

GOSPEL of John

(Chapters 11-15)

Study Booklet

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Faith Community *Church*

Worshiping the Triune God **IN**
community, **AS** a community,
FOR the community.

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I Am the Resurrection and the Life

John 11:1-44

Quote

“Now the whole human race is plunged in death; and, therefore, no man will be a partaker of life until he is risen from the dead. Thus Christ shows that he is the commencement of life, and he afterwards adds, that the continuance of life is also a work of his grace...Thus it is that death everywhere holds dominion, for the death of the soul is nothing else than its being estranged and turned aside from God.1 Accordingly, they who believe in Christ, though they were formerly dead, begin to live, because faith is a spiritual resurrection of the soul, and—so to speak—animates the soul itself that it may live to God...This is truly a remarkable commendation of faith, that it conveys to us the life of Christ, and thus frees us from death.” (John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to John, 435-436)

More Scripture

Matthew 9:18–26

Matthew 27:45–56

Mark 5:35–43

Luke 7:11–17

Luke 24:1–12

Acts 2:22–36

Acts 26:19–23

Romans 1:1–7

Romans 6:1–11

Romans 8:10–11

1 Corinthians 6:14

1 Corinthians 15:3–8

1 Corinthians 15:20–22

2 Corinthians 4:13–18

Ephesians 1:15–23

Philippians 3:7–11

Colossians 2:11–15

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

1 Peter 1:3–9

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you confronted the reality of death and discovered hope beyond it OR when you witnessed the transformative power of love and hope, even in the midst of darkness.
- 2) What is the significance of the setting in Bethany – a town known for its proximity to Jerusalem? How does this geographical context add to the story?
- 3) Why does Jesus delay going to Bethany when news of Lazarus' illness reaches him? What lessons can be learned from this delay?
- 4) Some present questioned why Jesus didn't arrive sooner to prevent Lazarus' death. How does this reaction reflect common doubts about God's timing and intervention?
- 5) When Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25-26), how does this statement challenge Martha's understanding of resurrection and death? How does this apply to us?
- 6) In what ways can the events in John 11:1-44 inspire faith and hope in everyday life, even when faced with challenges and loss?

Jesus Withdraws

John 11:45-54

Quote

“The redemptive significance of Jesus’ death is universal. He is the Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep wherever they may come from and will therefore “draw all people” to himself and in his elevation on the cross give them the great gathering point and center of their unity. The picture here is no longer that of the Gentiles streaming toward Mount Zion to be incorporated into the people of God. It is, rather, of a new unity of believers from Israel and from the nations and, accordingly, of the new people of God. Belonging to the flock therefore gains new meaning, that of being known by and knowing the good Shepherd or, as here, that of being “God’s children.” This designation, which in passages like Is. 43:5 refers to Israel’s election out of the nations, is here transposed to those known and called by God out of all nations.” (Herman N. Ridderbos, The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary, 410)

More Scripture

Isaiah 49:5–6

Isaiah 53:1–3

Matthew 15:21

Matthew 26:1–5

Matthew 27:15–23

Mark 3:7–12

Mark 6:30–33

Mark 11:15–19

Mark 14:53–65

Mark 15:6–15

Luke 4:42–44

Luke 5:15–16

Luke 9:10–11

John 6:1–15

John 7:1–9

Acts 4:1–4

Acts 4:13–22

Acts 5:27–33

Acts 7:54–60

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you faced overwhelming opposition, yet persevered or had to remove yourself from the situation.
- 2) How is this passage connected to the previous story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead?
- 3) How does the statement "the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" reveal their priorities?
- 4) How does Caiaphas' response differ from the others, and what might motivate his perspective? What does his prophecy about Jesus "dying for the nation" foreshadow?
- 5) How does this passage contribute to the developing conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities?
- 6) Compare and contrast John 11:50 with passages like Isaiah 43:5 or 60:8. How does John expand the traditional understanding of God's children?
- 7) What might be the significance of Jesus withdrawing to Ephraim with his disciples?

Jesus' Anointing at Bethany

John 11:55-12:8

Quote

“One denarius was the daily wage given to a common day-laborer; three hundred denarii was therefore the equivalent of a year’s wages for a fully employed laborer (no money would be earned on Sabbaths and other holy days). The sum was enormous. Either Mary and her family were very wealthy, or perhaps this was a family heirloom that had been passed down to her. Either way, Judas displays a certain utilitarianism that pits pragmatic compassion, concern for the poor, against extravagant, unqualified devotion. If self-righteous piety sometimes snuffs out genuine compassion, it must also be admitted, with shame, that social activism, even that which meets real needs, sometimes masks a spirit that knows nothing of worship and adoration.” (D. A. Carson, The Gospel according to John, 429)

More Scripture

Exodus 12:1–14

Exodus 12:21–28

2 Chronicles 30:1–27

2 Chronicles 35:1–19

Psalms 22:1–31

Psalms 45:6–9

Isaiah 53:1–12

Isaiah 61:1–4

John 5:30–47

Matthew 26:6–25

Mark 11:1–11

Luke 7:36–50

John 13:1–30

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you realized you had misunderstood something significant, and how that changed your way of thinking.
- 2) What is the significance of the timing of this passage, just before the Passover? How does it contribute to the tension and anticipation surrounding Jesus?
- 3) How does Mary's act of anointing Jesus represent an expression of pure devotion and love, regardless of practical considerations? How does this act foreshadow Jesus' upcoming death and burial?
- 4) Why did Judas object to Mary's act, claiming it was a waste (John 12:4-5)? What does his perspective reveal about his priorities and motivations?
- 5) How does Jesus defend Mary's anointing in John 12:7? What does he teach about the value of her act and its significance for his upcoming sacrifice?
- 6) In your own life, have you encountered situations where practical concerns and acts of faith seemingly clashed? How did you approach those situations, and what did you learn from them?

Blessed is the King of Israel!

John 12:9-19

Quote

“The palm was the emblem of victory and peace among the ancients; but they were wont to employ branches of palm-trees, when they bestowed kingly power on any one, or when they humbly supplicated the favor of a conqueror. But those persons appear to have taken into their hands branches of palm-trees, as a token of gladness and rejoicing at receiving a new king...for this is also a joyful prayer for the happy and prosperous success of that kingdom, on which the restoration and prosperity of the Church of God depended...He will be a faithful guardian of his kingdom, to defend it by his invincible power and protection. True, indeed, though we remain drowsy and inactive,¹ the majesty of his kingdom will be firm and sure; but when—as is frequently the case—it is less prosperous than it ought to be, or rather falls into decay, as we perceive it to be, at the present day, fearfully scattered and wasted, this unquestionably arises through our fault. ” (John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to John, 18-20)

More Scripture

Psalms 118:21–29

Zechariah 9:9–17

Zechariah 14:1–5

Matthew 21:1–17

Matthew 24:29–31

Mark 11:1–11

Luke 19:28–40

Acts 1:6–11

Philippians 2:1–11

Revelation 1:4–7

Revelation 7:9–12

Revelation 19:1–9

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you witnessed someone lead with selfless courage. How did this act of courage impact you personally?
- 2) Briefly summarize the events leading up to John 12:9-19. What has Jesus done that draws a crowd?
- 3) What was the significance of Jerusalem and the Passover festival in Jewish culture at that time?
- 4) Describe the actions of the crowd as they welcome Jesus. What symbols do they use (palm branches, donkey, etc)? What is the meaning of the phrase "Hosanna"? How does it connect to Jewish messianic expectations?
- 5) Consider the contrast between the joyful celebration of the crowd and the growing opposition from religious leaders. How does this foreshadow the duality of Jesus' messianic role (Savior and Sacrifice)? Why do the religious leaders consider him a threat?
- 6) How does the passage challenge us to examine our own motivations for following Jesus? How does this passage change the way we worship Jesus?

The Unexpected Light of Glory

John 12:20-36

Quote

“Accordingly, vs. 26 describes discipleship to Jesus as servanthood: one is taken up into the work that Jesus must accomplish, work in which he is Lord and Master and disciples are servants, entirely in keeping with the position disciples of the rabbis had in relation to their teachers. The emphasis, however, does not lie so much on this servanthood as on the implied obligation: “he must follow me,” by itself a general reference to the pupil’s permanent presence in the company of a certain rabbi... “he must follow me” gain a highly charged meaning, implying both the risk entailed in being in the company of this “Lord” and the promise of great reward. For it is in that discipleship that they will experience the paradoxical truth of losing one’s life if one loves it and of keeping it forever if one hates it.” (Herman N. Ridderbos, The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary, 433)

More Scripture

Isaiah 53:1–12

Jeremiah 29:10–14

Micah 6:6–8

Matthew 16:24–28

Matthew 20:20–28

Matthew 23:1–12

Mark 8:34–38

Mark 10:35–45

Luke 9:23–27

John 13:1–17

John 15:12–13

Romans 12:3–21

Galatians 5:13–15

Ephesians 4:1–7

Philippians 2:1–11

James 1:19–27

1 Peter 4:1–11

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you had to choose between comfort and growth, and what you learned from it.
- 2) What is the symbolism of a grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying? How does this parable connect to Jesus' understanding of his own mission and sacrifice?
- 3) How does the concept of a disciple in the Jewish context shape our understanding of "following" Jesus here? What are the implications of Jesus requiring his followers to "serve him" and "follow him"?
- 4) Discuss this statement "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." What does it mean to "love" or "hate" your life in this context?
- 5) What challenges or insights do you find in Jesus' teachings about self-denial and seeking eternal life? How do we balance the concepts of servanthood, obedience, risk, and reward in our own faith journeys?

Out of the Darkness by Faith

John 12:37-50

Quote

“In order to render his disciples more bold and persevering, he proceeds still farther in maintaining the certainty of faith. And, first, he testifies that he came into the world to be a light, by which men might be delivered from darkness and errors; and, at the same time, he points out the means of obtaining so great a benefit, when he says, that whosoever believeth in me may not remain in darkness. Besides, he accuses of ingratitude all who, after having been taught by the Gospel, do not separate themselves from unbelievers; for the higher the excellence of this benefit, of being called from darkness to light, the less excusable are they who, through their indolence or carelessness, quench the light that had been kindled in them.” (John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to John, 49)

More Scripture

Psalms 81:10–13

Isaiah 6:8–13

Isaiah 29:9–10

Jeremiah 5:18–25

Ezekiel 2:3–8

Ezekiel 12:1–2

Zechariah 7:8–14

Matthew 13:10–17

Mark 4:10–13

Luke 8:9–10

John 3:16–21

Acts 28:23–31

Romans 10:14–21

Romans 11:1–10

2 Corinthians 3:12–18

2 Corinthians 4:1–6

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you experienced deep doubt, questioning, or darkness but ultimately saw Christ's light break in through faith.
- 2) What connection does Jesus draw between his own message and Isaiah's prophecy?
- 3) What does it mean for Jesus to be the "light" in verse 46? How does this metaphor impact the way we understand his teachings and their role in overcoming darkness?
- 4) How does Jesus contrast his role as a judge with his mission of salvation in verses 47-48? What implications does this distinction have for our understanding of God's justice and mercy?
- 5) In verses 35-36, Jesus emphasizes the urgency of believing in him before the "light" departs. What might be the consequences of remaining in darkness?
- 6) What are the potential dangers of "quenching the light" that has been kindled within us? How can we cultivate faith and resilience in the face of such challenges?

He Loved Them to the End

John 13:1

Quote

“If God loves the world (3:16), it is in order to draw men and women out of it. Those so drawn out constitute a new entity, set over against the world: the world loves its ‘own’, Jesus loves his ‘own’ (15:19). The object of the love of God in Christ, in these chapters, is therefore not the lost world, but the newly forming people of God, the disciples of the Messiah, the nascent church, the community of the elect. Jesus had loved his own all along; he now showed them the full extent of his love...the way Jesus displays his unflagging love for his own is in the cross immediately ahead, and in the act of self-abasing love, the foot-washing, that anticipates the cross. ‘Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends’ (15:13).” (D. A. Carson, The Gospel according to John, 461)

More Scripture

Esther 4:13–17

Psalms 31:9–16

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

Isaiah 54:4–10

Jeremiah 31:2–6

Mark 1:14–15

John 7:1–9

John 15:1–17

John 17:20–26

Acts 1:6–8

Romans 5:1–11

Romans 8:31–39

Galatians 4:4–5

Ephesians 5:15–21

2 Timothy 4:6–8

1 Peter 1:10–12

Revelation 1:1–3

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when someone showed you love in a way that challenged your expectations and redefined your understanding.
- 2) What is the historical and cultural context surrounding the Passover Feast mentioned in the verse? What emotions or atmosphere might Jesus and his disciples be feeling just before the Passover?
- 3) How does Jesus' statement "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" define his love for his disciples? What does it mean to love "to the end" in the context of Jesus' impending sacrifice?
- 4) In John 3:16, Jesus famously declares "God so loved the world." However, in John 13:1, we see "he [Jesus] loved his own who were in the world." Analyze how these statements co-exist and consider the nature of God's love in each context.
- 5) How does this passage challenge our own understanding of love and what it means to love fully? What challenges do we face in practicing and demonstrating love, similar to Jesus' love for his disciples?

I Have Loved You...Love One Another

John 13:2-38

Quote

“He has washed their feet to portray to them the nature of the fellowship that not only unites them with him but must also be the permanent measure and source of their mutual relations when he is gone from them...For in being bound to him they are also bound to each other and therefore can only appeal to him as master and teacher if they are prepared to do as he, at his farewell from the world, has done for them...“As I have done for you” does not mean that in their contacts with each other the disciples can or should equal Jesus’ love for them. It directs them, rather, to Jesus’ self-sacrificial love for them as the source and driving force for their love for each other—“just as” his love for them has its source and ground in the Father’s love for him (15:9).” (Herman N. Ridderbos, The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary, 463)

More Scripture

Micah 6:6–8

Matthew 20:20–28

Matthew 23:1–12

Mark 10:35–45

John 15:1–17

Romans 12:1–21

Romans 13:8–14

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

Galatians 5:13–15

Ephesians 5:1–13

Philippians 2:1–11

James 4:6–12

1 Peter 4:7–11

1 John 3:16–18

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you had to swallow your pride and accept help or service from someone. What did you learn about humility and interdependence?
- 2) Why does Jesus choose to wash the disciples' feet, an act traditionally reserved for slaves?
- 3) How does Jesus' act of foot washing foreshadow his sacrifice on the cross, both in its humility and demonstration of self-sacrificial love? How does the promise of the Holy Spirit connect to the theme of mutual love and service within the fellowship?
- 4) How does the knowledge that "the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him" influence the reading of Jesus' actions?
- 5) How can the principles of fellowship and service displayed in Jesus' foot washing be applied to relationships within your own community or church? What personal struggles or biases might you need to overcome to embody the kind of love Jesus calls for in this passage?

I AM the Way

John 14:1-31

Quote

“The statement amounts to this, that whoever obtains Christ is in want of nothing; and, therefore, that whoever is not satisfied with Christ alone, strives after something beyond absolute perfection. He lays down three degrees, as if he had said, that he is the beginning, and the middle, and the end; and hence it follows that we ought to begin with him, to continue in him, and to end in him...The whole may be summed up thus: “If any man turn aside from Christ, he will do nothing but go astray; if any man do not rest on him, he will feed elsewhere on nothing but wind and vanity; if any man, not satisfied with him alone, wishes to go farther, he will find death instead of life.”” (John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel according to John, 84-85)

More Scripture

Deuteronomy 31:6–8

Psalms 23:1–6

Psalms 25:1–5

Psalms 37:1–7

Proverbs 3:1–8

Isaiah 26:3–4

Isaiah 30:19–21

Isaiah 41:8–13

Isaiah 43:1–7

Matthew 6:25–34

Matthew 16:24–25

Luke 14:25–33

John 8:12

John 10:27–30

John 16:31–33

Romans 8:31–39

Philippians 4:4–7

1 Peter 2:21–25

Revelation 14:1–5

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you chased something beyond Christ, only to discover its emptiness and return to the abundance of His love.
- 2) What is the significance of Jesus repeating "I am" throughout the passage? What does it reveal about his identity and role?
- 3) Jesus declares himself as "the way, the truth, and the life." How does this show us that we have everything in him? What implications does it have for seeking fulfillment elsewhere?
- 4) Jesus offers his peace, contrasting it with the world's peace. What does this suggest about the restlessness and yearning in humans, and how does Christ address it? How does Jesus define "peace"? How is this different from worldly peace?
- 5) What does it mean to love Jesus and keep his commandments? How do these two things go hand in hand?
- 6) What anxieties or fears do you relate to in the disciples' responses? How does Jesus' message offer comfort and assurance?

Fruitful Suffering

John 15:1-8

Quote

“What makes Jesus the true vine is that, as the one sent by God, he gathers a community, a fellowship of life, in which his word exerts a redeeming, life-creating, continually purifying, and dividing effect...Jesus is urging his disciples to remain faithful to him after his departure...the image of the vine as the only possibility of continuing to bear fruit. Therefore, “remaining in him” is not a state of rest, an adherence to what the disciples have already received in Jesus solely to conserve it, but an adherence to him as the vital source of help and strength, in order to bear much fruit...For without this reciprocal remaining in him and him in them they will fall back on themselves, either in total unfruitfulness or lapsing into the wild growth that is no longer shaped by his word, into activism or idealism that is neither derived from nor directed to him.” (Herman N. Ridderbos, The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary, 516-517)

More Scripture

Psalms 63:1–8

Psalms 73:23–28

Psalms 119:65–72

Psalms 145:14–20

Isaiah 26:3–4

Isaiah 43:1–7

Isaiah 53:1–12

Matthew 11:25–30

John 16:31–33

Romans 5:3–5

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

Philippians 3:7–11

Hebrews 5:7–8

James 1:2–4

1 Peter 1:3–9

Revelation 2:8–11

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life where you faced a significant challenge and initially tried to tackle it alone (in your own strength).
- 2) Jesus says "I am the true vine." How does this statement build on the Old Testament imagery of God as a vineyard or gardener? What is unique about Jesus being the "true" vine?
- 3) What is the purpose of "pruning" the branches? How does this connect to the concept of bearing fruit? Is pruning ever painful or uncomfortable?
- 4) What motivates us to bear fruit, according to the passage? Is it solely out of duty, or is there something more profound driving our desire to serve and live well?
- 5) Reflecting on Ridderbos' statement, how can your understanding of "abiding in Christ" move beyond passive receiving to active dependence and collaboration with him?
- 6) Identify an area in your life where you could practice leaning on Christ for strength and guidance instead of relying on your own resources.

I Have Loved You

John 15:9-17

Quote

“If we are the recipients of Jesus’ love in a way analogous to his own reception of the Father’s love, we must remain in Jesus’ love by exactly the same means by which he has always remained in his Father’s love: obedience, that total obedience which finds Jesus testifying, ‘The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him’. The obedience of Jesus is one of the central Christological realities articulated by this Gospel...here it serves as the supreme paradigm for the obedience we owe. If obedience is the condition of continuously remaining in Jesus’ love, it is no less important to remember that in 14:15, 21 our love for Jesus is the wellspring of our obedience to him, as our obedience is the demonstration of the reality of that love...Jesus insists that his own obedience to the Father is the ground of his joy; and he promises that those who obey him will share the same joy.” (D. A. Carson, The Gospel according to John, 520-521)

More Scripture

1 Chronicles 16:28–34

Isaiah 54:4–10

Jeremiah 31:1–3

John 3:16–21

Romans 5:1–11

Romans 8:31–39

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

Ephesians 2:1–10

1 Peter 1:3–9

1 Peter 4:7–11

1 John 3:16–18

1 John 4:7–21

2 John 5–6

Questions

- 1) Tell a story from your life when you realized that true, abiding joy comes not from following our own desires, but from aligning ourselves with God's will.
- 2) How does verse 9 compare God's love for Jesus with his love for us? What does it mean to "remain" in Jesus' love?
- 3) Jesus connects abiding in his love with keeping his commandments. How does obedience to God's commands relate to experiencing his love and joy?
- 4) Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." What does it mean to love like this in our daily lives, without literally sacrificing our lives?
- 5) Jesus links his own obedience to the Father with his abiding joy. How might surrendering to God's will, even when challenging, ultimately lead to a deeper joy in our lives?
- 6) Think of a current area of resistance in your life where surrendering to God feels difficult. How can you reframe it as an opportunity to experience the joy Jesus promises to those who obey him?