

the gospel of *john*

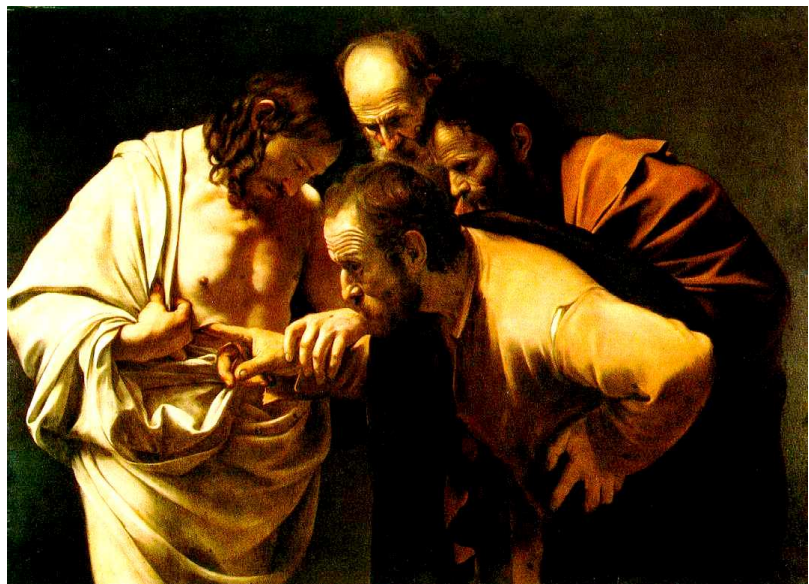
tool kit Part 3

The Gospel of John is a literary masterpiece. It is simultaneously simple and complex, straightforward and mysterious, beautiful and haunting. In it we find some of the most memorable events in the life of Jesus as well as some of his most demanding words. Because there are no other biblical books like it, the gospel of John has drawn the attention of simple Christians, people variously opposed to the Bible, and the greatest Biblical scholars in world history since it was penned in the first century. There is simply no other book like it.

In this preaching series, we will walk through the gospel at a pace that is intentionally balanced so as to allow a focus on individual words and sentences without losing sight of the larger themes and metanarrative, elements which this gospel is built upon. The following pages are part 2 of resources intended as a supplement to this preaching series. They can be used in a variety of ways, from deeper individual study or devotion, small group discussion, to family dinner-table discussion. Just like a chest of tools, pull out whatever part of this kit is useful for your specific need. You need not master all of its contents to put it to good use. Enjoy parts or the whole, just enjoy.

Tools in the Kit

- Discussion Questions Part 3



Discussion Questions Part 3

Just how is one supposed to utilize these discussion questions? Because this section of the tool kit is probably the most important, this question is central. The answer: these discussion pages can be used in several ways. They can also be used in any combination. Use one or all of them.

Following the above proposed preaching schedule we offer a separate page for each sermon passage. These questions allow for a diversity of applications and plenty of white space to write notes. Among other uses, each page is designed for at least three distinct applications: deeper individual or devotional study; small group discussion; family devotions and meal-time thought questions. NOTE WELL: Questions intended for family devotions or meal-times are underlined.

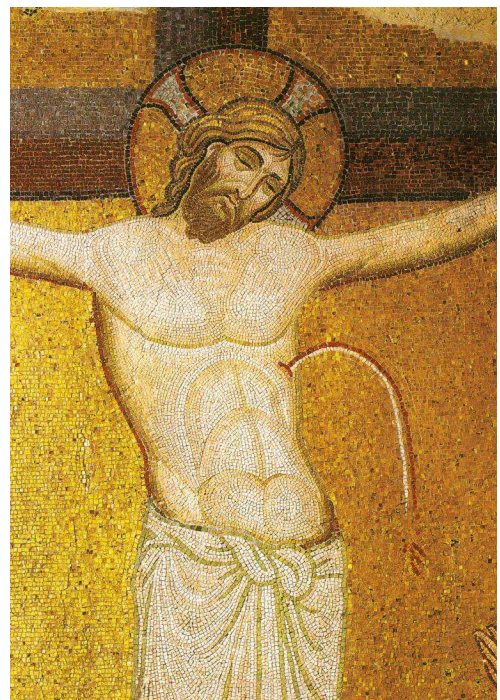
Devotional Use – Individuals may want to use these pages in their own Bible study times during the week. In this case, all of the questions can be mined in turn, writing in the white space or on the back of the facing page.

Small Group Use – Use of these discussion pages within a small group setting necessitates that you move quicker through the “Engage the Text” section to focus more on the application questions (at length). This approach will also allow for the useful devotional use above and keep the small group discussion moving to a good conclusion focused on life change. Since most small groups this Fall will not begin meeting until after Labor Day, our discussion pages includes a “Catch Up” page which will serve as the first for small groups after Labor Day. It will cover all of chapter one and will place these groups back in line with the weekly sermons.

Family Use – The underlined questions are so highlighted because they serve as open-ended questions that would easily fit into a family meal time or devotional discussions. It may go like this: “Thinking about the sermon and study last Sunday at church, what do you think about...?”

Challenge – These closing comments are intended as activities to focus on throughout the week. Ask about these activities next time you meet together.

For sake of length and preparation time, we have decided to release these questions in several parts. Pay attention to the website for the next installment of questions to appear under the Tool Kit icon. We recommend that you print each section of the tool kit and mark it up with your own comments.



John 7:1~52 – The Feast of Booths

Starter Questions

Have you ever been caught “between a rock and hard place”?
How? Why? What happened?

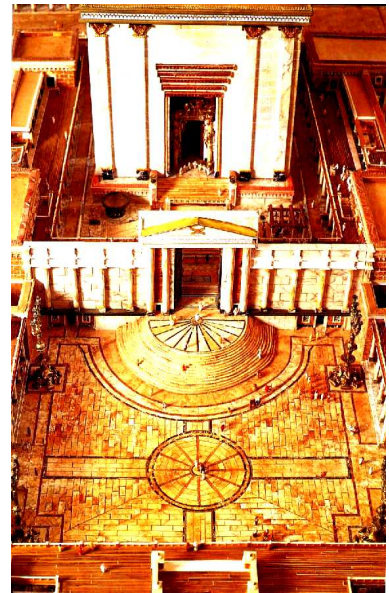
Can you remember a time when you felt judged? Explain.

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 7:1-52

“After these things” is a common way that John begins a new section. You may want to refresh your memory of chapters 1-6 so as to fill in “these things.”

Where does the text say that the Jews were seeking “to kill” Jesus? What is their reasoning? (See 5:18 and its connection to 7:23; and afterwards 7:19, 25; 8:37, 40; 11:53)



Review the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths in Leviticus 23:33-43 and Numbers 29.

What is the purpose of the feast?

What elements are involved?

How can one synthesize 7:3-9 (Jesus’ refusal to “go up”) and 7:10 (Jesus’ secret going up)?

Hint: What do Jesus’ brothers really want Him to do?

How do the following texts apply: Psalm 69:7-9; Matthew 10:21-22, 34-39; John 15:18-20.

Summarize Jesus’ statements in 7:16-18 in your own words.

What background color would be added to 7:37-39 if while Jesus said this, the chief priest was pouring out a pitcher of water before the massive crowd, commemorating Exodus 17:1-7?

Take time to connect 7:39 with 16:5-15.

Summarize the people’s problem in 7:40-44 in your own words.

Summarize the leadership’s problem in 7:45-52 in your own words.

Application Questions

Which group in this chapter do you most relate with: Jesus brothers, the crowd, the Jewish leadership, Jesus, or the Pharisees? Why and how?

How have you noticed a sense of meaninglessness in your life or work?

What are the gifts the Holy Spirit has given you? How are you serving with those gifts?

John 7:53~8:11 – Interruption: A Woman Caught in Adultery

Starter Questions

What person do you trust most on this earth? Why?

Do you trust the words of your Bible? Why or why not?

Engage the Text

Take the time to reread John 7:53-8:11.

How could a person be “caught” in the act of adultery by religious leadership?



Review Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 for the penalty of this according to Mosaic Law.

What is the test of 8:6?

What would happen if Jesus forgave her?

What would happen if Jesus stoned her? (Remember they are under Roman occupation)

Restate Jesus' response in 8:7 in your own words.

What is the possible significance of Jesus writing “with his finger” on the ground?

What is the physical surface He would have been writing on at this time?

Can you think of any other Biblical episode like this?

Why do you think the woman's accusers began to leave after Jesus' response? Why would the older ones leave first? Could Jesus' response in 8:7 have referenced the Law?

How would Deuteronomy 19:15-19 possibly apply to this “test” of the Pharisees?

How would it apply to Jesus' response to the woman in 8:10-11?

Application Questions

How are you personally challenged by this passage?

What would it be like if you took the place of the woman? Her secret sin became your secret sin. Her punishment would be your punishment. Jesus' advocacy and forgiveness was expressed towards you. How would you feel? What would you think of Jesus?

What does it mean to be condemned?

Have you ever felt condemned? How and why?

How do Jesus' words in 8:10-11 apply? (You may want to look up Romans 2:1; 8:3 and 8:34)

John 8:12~30 – Continued: The Feast of Booths

Starter Questions

Have you ever been scared of the dark? Why? How?

Are you a people-pleaser? Why or why not?

Engage the Text

Take the time to reread John 8:12-30.
As you read, note the similarities to 7:1-52.



What context does verse 12 pick up?

Since the Pharisees appear in v. 13, is it possible that this is within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles (see 8:20)? Why or why not?

How does the gospel of John develop the theme of “light”? (See John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 5:35; 9:5; 11:9-10; 12:35-46)

Why would the Pharisees discount Jesus’ testimony about himself? (See Deut 17:6; 19:15)

What is the difference between John 8:14 and John 5:31?

Restate Jesus’ statements in verses 23-24 in your own words.

What exactly does Jesus want the people “to believe” in 8:24? (See John 4:26; 6:20; 6:35; 8:12)
Why do you think the people responded the way they did in 8:25? (See 8:27)

Restate Jesus’ statements in verses 28-29 in your own words.

Why does John, the author of the gospel, record the response of “many” in 8:30? (See 2:11; 2:23; 4:39-41; 4:53; 7:31; 7:41; 20:30-31)

Application Questions

What does it mean to “walk in darkness”?

How are you potentially walking in darkness?

How does following Jesus change this?

How do the crowds and the leadership misunderstand Jesus in this text?

In your opinion, how does our culture misunderstand Jesus, His claims, or His offers?

In what ways are you potentially misunderstanding Jesus?

What are the dangers of being a people-pleaser?

How can you emulate Jesus in being a Father-pleaser (8:29)?

John 8:30~9:7 – Blasphemy and Miracle

Starter Questions

What teacher has most influenced your life? How?

What about your life reflects this teacher's influence?

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 8:30-9:7.

What does “disciple” mean?

How can an individual be considered a disciple?

What is the difference between “disciple” and “believer” in the gospel of John? (See 6:60-64)

To what kind of freedom is Jesus referring in 8:32?

How does He explain this idea in 8:34-36?

Trace the words “son” and “father” through 8:35-49. What do you notice?

How does this passage relate to Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 2:6-16?

Can you trace and summarize the heart of the dialogue in 8:31-51?

Restate it in your own words.

Why does Jesus' audience jump to the assumption that He is possessed with a demon?

How did Abraham “rejoice to see” Jesus' day? (8:56)

How did Abraham “see” it and rejoice?

What does the reaction in 8:59 tell you about Jesus' statement in 8:58?

What does Jesus' statement mean?

To what images and passages in the Old Testament does He refer?

What relevance does 9:1-7 have on the previous section of text? (It is directly related)

Application Questions

What practical steps are you taking in discipleship?

What is the next step in your spiritual growth into the likeness of Jesus?

Who will you invite to walk with you in this growth? Be specific.

Do you “demonize” people you don't agree with or understand? How can you reconcile?

Pray: Ask God to open your eyes this year. Ask Him to show you more of Himself.



John 9:8~38 – Reaction to the Healing of a Blind Man

Starter Questions

Have you ever witnessed a miracle of God? Explain.

Have you ever been involved in a controversy regarding your faith in Christ?

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 9:8-34.

Recap the story in your own words.

Who are the main characters?

What is the point of tension?

What is the outcome?

What is the ironic tragedy of 9:15-16?

How does Isaiah 35:4-6 apply?

From this text and others like it, what would be some of the activities of the Messiah prophesied from Old Testament times?

Track the progression of the man's statements from 9:9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 25, 27, 30-33, 36, 38.

How does his understanding of Jesus change from 9:9 to 9:38?

What would it mean to be “put out of the synagogue” at this time? (v.22)

Regarding this excommunication, can you see the beauty in 9:34-35?

What is ironic about Jesus' statement in v.37, “you have seen him...”

Application Questions

How does this man's transformation encourage you to share your salvation story with others?

What was keeping the Pharisees from “seeing”? Are you “blinded” by the same things?

What does this story communicate about truth, power and worship?
How do these elements encourage and challenge you?



John 9:39~10:21 – Jesus Responds

Starter Questions

Can you recall the most arrogant person you've ever met? (Be careful) Share.

Can you recall the most welcoming, hospitable and generous person you've ever met? Share.

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 9:35-10:21.

How does this section of text relate to the story of the healing at the beginning of chapter 9?

What is your initial understanding of 9:39?

What did Jesus previously say about “judgment”? (See 3:17 3:17-19; 5:22-30; 8:15-16; 12:31, 47-48; 16:7-11). Is this a contradiction?

The last part of 9:39 has both a literal and symbolic meaning. Literally Jesus is referring to the man born blind and the Pharisees. Symbolically He is referring to a spiritual aspect of His coming. Can you restate 9:39 in your own words?

How does 9:40 help to interpret 9:39?

The statement of 9:41 begins a dialogue that continues until 10:21. This opening statement is key. Jesus says “If you were ignorant of God’s revelation and of the Messiah, then you would not be guilty of rejecting Him. But since you claim to know, the guilt of your rejection of the Messiah remains.”

Notice three key elements in 10:1-5: the door (v.1), the identity of the shepherd (2), and the activities of the shepherd (3-4). This is an explanation of Jesus’ miracle.

In 10:7-18, Jesus expands on these same three elements. Can you track it?

What is most challenging about Jesus’ statements about shepherding?

What is most encouraging?

What do these passages say about God?

How do these passages challenge us as human “shepherds” of our families, spouses, ministries?

Application Questions

How might you struggle from chronic spiritual pride like the Pharisees did (9:39-41; 10:6)?

As a shepherd of your family, friends, job, ministry, etc., how do you match up with the Good Shepherd?

John 10:22~40 – The Feast of Dedication

Starter Questions

Can you recall a time when someone was extremely angry with you?

Share.

How did you respond then?

How would you respond differently if that situation occurred today?

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 10:22-40.

How is the setting different than the last specific mention in 7:2?

What were the Jews really looking for with their question in 10:24?

How does their response in 10:31-33 inform their intent?

Restate John 10:25-30 in your own words.

Do you think Jesus' words speak to the ability to "know" and be "assured" of our salvation?

What does it mean that "no one can snatch them out of My/the Father's hand"?

Take time to read Psalm 82.

How does Jesus reference this psalm in His response to the Jews claim of blasphemy?

What is the result of the dialogue?

Why do the Jews persist in rejection and unbelief?

What is the result for the wider population of "many"?

Application Questions

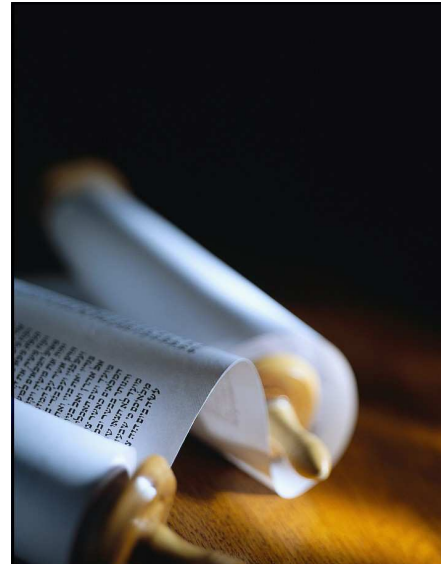
How do you handle conflict? Is your tendency to run, pout, blame, self-justify, scream, cry, power-up or to listen, reconcile, forgive and ask forgiveness?

What can we learn and apply from Jesus' response to criticism and accusation?

How important is it for others to understand and agree with you?

How do you handle when people disagree with you or fail to understand you?

What is one thing you can practically do to handle conflict in a more Christ-like way?



John 11:1-46 – The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus

Starter Questions

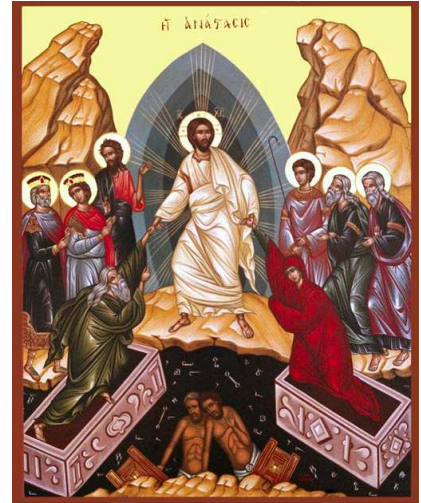
Have you lost someone very close to you?

What emotions come to the surface when you think of this person?

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 11:1-46.

(Note: the reference to Mary anointing Jesus' feet (11:2) actually comes before the event itself in John 12. This is a clue that the author was not concerned with accurate chronology when he arranged his gospel.)



Where else in John's gospel have we seen God's bigger picture design for suffering, sickness or ailment? This is the third time God uses disease, suffering and/or death for His purposes.

What does this aspect of the gospel tell you about God and suffering?

After the statement of 11:5, how difficult do you imagine it was to “stay two days” more? If Jesus was still in the region “beyond the Jordan” (10:40), and he waited two days before leaving, then it must have taken him at least two days to travel to Bethany. (The distance of the Jordan River from Bethany is about 20 miles)

Restate Jesus' words in 11:9-10 in your own words.

Can you make sense of Thomas' statement in 11:16? What did he mean?

The resurrection of the dead is a theology that existed in the Old Testament, but only at a very basic level. See Job 19:35; Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:17-19; 2 Samuel 12:23; Daniel 12:2. By the time of the New Testament, the theology was much more developed and assumed.

What is the significance of the interaction of 11:23-27?

Why does Jesus ask Martha “do you believe this”?

In 11:41-42, what is the purpose of this miracle? How does that connect with 20:30-31? What is the result for “many of the Jews”?

Application Questions

Do you have hope? Where does your hope lie? Where should it be? See Heb 6:17-19.

When trouble comes, sickness, financial issues, death, etc., is Jesus the first place you run?

John 11:47~12:11 – Leading up to Jesus' Last Days

Starter Questions

What is the most expensive gift you've given to someone?

How did it make you feel to give it away?

Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 11:47-12:11.

What is the chief concern of the chief priests and Pharisees?

John 11:49-52 are beautiful.

Why do you suppose God saw fit to prophesy through this man who was trying to kill Jesus?

The mention of Passover is the third and final one in the gospel (11:55).

Can you remember the others?

Reread Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23 and refresh your memory on the Passover feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Luke 10:38-42 may record another aspect of this same story in John 12.

What is the point of Luke's story? What is the point of John's?

Jesus' words in 12:7-8 are the interpretive key to Mary's act of anointing.

What was the significance of the anointing?

How does it connect to 11:53 and what would come in the next few days of Jesus' life?

The progress report of 12:9-11 is surprising in several ways. What surprises you?

Application Questions

In your opinion, what is most challenging about this passage?

What does it tell you about how God works?

What does it tell you about the corrupt nature of man?

What does it tell you about worship?

What does it tell you about Jesus?



John 12:12~50 – Jesus’ Last Trip to Jerusalem

Starter Questions

What does the symbol of the cross mean to you?

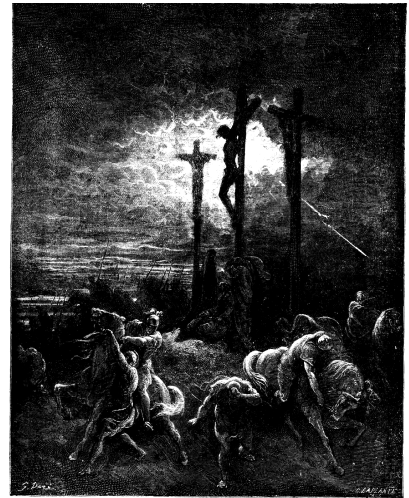
Engage the Text

Take time to reread John 12:12-50.

Notice that a “large crowd” greeted Jesus.

This has been referred to as the “triumphal entry” and you can read more in Matthew 21:4-9; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:35-38.

What strikes you about these accounts in light the proximity of beating and crucifixion?



The crowds here in John 12 refer to Psalm 118, which is one of the most referenced Psalms in the New Testament. Take some time to read it.

Compare 12:16 to John 2:22. What does this tell you about the disciples and this gospel?

Compare the order of people in 12:20-22 to those in 2:40-44. What do you notice?

What does Jesus say about the “hour” in 12:23? See also 13:1.

What has Jesus and the author of the gospel said about the “hour” up until this point? See John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20.

Warren Wiersbe says about 12:27, “In the hour of suffering and surrender, there are only two prayers we can pray, either 'Father, save me!' or 'Father, glorify Thy name!'”

What do you think about this statement?

What does verse 27 say about God’s will? What does it say about Jesus’ obedience?

John 12:30-31 is very significant. Jesus does not say that “all men” without exception will be drawn to Him and saved. He does say that “all” who will be saved will be saved through Him. For more on the “ruler” see John 14:30; 16:11; Matt 4:8-9; Lk 4:6-7; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12.

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and Isaiah 6:1-13 and meditate on their relevance in 12:37-43.

What does John 12:44-50 say about belief? About discipleship? About judgment?

Application Questions

What does it mean to walk in the Light? How would you practically do this?

How are you walking away from sin in your life? What practical steps can you take?

Part 4 of the John Tool Kit will cover John 13-17, often referred to as the Upper-Room Discourse.

It will be uploaded soon.