOU HAVE COME UP WITH.

## **I am the Resurrection – John 11.17-44**

**Welcome:** If Jesus were to ask you one question what do you imagine it would be?

**Worship:** In your group take it in turns to go around saying 'thank you for the resurrection because...'

### **Word:**

Read John 11: 1-15 What is the context of our passage today? cf. vv34-36.

Where are Lazarus' family located? cf v. 1, 8

Where is Jesus when he gets the news? see John 10:40 (cf 1:28)

Why is Jesus so out of the way? (cf 10:39, 11:16)

Look at the 'extra info'. How long does Jesus stay before travelling? (11:6). If Jesus had started to travel as soon as he knew Lazarus was sick how long would Lazarus have been dead when he got to him? (cf 11:39) Does this help explain why he waited?

Imagine being Mary, Martha or one of the disciples in those first days of this story. Does Jesus make any attempt to justify his waiting? Would you understand why Jesus waited?

How about in your life now? Can you trust Jesus when you're waiting for some action from him? How might this passage increase your confidence in God's sovereign hand over your life?

### **Resurrection and the Life**

What views about life after death are popular in our culture today?

What do you think Martha's worldview about life after death was?

When was the last day going to be? (cf 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 12:47-48]

What does Jesus say about himself v.25

Look at the 'one to think on box...'

Why do you think Jesus finishes v. 26 with a question?

How would you respond?

### **And finally...**

Can you think back on other stories in the Bible and in your life experience that would help you trust God when you are waiting for a response

### **One to take away**

If Jesus is the resurrection and the life need you fear death?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

*No study notes for Palm Sunday & Easter Day: We would love to encourage you to join in with some of the Holy Week Programme and to take the opportunity for some social time.*

### **I am the Way – John 14.1-14**

**Welcome:** Has anyone got any stories of getting lost and then experiencing great relief when they finally found their way?

**Worship:** Say night prayer together you can find the liturgy online on the Church of England website.

#### **Word:**

Read John 14.1-14

This passage is often chosen at funerals. Why? What comfort does it provide?

From listening to the talks on Sunday and reading the passage again what key messages stand out to you?

To say that there are many ways to God clashes with 14.6 – discuss.

How do we make sense of verses 12-14 today? What did you learn from the talks on Sunday?

The passage goes on to tell us how we can show our love (read on a little) – what does it say?

What will you take and apply from the passage today?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.

## I am the Vine – John 15.1-17

**Welcome:** How good are you at working from rest, rather than just resting from work?

**Worship:** Have a pause to rest in God's presence and you may want to use the lectio 365 app together and listen or to put on some quiet worship music or to read a psalm and leave some silent reflection time.

**Word: A) Review the Old Testament passages re: the vine (Ps 80, Isa 5, Jer 2)**

What did the Vine represent to Jewish people?

What do these passages say about the health of the vine?

What do you think Jesus is claiming to be in saying that he is now the 'true vine'?

### ***B) Context***

Where is Jesus as he gives this speech?

Look at verse 3. When did Jesus previously talk about them being clean (same Gk word as 'pruned')? This speech continues from Chp14-17 and all happens on that same night. How might this passage encourage them given what is about to happen?

### ***C) Abiding/remaining/obedience and bearing fruit***

What could abiding look like in the Christian life: i) on a daily basis, ii) on a weekly basis, iii) on an annual basis, iv) on a 7 year cycle.



What do you think he means by bearing fruit? Where can you see this fruit?  
Does this passage mean God's love is conditional on your fruitfulness?

#### *D) Pruning...*

Does it seem unfair to you that the gardener wants to prune those bits of your life that have been bearing fruit? What could you tell yourself when you seem to be going through a time of pruning?

**Witness:** Whilst we are in this series in John, we're going to suggest consistently praying for the same three people that we would love to see come to know God's love for themselves. Spend time as a group identify three and thinking about how you will remember to pray for them.