

PRAXIS

OF

Belief

PART 1

GRACEWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH

# PRAXIS

## On Belief

The Gospel of John

Part I  
John 1:1 to John 10:42

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version Bible.

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## **Welcome to the April edition of Praxis!**

*The readings are brief*, in order to cover the Scripture, present the thought, and allow time to take it in through *meditation, contemplation*, and *prayer*. We encourage you to record your responses and the things that the Holy Spirit shows you. The readings are set up according to the ancient practice of the *daily office*, with a reading for morning hours, and a reading for evening hours. Of course, when and how you do this is completely up to you, but we do encourage you to do it at the same time and place each day, in order to simplify and develop the habit.

**Take your time to soak in the Word. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you each day. Even the simplest of things can bring revelation when we dedicate attention to the Spirit and the details.**

This compilation has been designed to lead us into the Scripture each day, to help empower us in the Holy Spirit and Truth, and to culminate in the Home Church experience.

*Make special note* of the pages given to each Sunday, take time to review your readings and responses from the week. This will help prepare you for a richer experience in Home Church, through both sharing and receiving.

*If you are not yet part of a Home Church*, we would love to have you experience it for yourself! Find out more from the person who gave you this book, or reach us at [www.GracewayRI.org](http://www.GracewayRI.org)

The commentary that accompanies each reading is written by Ed Pichette Sr., who serves as an elder and a Home Church Leader at Graceway Community.



*The book of John is quite different from the other gospels. The other three gospels are often referred to as the synoptic gospels. The word synoptic means "with one eye." The intended meaning of that term is simply that those three gospels discuss many of the same details and present them in more or less the same order. John is different. John tends to present the details in a somewhat different order than the others. For example, John tells the story of the cleansing of the temple near the beginning of his gospel (ch. 2) while the others all place that story more toward the end of their gospels (Mat 21; Mk 11; Lk 19).*

*Most scholars believe the reason for these differences is because John has a different goal in writing his gospel. While the synoptic gospels are concerned with the details of what happened and when it happened, John is more concerned about developing a theology. John's primary goal is to discuss who God is and especially who God is, as seen through the coming of Jesus. Don't misunderstand, all four gospel writers are concerned about theology and what happened when. The difference is a matter of degree and how to achieve their respective goals. For the synoptic gospels, the primary goal is to tell, as precisely as possible, what happened and when. For them, the nature of God and Jesus will follow out from the details of the events. For John, the primary focus is on the nature of God and Jesus. John will present the events of Jesus' life in an order that helps him to teach about who the Father is and who Jesus is.*

*God has seen fit to preserve for us four gospels. Each contributing to a fuller picture of God AND Jesus AND the Holy Spirit. To make the most of it, we should approach each gospel individually and then compare and contrast them to build a fuller picture.*

**<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. (Jn. 1:1-2 ESV)**

*John begins his gospel with the words of Gen. 1. "In the beginning..." Those words evoke a picture in the mind of a faithful believer. The power of God in creation – His goodness and His desire to bless His people – all this and more is brought to mind. But then John adds a twist. He changes the story. He does not say "In the beginning God created ...", rather he says, "In the beginning was the Word." John, the theologian, is hinting that the two words "God" and "Word" are, at least in some ways, interchangeable. So his opening phrase presents a major theme for this gospel.*

*"In the beginning was the Word" is a demonstration of who Jesus is – He is the same one spoken about in Gen 1:1. John will develop this idea more in just a few verses. In the next phrase John tells us that Jesus is NOT identical to God the Father. By saying "the Word was with God," John tells us that Jesus is distinct from the Father in some way. If they were completely identical so that God and the Word were simply two different names for the same person, then you would not say that the one was "with" the other. If you are "with" someone then you are necessarily distinct from that other person. This first verse of John concludes by clearly stating that "the Word was God". John has summed up his theology in the first verse.*

*Jesus is equal to the Father and Jesus is distinct from the Father.*

*He will go on to develop this theme more clearly as the gospel continues. Verse 2 then repeats the same idea. Jesus was present "in the beginning" just as the Father was. Jesus is the agent through whom creation came to be – He is equal to God the Father! And, at the same time, the Word was "with" God. Jesus is somehow distinct from God the Father!*

*Praise God today for revealing Himself to us through Jesus!*

**<sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (Jn. 1:3-5 ESV)**

*John continues demonstrating that the creator is the Word of God. He shows that Jesus is equal to the Father by telling us that Jesus did the same things that the Father did. This too is a theme repeated throughout John's gospel. John is asserting here that Jesus is equal to the Father because Jesus does only the things that the Father does.*

**<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. (Jn. 5:19 ESV)**

*In v. 4 John tells us that life is in Jesus. So John, in the first four verses of his gospel, has presented Jesus as creator and giver of all life – these are attributes that belong to God alone. Jesus does what the Father does because He is the equal of the Father.*

**<sup>18</sup> This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (Jn. 5:18 ESV)**

*In v. 5 John tells us that, in Jesus, light has come into the world. He has just said in v. 4 that this light is life! He goes on to say that the darkness has not overcome the light. Some translations substitute understand for overcome. The idea is that evil cannot deal with the goodness of God. The evil one desires to overpower the Father – but he cannot. So John is telling us that the devil is weak in comparison with God's power and he is not able to understand who God is. The devil is out of his depth in his desire to surpass God.*

**<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. (Jn. 1:6-11 ESV)**

*Hopefully you can begin to see the difference between John's gospel and the synoptics. John began with a very theological discussion of who Jesus is. While the other writers will not have the type of discourse that John uses to open his gospel, they too, each in his own way, expound on the deity of the Christ. Beginning in v. 6 John shifts gears and now moves on to discuss the Baptist. Note how John introduces him as "a man sent from God." John wants us to understand that the Baptist has a specific God-given role to play. What the Baptist will do is not some foolish nonsense that he has dreamed up on his own. No, in the Baptist we should recognize the hand of God as He continues working out His plan which was set in place before the foundation of the world. John came "to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him." John goes on to repeat that the world would not recognize Him. Remember that the word believe is important to John. Did you notice it here? Keep watching for it!*

**<sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (Jn. 6:27-29 ESV)**

*Do you recognize Him as He is moving in your life and in your world? He's always there but we can get caught up in our daily circumstances and miss the small details of His working. How many times have I, in my life, been going along day after day until something bigger than usual occurs and I'm reminded that He's working. At times like that, God stops me in my tracks and lets me see the small details He's been working through. One of my goals is to become more and more sensitive to the work of God in my life. I want to see, daily, what He's doing; to be more aware of His presence with me. For me, that is not a simple task. What about you?*

**<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (Jn. 1:12-16 ESV)**

*Now John puts his theology cap on again. It is by believing, that is, through faith that God gives us "the right to become children of God." He goes on to say that this is the will of God! Because it is God's will that faith should be enough for us to be redeemed, Jesus had to take on flesh. The primary purpose of Jesus becoming human is so that He might die in our place. Of course He did more than just die but His death is the most significant event in history. The eternal fate of all those who believe is changed because he dared to die in our place! The Baptist recognizes the importance of the Christ in God's plan. That's why he says, "He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me." Here is yet another veiled image of the deity of the Christ. He was before John - in fact He has always existed with the Father - who is the eternal God!*

**<sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. (Jn. 1:17-18 ESV)**

*Here John differentiates between God's Law and God's Grace. The NT is replete with references to the holiness of God. In the NT we find that we too must be a holy people.*

**<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:14-16 ESV)**

*In Christ our sin is forgiven. It's not that our sin has disappeared. Rather it has been atoned for. We will no longer be forced to pay the price of our sin. The Law remains, but we are no longer under it's curse! We will not be required to pay the price that the Laws demands. Christ has paid that price for us. Jesus said Himself that He had not come to destroy but to fulfill it.*

**<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matt. 5:17 ESV)**

*So the Law remains BUT by grace and through faith we have been released from the curse that the Law alone would bring upon us! In Jesus and His sacrifice of Himself we see the incredible grace and mercy of the Father! In Christ the righteous demands of the Law have been met! By loving us to the point that He was willing and did die in our place, Jesus has made known the incredible love that the Father has for us.*

<sup>19</sup> And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." <sup>24</sup> (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup> They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, <sup>27</sup> even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup> These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (Jn. 1:19-28 ESV)

*The gospel writer uses this discussion between the Baptist and the priests and Levites to further his point about who Jesus is. As great as the Baptist is and as important as his mission is, yet, by comparison, the Baptist is not worthy to untie Jesus' sandals. Here we also see John's first hint concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit which would occur only after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension.*

*When the Baptist described himself as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, he was quoting from Isaiah.*

**<sup>3</sup> A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Isa. 40:3 ESV)**

*Notice in Isa 40:3 it says, "prepare the way of the LORD." The capitals of LORD are an indication that here the Hebrew text had Yahweh – name of God that the Jews would neither write nor pronounce. So the Baptist is the one who announced the coming of Yahweh to His people. Note also how Isaiah goes on to say that the Baptist's role was "to make straight in the desert a highway for our God." So here we find yet another place in John's gospel where he is declaring Jesus' deity. But if you don't know the OT well, you just might miss it!*

**<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (Jn. 1:29-34 ESV)**

*Notice in v. 31 how the Baptist admits that he would not have recognized Jesus except that it had been revealed to him that he would see the Spirit descend as a dove upon the Christ. So there was nothing extraordinary about Jesus' appearance that would indicate who He was. He looked more or less like every other human being. On your own, trusting only in your five natural senses to observe the world, there is nothing about Jesus that points Him out as being special. But the Spirit of God can and does point all people to Jesus as the savior of the world. Your physical attributes may be of little value in finding your place and purpose in life. But the Spirit of God is always working to point people to Jesus. Pray that God would use you as a vehicle through whom the Spirit might speak to others that they too might come to saving faith in Jesus!*

<sup>35</sup> The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (Jn. 1:35-39 ESV)

*John tells us here about two of the Baptist's disciples who leave John and begin to follow after Jesus when the Baptist points Jesus out as "the Lamb of God." The role for the Baptist is drawing to a close. His purpose was to point out who Jesus was. With that role completed he begins to fade into the background - as he should.*

**<sup>29</sup> The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease." (Jn. 3:29-30 ESV)**

*Be like the Baptist. Point out the Christ through your lifestyle- your words and deeds and then humbly get out of the way. Do and say what you ought to do and say. Then remove yourself that God might achieve His purposes in the lives of those around you.*

<sup>40</sup>One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup>He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). <sup>42</sup>He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). <sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. (Jn. 1:40-44 ESV)

*John now turns his attention to introducing Jesus' disciples who will become the apostles. Consider Andrew's remark in v. 41. He has only recently been introduced to Jesus and yet he immediately seems to know that He is the Messiah. Jesus renames Simon as Peter – the Rock. Why does Jesus give him such a name? Probably because Jesus knows the faith that Peter will have. Peter will have his issues as we'll see later in this gospel, but he will also demonstrate great faith in Jesus.*

<sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:15-18 ESV)

**<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, <sup>18</sup> and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. (Dan. 2:17-18 ESV)**

*Next, Daniel finds his trusted friends and asks them to pray with him about the situation they are now facing. Having appeased the king for the moment, Daniel sets about finding the necessary solution. He does that by praying and asking other like-minded believers to pray with him!*

<sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup> Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (Jn. 1:45-51 ESV)

*The first chapter concludes with the names of a few more disciples. Notice in v. 48 Jesus tells Nathanael where he was and what he was doing when Philip found him. Nathanael is amazed at Jesus' words and responds by naming Jesus as "the Son of God." Jesus responds that, as Nathanael follows Him, he will see far greater displays of Jesus' power and majesty.*

*I think that we too would see far greater displays of Jesus' power and majesty if we would learn, in faith, to expect Him to do so.*

**<sup>1</sup>On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." (Jn. 2:1-4 ESV)**

*The second chapter begins with the story of Jesus and His mother attending a wedding. John quickly gets to the point. In v. 2 John tells us what Mary said to Jesus when the wine ran out, "They have no wine." There is more going on here than meets the eye. Jesus is now about 30 years old. At this age, the typical male should be out on his own doing what he knows he should do. Mary, more than anyone, knows how unique and special Jesus is. What she is really saying to Jesus is that it's time for Him to set out on the path that the Father has for Him. Jesus response is, "what does this have to do with me?" Jesus certainly knows who He is by this time. He knows what He must do. He knows the pain and suffering that await Him. Because He knows scripture so well, He probably also knows that once His ministry begins, He'll have roughly three years of ministering before His crucifixion comes to pass. I don't think He's in any hurry to get going. Have you ever known that there is something that you must do that will be very costly to you? I have. In times like that, it brought me comfort to know that while I'd have to do it eventually, I didn't have to do it immediately. There was still time that I could put it off for a while anyway. I think that's a very human response and, as scripture tells us, Jesus was fully human.*

*What about you? When have you known that you needed to do something hard? How did you deal with it?*

**His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." (Jn. 2:5 ESV)**

*Mary doesn't argue with Jesus. Rather she sets the stage so that Jesus will do what both she and Jesus know He should do. They both know it's time for Jesus' ministry to begin. As the next few verses show, Jesus accepts the challenge and performs the miracle that initiates His public ministry.*

<sup>6</sup> Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." <sup>11</sup> This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. (Jn. 2:6-11 ESV)

*Jesus works His first miracle. The master of ceremonies notices that this wine, brought out last, is better than what was served first. The MC has no idea what is happening around him, but he does know that something unusual is afoot. That's how the world responds to God's activity in the world. They don't understand the significance of what is happening but they do understand that something unusual is going on. Healthy human beings do not want to die. Jesus, in addition to being the equal of God the Father, was also a healthy human being. He did not want to die. But, as a human being, He chose to submit Himself to the Father's will rather than force His own will on His circumstances. Sometimes doing God's will can be very difficult. You may not want to do God's will for you. That's ok. You don't have to want to do God's will. He will never force His will upon you. But if you want to find true joy in life, if you want to be the person that God wants you to be, then YOU DO HAVE TO DO GOD'S WILL.*

<sup>41</sup> And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Lk. 22:41-42 ESV)

<sup>12</sup> After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days. <sup>13</sup> The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. <sup>15</sup> And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup> And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." <sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." (Jn. 2:12-17 ESV)

*Here we find an example where John's chronology of events differs from the synoptics. John places Jesus' cleansing of the temple here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The synoptic writers place this story near the end of their gospels after Jesus has made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and just before His crucifixion. What, do you think, might have motivated John to include this story here rather than at the end of his gospel like the other writers did? After telling the story, John concludes by citing the book of Psalms.*

**<sup>9</sup> For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. (Ps. 69:9 ESV)**

*Perhaps the fact that John quotes the book of Psalms provides a clue to help us understand the point John is trying to make.*

<sup>18</sup> So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"  
<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."  
<sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"  
<sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body.  
<sup>22</sup> When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.  
<sup>23</sup> Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. (Jn. 2:18-23 ESV)

*No matter what or how much proof Jesus offered about Himself, the Jewish leaders always asked for more. When they ask for a sign here in v. 18, He replies that when the temple was destroyed, He would rebuild it in three days. They thought He was talking about the Temple building. But John, the gospel writer, lets us in on a secret - Jesus was really talking about His body! V. 22 provides the point of all this. When Jesus was raised from the dead they remembered His words here and so this story reaffirms their faith - "and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. Time and again John brings us back to the importance of believing! Take another look at v. 23.*

**<sup>24</sup> But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people<sup>25</sup> and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. (Jn. 2:24-25 ESV)**

*As chapter two comes to a close, John gives us a clue about Jesus' thinking. Again Jesus humanity rises to the fore in these two verses. Imagine how lonely He must have felt every day as He went through His ministry knowing how He would have to surrender Himself totally for others and at the same time knowing that there was no one who could possibly understand what He was doing! His love for us is all the more amazing when seen in the light of our failure and indifference.*

**<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 Jn. 4:9-10 ESV)**

***Notes from Home Church***

**Community Prayers**

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (Jn. 3:1-6 ESV)

*Nicodemus greets Jesus in v. 2. He calls Him a rabbi and a man "come from God." Nicodemus is a well respected Pharisee and he's probably expecting Jesus to respond with a similar honoring greeting. But that's not what Jesus does. Rather He bluntly tells Nicodemus that he needs to be born again. Nicodemus is confused by this comment. Jesus goes on to add that one must be born of the water (probably some connection with physical birth or maybe water baptism) and the Spirit. The idea of being born of the Spirit would be very foreign to Nicodemus. Being a good Pharisee, Nicodemus would be very familiar with the arguments and interpretations of his forebears. Their way of dealing with scripture was very regimented. There was not a lot of room for a movement of the Spirit. Nicodemus comes from the upper crust of Jewish society. Nicodemus is interested in what Jesus is saying and doing but he does not want anyone to know about that (hence his coming to find Jesus under cover of the night). Jesus' greeting to Nicodemus is close to being rude. Jesus understands Nicodemus' mindset. He knows that He will have to knock Nicodemus off his high horse if He wants to make him a believer. Jesus wants to save souls. If that goal can best be reached with kindness and gentleness then He will be kind and gentle. If His goal can best be achieved by being confrontational then He will confront and challenge. Always He is looking to bring people to repentance and faith - whatever it takes to reach the Father's goal He will do!*

*Have there been times in your life when the Spirit gently moved upon you to point you in the direction He wanted you to go? Have there been times when He has not spared any punches to show you God's will for you? I believe that the Spirit would rather work with me in a kind and gentle way. But I know that I can be hard-headed and stubborn. When I am, He loves me enough to face me down and lead me forward. How about you?*

<sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (Jn. 3:7-12 ESV)

*Nicodemus knows a well regimented way of understanding and interpreting scripture. Jesus wants him to learn that while God can and does work in those ways, God is also capable of working more freely through the Spirit. That's why Jesus tells Nicodemus the metaphor about the wind. We all recognize the power of the wind but we don't know where it comes from or goes to. God's ways can at times be very recognizable and at other times they can be very mysterious. Nicodemus wants to put God in his little box. He wants God to act always in ways that are predictable and expectable. But God won't fit in that or any other box! If Nicodemus is going to come to saving faith, he must first realize who God is and who he himself is. Jesus is willing to get right in his face to help him learn those lessons.*

*Where are you in your walk with Jesus? Are you still trying to fit Him into a box? When you come to see that one box is too small, do you simply make a bigger box or do you get rid of all the boxes?*

<sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." (Jn. 3:13-21 ESV)

*In these verses, Jesus gives Nicodemus the gospel message. In v. 13, He tells Nicodemus who He is – the Son of Man. In v. 14 He reminds Nicodemus of an OT story about redemption that foreshadows the crucifixion. (See Num. 21:6-9) In v. 15, He tells Nicodemus that people are saved and gain eternal life through faith in Him. In v. 16 we have perhaps the best known verse of all scripture. In v. 17 Jesus tells Nicodemus why God sent His Son into the world – not to condemn the world but rather to offer salvation to the world. In v. 18 Jesus says that belief in Him brings salvation. The one who fails to believe is already condemned. In v. 19 Jesus goes on to explain that although God has sent His Son, the light, into the world, people prefer to hide in the darkness because they are evil. In v. 20 He says that evil people like the darkness because they think it will hide their sin. In v. 21 He concludes by telling Nicodemus that righteous people come to the light so that it can be seen that their works have been carried out in God. Jesus wants Nicodemus to see that this gospel message is what underlies all the laws and teaching of the OT. Nicodemus and his peers strained at the OT teachings, hanging on every word, but they had also missed the mercy and love of God and fellow man that serve as the foundation of everything found in the OT.*

**<sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! (Matt. 23:24 ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. <sup>23</sup> John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized <sup>24</sup> (for John had not yet been put in prison). <sup>25</sup> Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. <sup>26</sup> And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness-- look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him." <sup>27</sup> John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' <sup>29</sup> The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease." <sup>31</sup> He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup> He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. <sup>33</sup> Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. <sup>34</sup> For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. <sup>35</sup> The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. <sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (Jn. 3:22-36 ESV)

*The story returns back to the Baptist. When his disciples point out that everyone is now going out to see Jesus, the Baptist says that his time is over. He had a role to play and he played it out to the best of his abilities. But now his work is done and so, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The Baptist knows his place. His humility is admirable and something we should all seek to mimic. Note v. 36 where the importance of belief is once again brought to the fore. Note also how in this verse, the opposite of belief is not unbelief but rather disobedience.*

**<sup>1</sup>Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), <sup>3</sup> he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. <sup>4</sup> And he had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. (Jn. 4:1-6 ESV)**

*The scene shifts and we find Jesus leaving Judea and heading for Galilee. Note v. 4 where we're told, "he had to pass through Samaria." Judea and Samaria both lie on the west side of the Jordan river. The shortest path from Judea to Galilee would run through Samaria. But, because the Jews so hated the Samaritans, it was their custom to take a longer route. So to go from Judea to Galilee a Jew would go east across the Jordan, then north passing to the east of Samaria and then cross the Jordan again and head north to Galilee. So Jesus did not have to go through Samaria because that was the only way. In fact, the route that crossed the Jordan to avoid Samaria was a much more popular route. Jews avoid Samaritans and vice versa. So if Jesus really did have "to pass through Samaria," it was not because there was no other route. Rather He knew that the Spirit had arranged a meeting with a woman near a well in Samaria.*

*Forty years ago, I had a friend, Ken, who traveled cross town daily to work while he was a student at seminary. He passed a small diner twice – once going to and once returning from work. Ken used to say to himself, "one day I'm going to stop in there to try their food." He never did until one day He sensed the Spirit prodding him to stop in for a cup of coffee on the way home from work. As he went in, he noticed that the diner was empty. There was only a young woman working the counter and a cook in the back. As he ordered his coffee he noticed that the woman seemed to be upset. He struck up a conversation with her. She had been going through some rough times and friends had been talking with her about the Lord. That evening Ken had the great pleasure of leading that young woman to the Lord!*

*Have you ever had a similar experience? Do you listen, as Ken did, to the prompting of the Spirit and allow Him to interrupt you on your daily travels and set up an unexpected appointment for you?*

<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." (Jn. 4:7-15 ESV)

*As we work our way through these verses keep in mind the earlier conversation in chapter 3 between Jesus and Nicodemus. In v. 1, Jesus asks for a drink. In v. 3, the woman reminds Jesus of proper protocol – Jews avoid Samaritans (especially unaccompanied females!) and Samaritans avoid Jews. Jesus tells her that if she knew God's gift then she'd ask Him and He'd give her living water. She asks Him how He'll get this water since He has no way to get water from the well. He says that if she would drink the water He has, then she'd never be thirsty again. Stop for a moment and consider this situation from the woman's point of view. She's gone to the well in the heat of the day to get water. All the other women would go later in the day when it was cooler. She's gone at noontime to avoid them. She finds a Jewish man there. Jews never go to or even through Samaria. She lets Him know He does not belong there. He tells her that if she should drink some of His water (which He has no way to get any water!) then she'd never be thirsty again! What would you be thinking if you were in her shoes? This guy is totally crazy!*

*But He's not crazy at all. She has been broken down by the difficulties of her life. She avoids people because they shame and hurt her. So Jesus plays the role of a harmless fool – His goal is to draw her out, to get her to talk. She buys into this scenario in v. 15 when she asks Jesus for some of His water. Of course she has no idea of what is about to happen, but Jesus has brought her to the point where she will be open and honest with Him – He has prepared her to hear the gospel!*

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." (Jn. 4:16-26 ESV)

*Now that she is willing to speak with Him, He reveals Himself to her. He tells her to get her husband. She replies that she has no husband. Jesus says that she truly has no husband but she's had five husbands and the man she lives with now is not her husband. She is amazed and recognizes the power of God at work in Jesus – she recognizes Him as a prophet. Immediately she asks the theological questions that trouble her and many other Samaritans. Who's correct – you Jews or we Samaritans? Should God be worshiped in Samaria or in Jerusalem? Jesus avoids the geographical questions and cuts to the heart of the matter, God must be worshiped "in spirit and in truth." She says that she's sure the Messiah will answer her questions when He comes. Jesus answers her, "I who speak to you am he."*

*Compare the way she responded to Jesus' revelation of Himself to her with Nicodemus response. Nicodemus is from the highest echelon in Jewish society. This woman is from one of the, if not the, lowest in Samaria. It is true that worldly wealth is an obstacle to receiving the gospel.*

**Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup> Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>27</sup> But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." (Lk. 18:24-27 ESV)**

*How strong a grip does your wealth have on you?*

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" <sup>28</sup> So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, <sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" <sup>30</sup> They went out of the town and were coming to him. <sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup> Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." <sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." (Jn. 4:27-42 ESV)

*When the disciples return and find Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman they immediately become concerned for His reputation. He makes it plain to them that nothing will get in His way to prevent Him from spreading the gospel message. The field is ripe for harvest! We need more workers! The woman goes back to town, to the people she used to hide from and tells them about Jesus. Notice v. 39, "Many Samaritans from that town believed in him." Also note v. 41, "many more believed because of His word."*

<sup>43</sup> After the two days he departed for Galilee. <sup>44</sup> (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) <sup>45</sup> So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. <sup>46</sup> So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. <sup>47</sup> When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. <sup>48</sup> So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." <sup>49</sup> The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. <sup>51</sup> As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. <sup>52</sup> So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." <sup>53</sup> The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. <sup>54</sup> This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee. (Jn. 4:43-54 ESV)

*Jesus continues the trip from Judea to Galilee. He meets a man who asks Jesus to come to his house to heal his ailing son. Jesus tells him to go home; He assures him that his son will live. When the man meets some of his servants, they tell him that his son is healing. He asks when the boy started to recover. When they answer the father realizes that it was at the very hour that Jesus had told him his son would live. John goes on to write, "And he himself believed, and all his household." John reinforces the idea again and again, we must believe!*

<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Heb. 11:6 ESV)

<sup>1</sup> After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a multitude of invalids-- blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" <sup>7</sup> The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." <sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." <sup>9</sup> And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup> So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." <sup>11</sup> But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" <sup>12</sup> They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" (Jn. 5:1-12 ESV)

*Chapter 5 opens with the story of a lame man whom Jesus heals. The story is really more about the response that the Jews make to the fact that Jesus performs this miracle on the Sabbath. The Jews tell the man that it is against the law for him to carry his bed on the Sabbath. They ask him who it was that told him to "Take up your bed and walk." Notice how these Jews who question the healed man don't want to talk about the miracle of his healing. All they want is evidence that they can use to accuse Jesus of breaking the law. Their cold hearts keep them from being able to see the mercy of God working through Jesus. They see but they don't understand.*

<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." <sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' <sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (Matt. 13:14-16 ESV)

*How well are your eyes and ears working today?*

<sup>13</sup> Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. <sup>14</sup> Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." <sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. <sup>16</sup> And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." <sup>18</sup> This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (Jn. 5:13-18 ESV)

*The healed man tells the Jews that he doesn't know who healed him. Apparently, he wasn't too concerned about who had worked this miracle for him since he let Jesus get away from him without first finding out who He was. Later, it's Jesus who finds him. Jesus warns him to avoid sinning lest he should end up in a worse condition than he was in before. Instead of expressing thanks to Jesus, this man instead goes to the Jews and tells them that it is Jesus who has healed him. The picture John paints of this man is that of a selfish ingrate. Jesus asserts His relationship to the Father in v. 17. In v. 18 John makes it plain what Jesus meant when He said that God was His Father. Jesus meant that He was equal to God!*

<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. <sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. <sup>21</sup> For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. <sup>22</sup> For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup> that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. <sup>25</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup> And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup> and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. <sup>30</sup> "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>31</sup> If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. <sup>32</sup> There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true. (Jn. 5:19-32 ESV)

*John continues offering more proof of Jesus' deity. In v. 19 & 20, he writes that Jesus does only those things that the Father does. Because the Father loves the Son, He will show Him even greater things to do. In v. 21 he writes that both the Father and the Son have the power to make the dead live. In v. 22 & 23, John writes that the Father has given all judgment to the Son so that all will honor the Son as they honor the Father. He restates this idea saying that if you don't honor the Son then you are not honoring the Father. Then in v. 24, John writes that to believe in Jesus is to have eternal life. In v. 26 John writes that both the Father and the Son have life within them. John continues on here demonstrating that because they do the same things and have the same capabilities and desires, the Father and the Son are equal. John wants to do much more than simply say Jesus is God. He is painting a picture of two distinct persons with one divine will – one divine essence.*

<sup>33</sup> You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. <sup>34</sup> Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. <sup>36</sup> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup> And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, <sup>38</sup> and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. <sup>39</sup> You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. <sup>41</sup> I do not receive glory from people. <sup>42</sup> But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. <sup>43</sup> I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. <sup>44</sup> How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup> Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (Jn. 5:33-47 ESV)

*John continues Jesus' words about who He is. Jesus' identity is bound up with the Father's identity. Note v. 39 where Jesus says that the Jews searched the scriptures to find eternal life therein. Jesus says that those very scriptures bear witness to Him, but the Jewish leadership refused to come to Jesus to find life in Him. Jesus tells them that their problem is that they don't have the love of God in them. He came in the Father's name but they would not receive Him. He says they put their trust in ordinary men but not in the Son of God. Jesus tells them that He won't accuse them. Rather it's Moses who accuses them. What Jesus is saying is that they are depending on their own ability to keep the whole law for their salvation. Moses also said that the law had to be kept perfectly all the time. So Jesus tells them that they stand accused not by Him but rather by Moses.*

*The Jewish leaders studied long and hard to understand the Law. Most of them were motivated by a love for God. But by approaching scripture in the way they did, they painted themselves into a corner. The Law became the overriding element. Grace and mercy were wrongly pushed out of the picture.*

<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup> And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup> Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" <sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup> "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" <sup>15</sup> Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. (Jn. 6:1-15 ESV)

*As chapter 6 of John's gospel begins, a large crowd comes out to listen to Jesus. Jesus tests Philip by asking him where they will find food for so many. Philip responds by telling Jesus the cost for enough bread to feed such a large crowd. Philip has failed. Jesus wants Philip, and by extension us, to go to Him when faced with what seems to be an impossible task. Philip tries to solve an impossible task in ordinary ways. What Jesus wants is for Philip (us) to turn to Him to do the impossible. The ordinary human response will lead only to anxiety and failure. Real faith, as the Spirit leads, will lift you above your human limitations. Faith allows you to be confident about the things you hope for.*

**<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1 ESV)**

*Faith is easy to claim when all your needs are met. Faith is tested when we're faced with the impossible. Do you have faith when the task seems impossible?*

***Notes from Home Church***

***Community Prayers***

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup> The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." <sup>21</sup> Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. <sup>22</sup> On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. <sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. (Jn. 6:16-26 ESV)

*John presents another test of faith. This time it is the crowd that's being tested. The crowd watches Jesus' disciples get into the boat and head back. There is no boat for Jesus to use. When the crowd cannot find Him, they set out in some newly arrived boats to look for Jesus. When they arrive, there is Jesus. How did He get there? They have no idea. They could (maybe should?) have realized that if He could feed them all with five loaves and two fish then it would not be a problem for Him to cross the sea. Here's the point. They had just witnessed one miracle. Based on that they might have had faith to believe that Jesus, a miracle worker, could get Himself somehow across the sea without a boat. Instead they are totally dumbfounded. Like Philip they fail the test of their faith. Jesus says, "you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves." In other words, you're looking for me not because of who I am but rather only for what I can do to meet your immediate needs. Jesus wants them to realize who He is – not simply what He can do!*

*Why do you worship Jesus? Is it because He is a good, gracious and loving God who is worthy of all your love. Or is it simply for what He can do for you right now in the short term? If it brought you no immediate benefit, would you still love Jesus?*

<sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." <sup>30</sup> So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?" <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" <sup>32</sup> Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." <sup>34</sup> They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (Jn. 6:27-40 ESV)

*Note the references to some form of the word believe in vv. 29, 30, 35, 36 and 40. Jesus wants them to see the bigger picture. He can deliver much more than a free meal. As John has told us, He is the source of life. When He tells them as much, they respond by asking what is this work of God that they should be doing? Jesus answers, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." They keep on thinking far too small. They remind Jesus how, in the OT, God gave their forefathers manna. (See how this is similar to Jesus feeding them - meeting an earthly need only.) Jesus wants them to receive "true bread from heaven."*

*God offers ALL that we need. Yes, He does want to provide for our day to day needs. But He also wants us to know that He can and will provide meaning and purpose for our lives!*

<sup>41</sup> So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me-- <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." <sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." <sup>59</sup> Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. (Jn. 6:41-59 ESV)

*This extended metaphor using bread and food continues. John goes on using the word believe to drive home his point. In v. 41 the Jews complain because by referring to Himself as "bread from heaven," Jesus is again claiming to be equal to God. Jesus answers saying that not everyone will receive Him. Only those who believe, as the Spirit draws them, will be saved. Jesus continues using the metaphor of bread and drink to the point in v. 51 where He equates this bread with His body. The Jews pick up on this and ask if Jesus is asking people to eat His very flesh. Cannibalism is forbidden in the OT. Jesus takes the metaphor to this extreme level to show us how deep our faith in Him and commitment to Him must be. Nothing can ever be allowed to disrupt our faith and our communion with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Nothing else could be more important. Nothing else could be more valuable. Nothing else could be more costly.*

<sup>60</sup> When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? <sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup> It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup> But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) <sup>65</sup> And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." <sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." <sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." <sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him. (Jn. 6:60-71 ESV)

*The disciples too are concerned with these words of Jesus about consuming His flesh. They had not yet realized the commitment that God is asking them to make to Jesus. Jesus' response to them is that this is a spiritual matter and the flesh is of no help. V. 66 tells us that many of Jesus' disciples turned back because of this. When Jesus asks Peter if wants to leave as well, Peter answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" If you refuse Jesus, then what is plan B? If God's word to you is false, then to whom will you turn to find the truth?*

<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. <sup>2</sup> Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. <sup>3</sup> So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. <sup>4</sup> For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> After saying this, he remained in Galilee. (Jn. 7:1-9 ESV)

*As time passes the Jewish leaders become more and more concerned about Jesus. They realize He is becoming a greater and greater threat to them. In response, Jesus becomes more cautious about giving them opportunities to seize Him. Jesus will deliver Himself over to them but not until the timing is perfect. When His brothers tell Him to show Himself more openly, He answers that it's not time for that just yet. They are free to do as they please but He is working on a schedule drawn out by the Father. He says that He's "not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come."*

*In our lives timing matters. The right words offered to a friend at the wrong time can have a disastrous effect. Let the Spirit guide you so that you might speak the right words at the right time - to the glory of God and to the benefit of your friend.*

<sup>10</sup> But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. <sup>11</sup> The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" <sup>12</sup> And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." <sup>13</sup> Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him. <sup>14</sup> About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. <sup>15</sup> The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" <sup>16</sup> So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. <sup>18</sup> The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. (Jn. 7:10-18 ESV)

*The Jewish leaders are now on the lookout trying to trap Jesus. Public opinion about Him is split. Some are afraid of Him. Others are scared to talk about Him. After secretly entering Jerusalem during this feast, Jesus shows Himself publicly. The leaders are not yet ready to confront Him in a crowd. They will be more emboldened as time goes on. As He speaks to the crowd, He claims that the proof, about who He is, is the fact that He is not seeking His own glory. In v. 17 He says, "If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority." The nature of Jesus is consistent with the nature of His Father. For those who know God's word, the things that Jesus did and said are consistent with what they see in the Word.*

*Have you ever heard or seen something that you recognized as true because it was consistent with God's word? As we grow in the Spirit and become more and more familiar with God and His ways we can see Him moving in ways that we might have missed before.*

<sup>19</sup> Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" <sup>20</sup> The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" <sup>21</sup> Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. <sup>22</sup> Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? <sup>24</sup> Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." <sup>25</sup> Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?" <sup>26</sup> And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? <sup>27</sup> But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." (Jn. 7:19-27 ESV)

*Jesus confronts the leaders who want to kill Him. Of course not everyone yet understands that leadership wants Him dead. So there is a confused response from the crowd. Jesus tried to show that the proof of who He was. This could be seen in His actions that were consistent with God's Word. In the same way He wants to demonstrate the duplicity of Jewish leadership by showing that their behavior is completely inconsistent with God's word. Even as He speaks the Jewish leaders are silent. The crowd wonders if their silence is due to the fact that they really do know that He is the Christ - the Messiah. In passages like this we can see how Jesus is controlling the situation. He is reaching those who are receptive to the leading of the Spirit and at the same time He is generating enough resistance from His enemies that they will, in God's time, take action against Jesus to kill Him.*

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. <sup>29</sup> I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." <sup>30</sup> So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. <sup>31</sup> Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" <sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. <sup>33</sup> Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. <sup>34</sup> You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." <sup>35</sup> The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? <sup>36</sup> What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come?'" (Jn. 7:28-36 ESV)

*Jesus continues to make claims about who He is – the Son of God, the Messiah. Anger against Him from Jewish leadership is growing but it has not yet reached a point where they will take action against Him. Jesus speaks to the crowd in veiled ways that His death is drawing nigh. How hard it must have been for Jesus to speak and act so as to orchestrate the events that would lead to His own death.*

<sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. <sup>40</sup> When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." <sup>41</sup> Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? <sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" <sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him. <sup>44</sup> Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. <sup>45</sup> The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" (Jn. 7:37-45 ESV)

*Have you noticed the growing tension as chapter 7 has progressed? There are still two very distinct groups in view. There are those who are becoming more outspoken about Jesus being the Messiah and those who oppose Him and are becoming more and more serious about killing Him. When a question arises about whether the Christ will come from Galilee, the Jewish leadership argue against Jesus by saying that the Christ must come from Bethlehem. The irony, of course, is that Jesus is from Bethlehem! When the officers fail to arrest Jesus, the Jewish leadership chide them for their failure.*

*Can you sense the confusion in the air? For those aware of what was happening it must have seemed as those things were getting more and more out of control. But things were not as they seemed. God's plan was working itself out just as He wanted. When things seem to be spinning more and more wildly out of control in your life do you get flustered? Or do you manage to center yourself around the truth that God really is in control?*

<sup>46</sup> The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" <sup>47</sup> The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? <sup>48</sup> Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup> But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." <sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup> "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" <sup>52</sup> They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." <sup>53</sup> [They went each to his own house, (Jn. 7:46-53 ESV)]

*As this chapter draws to a close, we see that even between the Pharisees and the officers there is disagreement about who Jesus is. The Pharisees claim they know the truth. They say it is the crowd of people who don't know the law that is accursed. They cannot see the truth that it is they themselves who are accursed because they have misread and misunderstood the purpose of the law. See how Nicodemus has changed over time. He has now reached a point where he is willing to be vocal in supporting Jesus. He may still have a way to go, but he is no longer willing to sit idly by and watch leadership condemn Jesus unjustly. The lines are being more clearly drawn between those who are for Jesus and those who are against Him.*

<sup>1</sup> but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup> Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup> they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" <sup>6</sup> This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup> And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup> And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." ] (Jn. 8:1-11 ESV)

*John chapter 8 begins with a well known story about a woman caught in the act of adultery. The scribes and Pharisees bring her before Jesus and ask what should be done with her. If she was caught in the act then there also was a man caught in the act. Why have they not brought him before Jesus as well? By letting the man go free they show their hypocrisy – they wish to protect the male and punish only the female. When Jesus asks that the one without sin should cast the first stone He is confronting them about their hypocrisy. While they never verbally admit any wrong doing, they are all shamed by what Jesus has said and they walk away one by one. When they've all left Jesus speaks to the woman. He does not tell her that it's fine for her to be an adulteress. Rather He tells her to go and sin no more. He has done a good thing for all involved. For the woman, He has forced her to face her sin and to renounce it from then on. For the scribes and Pharisees, He has forced them to face the sin of their hypocrisy. They wanted to trap Jesus and force Him to either a) be a hypocrite by letting the woman disobey the law or b) be a hypocrite by allowing the woman to be stoned while proclaiming the love and mercy of God for all who believe. In this passage, Jesus provides a good example of how God's ways are above our ways.*

<sup>12</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." <sup>13</sup> So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." <sup>14</sup> Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup> Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. <sup>18</sup> I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." <sup>19</sup> They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." <sup>20</sup> These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. (Jn. 8:12-20 ESV)

*When Jesus again tries to explain to them who He is, the scribes and Pharisees say that He cannot be believed because He has no witness. The laws required that there should be at least two who witnessed the same truth before it should be accepted. Jesus counters that He has a witness - the Father. When, in v. 19, they ask Jesus where His Father is, they are again trying to trap Him. If Jesus answers in public that His Father is in heaven, then they will be able to say that Jesus has claimed God as His Father and in doing so has committed blasphemy. Jesus avoids the trap and this section ends by telling us that Jesus was not arrested because His time had not yet come.*

*Do you see here the wisdom of Jesus to be aware at each turn how His enemies are trying to catch Him in these verbal traps? I know for a fact that I could never see through these many trials and would be caught in one quite soon. But here's the thing. Jesus promises to give us the very words to speak as a witness for Him.*

**<sup>13</sup> This will be your opportunity to bear witness. <sup>14</sup> Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, <sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. (Lk. 21:13-15 ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." <sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." <sup>25</sup> So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. <sup>26</sup> I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." <sup>27</sup> They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup> And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." <sup>30</sup> As he was saying these things, many believed in him. (Jn. 8:21-30 ESV)

*Jesus continues telling them in veiled ways about His death and the implications that it will have for them. The Jews wonder if He's going to kill Himself. So He says more plainly that those who believe in Him will have eternal life while those who won't believe will die in their sins. After this remark, they ask plainly, "Who are you?" Jesus again avoids the trap. He basically says "I'm the one I've been claiming to be from the beginning." In v. 28 Jesus declares who He is by telling them what He will do. Jesus says, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he." This section concludes by telling us that as Jesus spoke these words, "many believed in him."*

<sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." <sup>33</sup> They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free?'" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." <sup>39</sup> They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup> but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. (Jn. 8:31-40 ESV)

*Jesus tells the people that if they believe in Him, then they will know the truth and the truth will set them free. The scribes and Pharisees answer that they have never been slaves - they are the children of Abraham. Jesus explains that whoever sins is a slave to sin. He tells them that they are trying to kill Him. He says that if they were Abraham's children then they would behave like Abraham and they would not be trying to kill Him. He wants them to see their hypocrisy but they are blind to it. Their hatred for Jesus prevents them from being able to know the truth about Him and be set free. God does not condemn them, rather they condemn themselves.*

***Notes from Home Church***

**Community Prayers**

<sup>41</sup> You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father-- even God." <sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup> Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." <sup>48</sup> The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" <sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup> Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. (Jn. 8:41-50 ESV)

*Jesus now becomes very bold and in v. 44 He tells them very plainly that they are of their father the devil. He tells them that they are doing the things their father does. The Jews reject all that He has to say about them. In vv. 49-50 Jesus takes solace in the fact that He is not alone. The Father is with Him. In fact, He is not seeking His own glory, but rather it is the Father who is seeking Jesus' glory.*

<sup>51</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."  
<sup>52</sup> The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.'<sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?"<sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'<sup>55</sup> But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."<sup>57</sup> So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"<sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."<sup>59</sup> So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. (Jn. 8:51-59 ESV)

*In this passage we find what may be the strongest claim in scripture made by Jesus to be the equal of the Father. The discussion turns to Abraham. In v. 56, Jesus says that Abraham rejoiced to see His day. The Jews respond that Jesus is not yet fifty years old. They ask Him, "Have you seen Abraham?" Jesus answers, "before Abraham was I am." The statement catches the readers attention. The grammar is wrong. If Jesus intends simply to say that He was around before Abraham He would have said, "before Abraham was I already was." The second verb should be in the past tense. You see, Jesus is not concerned about grammar, when He says, "I am" He is claiming that His name is the very name by which God named Himself back in the book of Exodus.*

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exod. 3:13-14 ESV)

*Jesus is saying that His name is "The Great I AM." The Hebrew for "I am" is Yahweh. Nowhere in scripture does He ever come so close to openly saying, "I am God" than He does here in John 8:58. (This is a very good verse to commit to memory.) His words are not wasted on the Jews. In their opinion He has just committed blasphemy. That's why they pick up stones to attack Him. The penalty for blasphemy is death.*

<sup>1</sup>As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup>Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup> and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. (Jn. 9:1-7 ESV)

*John 9 opens with the story of Jesus healing a blind man. As He and his disciples are walking they come along a man who was born blind. The disciples wonder why this man was blind at birth. It was assumed that blindness is a punishment for sin. They apparently reason together that if he's blind then he must have sinned. But they have a problem. The man was born blind, so did he sin before he was born so that his punishment was to be born blind? They continue discussing the matter and ask one another if it's possible to sin before birth. One of them apparently suggested that maybe it was his parents who had sinned. Then the question came up about whether God punishes someone, although the person was him/herself innocent, whose parents had sinned. Scripture includes none of the detail I've just presented, but I think it's fair to say that something of this sort took place between v. 1 and v. 2. Why else would they ask Jesus if this man had sinned or his parents? Jesus answered them saying that this blindness was not the result of anyone's sin. The error in the disciples thinking lies at the very start of their line of reasoning. It is incredibly common for people to think that if something bad comes their way then it must be because of sin. We do the same thing today. Have you ever said or thought, when something bad happened to you, "What did I do to deserve this?" The truth is that God can use bad circumstances to bring glory to Himself and blessing to others. Jesus tells His disciples that this man was born blind for that very reason. So the next time that something "bad" happens to you, don't despair. It just may be that God is setting up the right circumstances to bring you a wonderful blessing and glory to Himself. You cannot yet see that blessing but, by faith, you can know that He is working for your good.*

**<sup>28</sup>And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28 ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup> Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." <sup>10</sup> So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup> He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." <sup>12</sup> They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." <sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. (Jn. 9:8-14 ESV)

*When people see this blind man who has just been healed, they are slow to believe what they see. When the man is questioned, he says that yes he was blind but Jesus opened his eyes. So the people bring him to the Pharisees. In v. 14 we find the Pharisees response to this miracle. They will not find in this healing any reason to give glory to God; rather they will again try to dishonor Jesus because He has done "work" on the Sabbath which is against the law. Because they hate Jesus they will find cause to condemn Him even when He uses his power to bless and glorify God. So when Jesus works in the world, He has at least two goals in mind. First, He is working to bless people and glorify God and secondly, He is working to make sin evident both to the sinner and to the world. He exposes sin not because He wants to condemn people. Rather He exposes sin in the hope that people, faced with their sin, will repent and find forgiveness and salvation in Him.*

<sup>15</sup> So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." <sup>18</sup> The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup> and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" <sup>20</sup> His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. <sup>21</sup> But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." (Jn. 9:15-21 ESV)

*The Pharisees ask the man how he regained his sight. So the man tells them about how Jesus put mud on his eyes and when he washed them clean he could see. Some of the Pharisees insist that Jesus is a sinner; others ask how a sinner could be able to do such things. When they ask the healed man he says that Jesus is a prophet. The Jews are not yet ready to admit that Jesus has in fact healed this man. So they have his parents brought in. When the Pharisees question his parents they say that a) yes he is our son, b) yes he was born blind and c) we don't know how he got his sight back, and d) he is of age, ask him how his sight was healed.*

*Some people will want to deny Jesus no matter how much evidence is available to support Him and His claims. Have you ever encountered people like that? Don't give up on them. Pray for them. Know for a fact that the Holy Spirit is working in their lives to bring them to repentance. Perhaps they will never repent. But whatever they may do, our task is to remain faithful and sincere followers of Jesus.*

<sup>22</sup> (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." <sup>24</sup> So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." <sup>25</sup> He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." <sup>26</sup> They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup> He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" <sup>28</sup> And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. (Jn. 9:22-28 ESV)

*John continues the story telling us that the man's parents said what they did because they were afraid of the Pharisees. The Pharisees have the man brought back again. They tell the man that they know that Jesus is a sinner. He says to them, "Whether He is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They ask him yet again how Jesus had healed him. This man begins to lose patience with the Pharisees. He says that he has already told them exactly what Jesus did. He asks if they want to become His disciples too. Then they turn on him and accuse him of being a disciple of Jesus. They claim to be disciples of Moses.*

*The Pharisees will not give up trying to find some grounds to accuse Jesus. Their hatred and selfishness drives them on. As Jesus had said to them, they behave like their father. So don't be surprised when the world hates you and belittles you for your faith. They are just behaving like their father. It's all they have. Pray for them that the Spirit might break through the darkness and they might be saved.*

**29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. (Jn. 9:29-34 ESV)**

*The Pharisees continue their argument here. They claim they know that God spoke through Moses, but they don't know where this Jesus comes from. The man basically asks them what they are talking about. The reason the Pharisees know that God spoke through Moses was because of the miraculous signs that God worked through Moses. Here and now, Jesus is doing the same thing. Jesus is working miraculous signs and blessing God's people. The man tells them, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." Of course, the man is absolutely correct. The Pharisees know it and, being even more infuriated, they scold him and throw him out.*

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup> He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." <sup>38</sup> He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. (Jn. 9:35-41 ESV)

*After the man is thrown out by the Pharisees, Jesus finds him. Jesus asks him if he believes in the Son of Man. The man confesses his faith in Jesus and worships Him. Here is yet another proof from scripture about Jesus' deity. Jesus willingly accepts worship. No righteous person (or angel) in scripture ever accepts worship. Worship is due to God alone. The fact that Jesus accepts worship is proof of His deity. Jesus said He came to give sight to the blind and to make those who see become blind. In saying that He gives sight to the blind, He is saying that He is the Savior. Those who put their faith in Him will see – they will be saved. Those who see, that is, those who claim to know the truth of God yet reject Jesus, will lose their sight. When the Pharisees overhear this and ask Jesus if they too are blind, Jesus answers them. "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. In other words, Jesus is telling them that they are guilty because even though they have enough knowledge of God to know better, they still reject His grace and mercy that are offered only through Jesus.*

*The world does not want to be lost. The world wants salvation but it wants salvation on its terms. The world wants to claim that it deserves salvation on its own. But the truth is that God offers salvation only on His terms. Until and unless a person confesses that they are guilty and in need of a savior, that person remains guilty. God offers salvation only to those who acknowledge their sin, repent of it and put their faith in Jesus. Before you became a believer, you probably, like many in the world, believed that you were somehow ok with God. How did God open your eyes to the truth? By remembering how you came to Jesus in saving faith, you might be able to be more useful to God in leading unbelievers to Him.*

<sup>1</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>7</sup> So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. (Jn. 10:1-7 ESV)

*Jesus is claiming that He is legitimately who He claims to be. Theologians speak of "general revelation" and "specific revelation." General revelation has to do with the fact that God has placed evidence of Himself in creation. This evidence is made for all to see. Specific revelation has to do with the word of God - scripture. Jesus is saying that those who have recognized God through general revelation will be able to more clearly see that God is revealing Himself in Jesus through specific revelation i.e. in scripture. He is the legitimate Shepherd. His sheep will recognize Him. They already have enough evidence to know Him when they see Him. As Jesus put it, "the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."*

*There are certain themes that recur over and over again in scripture. These reveal truths about God that He wants us to grasp and respond to. His unfailing covenant love for us is one of these. His sacrificial and costly offering of His Son is another. What, in your opinion, are some other important themes that you find in the bible from cover to cover. As you grow in your faith, you will grow to know more and more of these core issues. You will grow to see God at work in the world. Stay attentive! Stay focused!*

**<sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, (Jn. 10:8-14 ESV)**

*Vv. 8-14 reinforce the same basic idea presented at the start of this chapter. Jesus claims to be the only means to obtain salvation. Many want to believe that all religions are the same - all simply different paths leading up the mountain to where God dwells at the summit. Nothing could be further from the truth. While there are some ideas that are shared among most if not all world religions, every religion makes unique claims that make it incompatible with all others. For Christianity the defining doctrine is the fact that Jesus is equal to God the Father. Remove that truth and what is left might be called a religion or a set of religious doctrines but it is not Christianity. V. 14 is critically important for every Christian. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me."*

*Rejoice in the facts that as a believer a) God, in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, knows you and b) you know God by Jesus' offering of Himself for you and through the work of the Holy Spirit living, God in you.*

<sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." <sup>19</sup> There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. <sup>20</sup> Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?" <sup>21</sup> Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (Jn. 10:15-21 ESV)

*V. 16 here is a reference to the fact that Jesus is the savior of the world and not just the Jews. In the gospels, Jesus seems most often to imply that He has come for the Jews. There are a few places where He demonstrates that He has come to save Gentiles as well. This is one of those places. As Jesus said, "there will be one flock, one shepherd." Also here in v. 18, Jesus says that He has authority to lay down His life and to take it up again. In most places that talk about His resurrection, the scripture says that the Father will raise the Son back up to life. This is one of only a few places in scripture where Jesus says that He will raise Himself back up to life.*

*I find it interesting that the gospels speak more of Jesus coming to the Jews and less about His coming for the Gentiles as well. Why do you think that is so? Also, why would the gospels more often say that it is the Father who raised the Son back to life and less often say that Jesus raised Himself back to life?*

**<sup>22</sup> At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup> and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. <sup>24</sup> So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." <sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, <sup>26</sup> but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (Jn. 10:22-28 ESV)**

*Here we see the Jews confronting Jesus openly. They ask Him to say plainly that He is the Christ. They want to have a clear undeniable admission from Jesus so they can accuse Him of blasphemy. Jesus won't play their game. Once again He defers to His Father's witness about Him demonstrated by the works that the Father has done through Him. Jesus tells them plainly that they are not among His sheep. His sheep recognize His voice and follow Him. He reassures His believers, "no one will snatch them out of my hand."*

*The unfortunate truth is that there are some who will refuse to believe in Jesus. They will commit the unpardonable sin of refusing to repent and be saved. But take courage. While some may never repent, there are also some who repent. Those who do can rest assured that they are safe in the Father's hand. Believers can rest assured today that they need not worry that will some how not be good enough in the end to be saved. The first thing that God does in the life of a new believer is to completely forgive all their sin.*

**<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10 ESV)**

**<sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one." <sup>31</sup> The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. <sup>32</sup> Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" <sup>33</sup> The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? <sup>35</sup> If he called them gods to whom the word of God came-- and Scripture cannot be broken-- <sup>36</sup> do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? (Jn. 10:28-36 ESV)**

*In v. 29, Jesus reassures His believers that they are secure and have no need to fear. In v. 30 He claims that He and the Father are one. In so doing He is claiming to be equal to God the Father. Upon hearing this, the Jews pick up stones to kill Him for blasphemy. In v. 34 Jesus quotes Psa 82:6*

**<sup>2</sup> "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah <sup>3</sup> Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." <sup>5</sup> They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. <sup>6</sup> I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; (Ps. 82:2-6 ESV)**

*Here we see the psalmist saying that God's people are all gods in that they do the works of God as demonstrated in vv. 3-4 of Psa 82. So Jesus' point here may be that since God, in Psa 82, calls all those who do His will are called gods, then why are the Pharisees so upset by His claims? Of course Jesus is saying that He is more than a mere human who happens to be doing God's will. But He is questioning the Pharisees about whether they have any right to accuse Him of blasphemy. The Pharisees are not willing to consider any way that Jesus might not be making blasphemous claims. They simply want to get any proof, even if they have to manufacture it, which they will ultimately do, to prove that Jesus is guilty. They want a reason, any reason they might find, to put Him to death. In v. 36, Jesus denies that He is blaspheming when He says that He is the Son of God.*

<sup>37</sup> If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; <sup>38</sup> but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." <sup>39</sup> Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. <sup>40</sup> He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. <sup>41</sup> And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." <sup>42</sup> And many believed in him there. (Jn. 10:37-42 ESV)

*Jesus is claiming in v. 37 that the proofs that He is who He says He is are the very works that He has been and is performing. If they won't take His word for who He is then He asks them to look at the works. How else could He do what He's doing - the same argument that the blind man earlier made before the Pharisees. As the chapter ends, we see in v. 42 that more and more people are coming to believe in Him. The people are saying that the Baptist himself may not have performed any miraculous signs but his witness about Jesus has been proved to be true by what Jesus has done.*

***Notes from Home Church***

***Community Prayers***