

# JOHN Bible Reading Schedule

## 4 Weeks

### WEEK 1

John wrote his Gospel to inspire faith. One of his most prominent words is “believe.” John knew Jesus intimately, and John’s Gospel provides an intimate portrait of the Lord. John referred to himself as “the disciple Jesus loved.” His Gospel has become the “beloved Gospel” of the church. Here we meet Nicodemus, Lazarus, the Samaritan woman at the well, and doubting Thomas. John records for us Jesus’ most memorable sayings, his longest sermons, and his most profound miracles. He clearly connects Jesus to the Great “I Am!” We begin with the Word made flesh:

#### Day 1 – John 1

This chapter highlights many things that get my attention. I am drawn to John the Baptist and his proclamation that Jesus is the Lamb of God. That is a very significant description of our Lord as we think of Passover and the lamb that is sacrificed. Plus, John’s ministry that Isaiah prophesied from 700 years ago, presents one crying in the wilderness, “make clear the way of the Lord.” Jesus’ meeting of his first disciples is an exciting part of the story as I think of myself as a disciple of Jesus, of course. But nothing compares to the declaration that “the Word became flesh (human)…” (Verse 14) John raises the curtain on his Gospel with a stunning description of Jesus Christ as “the Word.” Both Greek and Jewish listeners in the first century would immediately recognize the profound meaning of this title. Greeks would have thought of the original forces that sustain the universe. Jewish minds would have thought back to God creating the world through his word. The connection of God and his Word personified points to the divinity of Christ. Jesus shares the same essence as God; the Son existed before time, and he was the agent of all creation. The “logos” of God is nothing less than the revelation of God to mankind. It is truly an inspiring introduction to the life of Jesus who is God in the flesh. What phrase or verse especially inspires you as John begins with Christ, the Eternal Word? How has Jesus called you to be his disciple (Verses 35-51)?

#### DAY 2 – John 2

As we read John 1-11 in the next two weeks, we will read about seven miracles of Jesus. These miracles were meant to be a revelation of Christ’s identity. These miracles coupled with the “I AM” statements of identity mark the uniqueness of John’s Gospel. For example, Jesus feeds the 5000 in John 6 and then declares that he is the Bread of Life. So, I think something like that is happening at the wedding in Cana. It is an interesting story. Jesus was glad to celebrate with others at a wedding. A wedding banquet was a primary celebration in Jewish village life. To run out of wine would be embarrassing for the host family but not a crucial issue to Jesus. But as I read this familiar story again, I see Jesus turning the attention heavenward. No one may perceive this in the moment but the implications would be understood later. The idea of Jesus being new wine (Luke 5:37f) is highlighted in the other Gospels as a description of the

life Jesus offers. In John 4 & 7 Jesus announces that living water is available through believing in him. I connect new wine and the living water of the Spirit to this miracle of water to wine. The meaning of Jesus changing water into wine unveils for the first time his amazing identity. "This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory." (Verse 11) However hidden it may have seemed to the wedding attendees, it can be clear to us that Jesus changes lives and his miraculous work is about changing us from the inside out. Plus, his wine is the best! How do you respond to this story of our Lord's first miracle? Since Tyler recently referred to the cleansing of the temple, does that story have anything to say to you? Why or why not? These two episodes are so compelling to me. How does this chapter stir your heart?

#### DAY 3 – John 3

Obviously, the most familiar verse in the Bible is found in this chapter (3:16). Also, the encounter with Nicodemus is so significant. He asks questions of Jesus that everyone might ask. The importance of being "born again" jumps off the page. No doubt Jesus is priming the pump for the new covenant promise of the Spirit. He highlights the Spirit in verse 8 and likens him to the wind. The word for Spirit also can mean wind and breath. John says more about the Spirit than any other Gospel writer. But the word he introduces in this chapter with numerous references (too many to count) is "believe." This word occupies a central place in John's Gospel. It is often presented as a verb underscoring that faith is not static but full of action and connection. Believing in Jesus is the trait of all true believers. The verb translated believe is often followed by the Greek preposition "eis" (into). No parallel exists for this in ancient Greek usage. This emphasizes one's personal investment and connection with the person of Jesus Christ. Faith can be thought of as stepping into a relationship with Jesus. But John 1:12 says it even more clearly, "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name..." Receive and believe are one and the same in this verse. Rather than stepping into, it is better to think of it as being offered a gift and accepting it. In this case, it is the presence of Christ by the Spirit that one receives by faith. The Greek word for believe is also tied to faith and trust. I hope that makes sense to you because you are aligning yourself with who Jesus is and embracing the love of Christ and choosing to obey him which is a relationship of faith and trust. How does John highlight the verb believe in this chapter, in your opinion? Are you truly believing or just acknowledging Jesus? There is much at stake, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them." (Verse 36, NIV) How might this chapter stir you to action?

#### DAY 4 – John 4

This is a story of inspiration and spiritual conversion. The example of Jesus lives on as we endeavor to follow in his footsteps by meeting people and sharing Christ. The uniqueness of this encounter is what makes it so special. Jesus should not be talking to a woman or a Samaritan or doing it alone. Why wouldn't at least one disciple stay with him? But a good thing they didn't. Jesus had the freedom to be himself and talk to this broken woman freely. It would change her life forever. Jesus progresses in the conversation so naturally. It's about water; it's about kindness; it's about everyday type concerns like the depth of a well; it's about opening the door to what matters most: "But those who drink the water I give will never thirst again." (Verse 14) Living water is such an intriguing concept. Is water by itself alive? Not really. But water to Israel was an especially important commodity. The scarcity of water and the

questionable quality of water would be a daily concern in Jewish culture. Springs and rivers were few with the use of cisterns to collect water in the rainy season of winter. “Dead water” referred to standing and stored water. But “living water” was moving water; such water was precious because it was fresh and also rare. The distinction between “dead” and “living” water explains why the woman of Samaria was so perplexed when Jesus offered her living water (4:12). Samaria had no river. If Jacob had to dig a well there, how could Jesus offer superior water? Jesus demonstrates Spirit-led boldness but he didn’t shove anything down her throat, so to speak. This story stands as one of the clearest illustrations of relational evangelism in the Bible. If you desire to follow Jesus’ example from this chapter, what might it look like in your life?

#### DAY 5 – John 5

To me, the second half of this chapter represents John’s first recorded sermon from our Lord. We have read about two miracles and now some profound teaching from Jesus. Again, I see Jesus ministering with a “show & tell” approach. In the Gospels, Jesus establishes himself by showing the presence of God in his life. After engaging in service and ministering through miracles, Jesus speaks out about the truth of God. It is my heart’s desire to follow the Lord’s example by loving people with my actions leading to an opportunity to share words of hope and truth found in Jesus Christ. The verse that gets my attention is 19: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.” There is a discipleship series entitled, “Experiencing God” by Henry Blackaby. That study made a profound impact on my life with John 5:19 being one of the theme verses in the series. The Father is always at work. The Father is always doing the next best/right thing. When I sense the work of God around me, I am called to step into it by faith. The Holy Spirit will help us discern what God is doing. In this sermon, Jesus shares the Gospel, affirms his identity, challenges the perspective of those listening, and leaves the crowd hanging because of their disbelief. Too often, I want responses and results. But Jesus closes his sermon without giving them hope and without winning the debate. Jesus shared the truth and believed that God would use it in His time and in His way. What do you learn from Jesus in this chapter? What do you see the Father doing in your life and in the lives of those around you?

## WEEK 2

We read John 12 through 21 last week. This week we will focus on John 6 to 11 with these chapters emphasizing the “I Am” statements of Jesus. This section focuses on the teaching of Jesus to the masses. There will be much to think about.

### DAY 1 – John 6

Did you know that every Gospel writer includes the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5000?! But only John portrays this miracle as a reflection of the identity of Jesus. Jesus said that he is the “Bread of Life.” Obviously, bread was a significant part of this miracle. “So, they picked up the pieces (of bread) and filled twelve baskets with the scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.” (Verse 13) Biblical scholars often point to the historical provision of God in the wilderness when the Lord supplied the Israelites with manna from heaven. Jesus would share his connection to bread from heaven without hesitation even though this teaching was too much for some who were listening and many turned away and deserted him (Verse 66). This appears to be the first of many “I Am” statements as Jesus proclaims, “I am the bread of life.” (Verse 35) \*Jesus did refer to himself as the Living Water in chapter 4 to the woman at the well, but in this chapter, he proclaims this truth to the crowd. As challenging as these words were to the first listeners, we can perceive their significance because of all we know about Jesus. He truly does satisfy us spiritually. Jesus is the true manna that descended from God (Verse 38). How does this teaching of Jesus about bread from heaven touch your heart and mind? Is there part of you, like those first hearers, that struggles with the idea? How does Jesus highlight the anticipation of communion when we participate in the body and blood of Christ? There’s much to contemplate.

### DAY 2 – John 7

Yesterday we read about Jesus in Galilee but this chapter has Jesus participating in the Festival of Shelters in Jerusalem. Already the religious leaders are plotting to put Jesus to death. So, Jesus sends his disciples ahead of him and he remains in Galilee but not for long. “But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view.” (Verse 10) As Jesus steps out from the shadows, he begins to proclaim the truth. The people are impressed on the one hand and against him on the other. But the high point of this scene is Jesus bravely announcing he was sent from heaven. And my favorite proclamation is “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’” (Verses 37 & 38) In verse 39, John explains that Jesus was speaking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is pointing to words from the Old Testament that promise the life of the Spirit flowing in our lives because we believe in the Messiah. Ezekiel 36 is my favorite: “I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean... And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.” (Ezekiel 36:25-26) At the Festival of Shelters, a water ceremony was held each day with a prayer for God to send rain as the festival took place in the autumn season. The final day, when Jesus spoke out, would have included this ceremony repeated seven times as water was poured over the altar. At the same time, Jesus announces that he is the source of living water. The imagination of God’s Spirit being fresh water flowing within us makes complete sense to

me. When the Spirit stirs within my heart, I feel refreshed, inspired, and clean. How do you respond to this message from Jesus about living water? What might that mean to you?

### DAY 3 – John 8

One of the most well-known stories of Jesus is found in this chapter. The woman caught in adultery has been highlighted many times because it is such a compelling story. The authorities want to stone her. That is very intense and without the wisdom of Jesus, it might have happened. This event is referenced many times because it points to mercy and forgiveness but also accountability and genuine repentance. The most famous statement is clear, “Let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone! (Verse 7) Obviously, Jesus is very merciful but that does not mean he is saying she is innocent. “Go and sin no more” is a statement of repentance. Does she sincerely desire forgiveness? If not, the pardon that Jesus gives her means nothing. She will quickly find herself hooked by sin again. The next thing John highlights is an “I am” statement. “I am the light of the world.” (Verse 12) Why John places it right next to the woman pardoned of adultery seems clear to me. In fact, the second half of verse 12 says, “If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” Is that what this woman really needed?! She had journeyed in darkness long enough. Jesus shines light into her dark world. I think the next thing that catches my eye in this chapter also applies to living in the light. “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (Verse 31 & 32) The NIV uses the word “hold on” to my teaching. This idea is more connected to embracing the Lord’s teaching. The result is the truth of Jesus’ words brings freedom from darkness, falsehood, and sin. This is equally true for us. We do so much better when we intentionally hold on to the truth that Jesus gives found in his Word. Why does the truth Jesus shares with us set us free? What does that mean to you?

### DAY 4 – John 9

This chapter is one story from start to finish. It is an interesting story with the inclusion of an important principle about sin not necessarily being the reason for sickness and disease. This was a common belief among Jews in the first century. You know that God allows us to experience life’s challenges for his purposes as verse 3 says, “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.” Hardship can produce in us depth and greater strength as well as show how God can carry us through any adversity as we trust him. An important verse from my sermon on Sunday says, “These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” (1 Peter 1:7) I think this is such a significant truth, I would encourage you to memorize that verse. Also, Jesus tells us he is the light of the world again in this chapter as he announced previously in chapter 8. Verse 5 purposefully repeats this “I am” statement as Jesus gives light to a blind man’s darkened eyes so he can see. Do you remember that I made a connection between Jesus feeding the 5000 and him announcing that he is the bread of life? So too, in this chapter, he is the light because he made light shine into this man’s darkness. This story ends with a splendid reversal of roles: The blind man who was assumed to be in spiritual darkness could see God’s light, whereas the Pharisees, who could see physically and were thought to be enlightened, were shown to be spiritually blind. How does this fascinating story speak to you?

## DAY 5 – John 10

Previously, I thought that this chapter was one event but I see the clear break as Hanukkah is highlighted in verse 22. Jesus refers to his sheep in both sections which is why John wrote them side by side. The understanding of us being sheep is very helpful and illuminates our propensity to wander and how desperately we need a shepherd. Jesus identifying himself as the Good Shepherd is so rich. It reminds us of Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd” and Ezekiel 34 when the shepherds (spiritual leaders of Israel) were treating the sheep so poorly. (I encourage you to take a look at EZ 34!) The interesting connection between Ezekiel 34 and Hanukkah points to the fact that it was a primary Scripture for Hanukkah. Jesus purposefully used that theme to give instruction to sheep who would listen to his voice and follow the Lord. “I am the Good Shepherd” might be my favorite “I am” statement from Jesus because it describes the Lord in a way that draws me to him and meets my deepest spiritual needs. Jesus is the gatekeeper as the shepherd; his is the voice that the sheep recognize; he lays down his life for the sheep; no one can snatch the sheep away from his grip. There might be more ideas that surface in this chapter concerning the Good Shepherd. Do you notice any others? How might your discovery speak to your life? Write out some thoughts about the amazing gift we have in Jesus as our Good Shepherd!

## DAY 6 – John 11

Are you ready for another “I Am” statement from Jesus? This one has been voted most important and I would have to agree. “I am the resurrection and the life.” (Verse 25) Whenever I want to share the Gospel in the briefest way possible, I quote verses 25 & 26. It says it all. But not only does Jesus announce this as his identity but he shows it as his identity when he raises Lazarus from the dead. This is a marvelous chapter and concludes our reading in the Gospel of John. How do you respond to this event in the life of Jesus? What would it be like to be Martha and Mary? Now you realize that if Jesus didn’t also rise from the dead, this statement would have no power or impact. But we have highlighted the resurrection for the past two Sundays and nothing is more important to our faith than the empty tomb and the living Savior. Isn’t amazing that the religious leaders knew that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead and that creates even greater determination to eliminate our Lord? But this is true time and again in so many lives. The resurrection cannot be disproved. But this fact hits stony hearts and many continue on in unbelief. The chapter concludes with the Pharisees ordering people to find Jesus so they can arrest him and sentence him to death. This would take place within a few weeks, if not even sooner. We are not exactly sure of the time frame but this chapter bumps up against the arrest and trial of Jesus we have previously read. The Gospel of John is the most insightful record of Christ’s identity and highlights the divine nature of our Lord. This summer we will read from the other Gospel accounts but this one should have made an imprint on our hearts as we read it during the Easter season of 2023. May God’s Word fill us and empower us to live for Jesus. How have you sensed God speaking to you this Easter time?

## WEEK 3

### DAY 1 – John 12

For believers, Easter week is usually launched with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As much as I appreciate the enthusiasm of the crowd on Palm Sunday, I am even more drawn to the devotion of Mary as this chapter begins. Mary, the sister of Martha, is a beautiful character in the Bible as we remember her sitting at the feet of Jesus in Luke 10:38-42. “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Verses 41-42) So, when we read about Mary’s devotion to Christ in John 12, it does not surprise us. She has demonstrated a heart of love for the Lord. To let down her hair was an extravagant gesture that was only matched by the costly precious spice she used to anoint the feet of Jesus. As we begin our 10-day journey to the tomb of Jesus, how would you evaluate your devotion to Christ? What would it look like to increase your commitment, sacrifice, and devotion to the Lord?

### DAY 2 – John 13

This part of the story is so engaging to me. The way that John writes about the meal in the upper room reveals the truth behind the meal. In the other Gospels, we read about the Passover meal becoming the Lord’s Supper which is very significant. But here we see the heart and posture of Christ as a servant. Obviously, there is much to notice in this chapter with Peter, Judas, the new commandment, and so on. But the washing of feet is monumental to me. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus knew who he was. That means he is well aware that he is the Son of God. This certainty allows him to become small and serve. He will do the unthinkable and wash the feet of his disciples, even Judas. But the message is summarized in verse 15, “I have given you an EXAMPLE to follow. Do as I have done to you.” There are numerous times that Jesus is sending his disciples to carry on his message of good news. Here it demonstrates what that looks like. The call to serve others is undeniable. How does this visual message from Jesus speak to you?

### DAY 3 – John 14

The previous two days have highlighted the first thing that we read in chapters 12 & 13 and today it remains the same for me. The truth about Jesus preparing a place for us is so meaningful. The disciples were all worried about what was going to happen and Jesus tells them, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled.” How often do I allow my heart to be troubled?! The worries and fears of life can grip us just like the disciples of Jesus as they gathered in the upper room. Essentially Jesus is telling them that an eternal perspective will ward off the burdens of worry and uncertainty. When Jesus refers to “my Father’s house,” he is pointing to the dwelling place where God resides (Revelation 21:9-22:5). Jesus promises that his followers will have a place to “dwell” alongside him forever. “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23:6) Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25-26) How does the assurance of dwelling in heaven one day give you peace right now? Jesus said, in verse 27, he would give us peace. What aspect of Jesus’ teaching in this chapter means the most to you? Why?

#### DAY 4 – John 15

What an important chapter for the disciple of Jesus! This idea of “abiding” in Christ is so significant. The NIV uses the word, “remain” and so does the NLT. But I prefer “abide” because it seems more active as if to emphasize the part I play in my relationship with Jesus. There’s a commitment from both God and the disciple. The verse I want to emphasize is easy to see, “I am the Vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you so do nothing.” (Verse 5) Without God’s help, we are hopeless in producing fruit. This matches the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus introduces to his disciples. We can’t do any of this without his help. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is mentioned several times in these 3 chapters from the upper room. As the Holy Spirit dwells in us (14:17), we have the potential of abiding in Christ having a profound, intimate, and enduring relationship. I do think this teaching is primary and without it we will dry up spiritually. Cultivating a deep and intimate walk with the Lord is the most important emphasis for the disciple of Jesus. What does “abide in Christ” mean to you? How might you live this out more consistently? How do verses 26 & 27 apply to this theme?

#### DAY 5 – John 16

I have to admit I am thinking about Easter and the resurrection when I read these words. “You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy.” (Verse 20) There’s no doubt that the brutal death of Jesus would be frightening and shocking. The suffering of Christ during those last few hours before his death on the cross is beyond description. No one who loves Jesus will be able to “sluff off” the gruesome tragedy of his death. The disciples would mourn and would also run with fear for their own lives. However, Jesus does not dwell on the sorrow but rather on the joy of birth as Jesus exits the tomb to show himself to the disciples as the risen Lord alive and true to his word. This storyline is still ours today. This life has suffering and many losses time and again. But the Lord promises us a destiny that is nothing short of our own resurrection to eternal life. Jesus said this as a conclusion to his words on suffering and joy, “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth, you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” (Verse 33) Jesus tells them that they can discover peace even when surrounded by threats; they can be confident and reassured even in a hostile world. The reason? Jesus has overcome the world, the devil, and the grave, and paid for our sins. How are you embracing the peace and joy that Christ offers?



## WEEK 4

### DAY 6 – John 17

Welcome to the longest prayer in the Bible. I have found so much inspiration from this chapter. The prayers of Jesus in these verses have shaped my prayers as much as any other prayer. First, the simple clarity of the gift of eternal life is expressed in verse 3: “And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.” Jesus was sent to earth and this prayer announces that he is returning to heaven soon. Thus, the things that Jesus prays have even greater significance because they are essentially his last prayer time with the Father. He will pray from the cross but nothing like this prayer. Verses 15 & 17 are my most repeated prayers for fellow believers: “I’m not asking you (Father) to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe (protect) from the evil one.” I prayed that same thing for my children almost every day when they were growing up. Plus, I pray this for our church family, “Make them holy (sanctify) by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.” I essentially pray, “Stop the devil and bring Your truth in its fullness.” God’s truth, by the Spirit, will change us from the inside out. Those two verses invite me to pray those same words for the people in my life. Also, I pray for the unity of the church; both New Harvest and God’s church in the world. “I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.” (Verse 21) The unity and love of believers within the church will reflect the truth that God loves the world and through his Son brings salvation to the world. What other phrases in this chapter stir up your prayers? How does Jesus’ final prayer impact your heart and life?

### DAY 7 – John 18

The Gospel of John is especially meaningful to me as John tells us how often Jesus used the title, “I am!” You know, like, I am the Good Shepherd, the light of the world, the resurrection and life, the true vine, the bread of life... He simply says in this chapter, “I am he,” and the soldiers and temple guards all fall back to the ground (Verse 6). Roman soldiers were trained not to fall but they couldn’t help it as the power of God was present with Jesus. Plus, the Lord rebuked Peter for using the sword because Jesus had already decided to live out God’s will, not his own. “Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?” Do you remember Jesus praying that the Father would remove this cup from him in the garden? “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” (Luke 22:42) In fact, Luke 9:51 tells us, “As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” Our Lord was incredibly courageous and resolute. He came for the purpose of giving his life as a ransom for many and he shows how determined he is to follow through. What stands out to you from these familiar words?

### DAY 8 – John 19

Our reading today ends with Jesus in the grave and that is the theme of Saturday, silence & uncertainty. This is when faith transcends the circumstances and believes God and His plan anyway. Jesus does speak in this chapter but not very much. He addresses Pilate and speaks three times from the cross. I would focus on the last statement of Jesus in John’s Gospel, “It is finished.” Jesus raises himself up on his

nail-pierced feet and announces these words of triumph and exhaustion. Then, Jesus breathed his last breath with the truth that he had completed what he came to do. The Greek word “finish” means “paid in full.” It is closely associated with redemption as the ransom price for sin had been paid. Will I believe that prior to my own resurrection? I say, “Yes!” Jesus is in the tomb but not for long. I am on this earth but not for long. I live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). I encourage you to carve out some time for quietness on this day. Let your faith expand and your doubts subside. How do these final hours for Jesus speak to you?

#### DAY 9 – John 20

John gives us a more thorough account of the resurrection emphasizing the interaction with those closest to him. Mary, the disciples, and Thomas... all unique to John’s story of the resurrection. There are several points to highlight but I am drawn to Thomas. I have found that the person who challenges the reality of Jesus the most can become the strongest people of faith. Two authors I respect so much have a similar story. Josh McDowell and Lee Strobel both set out to prove that Christianity was false. But they obviously believed otherwise and since then, have written on the truth of our faith and the certainty of the resurrection. Both of these men have inspired me with their strong faith and astute intellect regarding the certainty found in Christ. To me, this connects with Thomas. He gives the shortest and most convincing testimony, “My Lord and my God!” (Verse 28) I do not look down on Thomas but applaud him for standing alone both as a doubter and then as a dynamic spokesman for Christ. Tradition tells us of Thomas working as a missionary in the East: in Parthia (Eusebius), Persia (Jerome), and India (Acts of Thomas). The Mar Thoma church on the west coast of India traces its roots back to the early missionary work of Thomas. In other words, Thomas never looked back or regretted his decision to follow Jesus. He gave his life for the Gospel. He was convinced. The resurrection is the most crucial event to our faith because we are believing in eternal life for ourselves and all those we are eager to reach. The promise of resurrection is the hope of Christianity. How does the resurrection shape your heart and mind in Christ Jesus?

#### DAY 10 – John 21

It makes sense to me that the day after Easter should be a happy day. But I am not sure that Peter was as happy as he could be. The shame of denial would still be hanging over his head. When it says he wants to go fishing, no one wants him to go alone. If someone in your life is struggling, you don’t want them to be alone either. I think that is the idea. But things get turned around by Jesus for Peter. I think Jesus’ questions for Peter are purposeful and restorative. Three questions match the three denials of Peter, right!? We know Peter loves Jesus but for him to say so is challenging but helpful. Jesus is pointing Peter to the high call of tending the flock of God and preparing for the challenges that are sure to come, even leading to words about the kind of death he would die. I have enjoyed studying Peter’s letters in the New Testament because they reveal a dynamic change in the posture of Peter. He was impulsive and boastful as one of the Lord’s disciples. But his writing is quite different. This specific encounter with Jesus on the shore in this chapter made an incredible difference. The specific times in my life when the Lord has made himself known to me have shaped me like nothing else. I know what I want for you this Easter Monday after the power of Resurrection Day: a close and meaningful encounter with Jesus. That is my prayer for you as each of us lives out our purpose for Christ!