21 DAY

BIBLE READING PLAN

Research shows that it takes 21 days to form a habit. Why not take the next 21 days and get into the habit of reading God's Word? By reading through the Gospel of John, you'll hear Jesus teach, see Him at work and discover He is the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd and the Savior God promised.

Enjoy your Bible reading!

With Pastor Bryan Clark

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21-DAY READING BREAKDOWN:

___Day 1 . . . . . John 1:1–51

___Day 2 . . . . . John 2:1–25

___Day 3 . . . . . John 3:1–36

___Day 4 . . . . . John 4:1–54

___Day 5 . . . . . John 5:1–47

___Day 6 . . . . . John 6:1–71

___Day 7 . . . . . John 7:1–52

___Day 8 . . . . . John 8:1–59

___Day 9 . . . . . John 9:1–41

___Day 10 . . . . . John 10:1–42

___Day 11 . . . . . John 11:1–57

___Day 12 . . . . . John 12:1–50

___Day 13 . . . . . John 13:1–38

___Day 14 . . . . . John 14:1–31

___Day 15 . . . . . John 15:1–27

___Day 16 . . . . . John 16:1–33

___Day 17 . . . . . John 17:1–26

___Day 18 . . . . . John 18:1–40

___Day 19 . . . . . John 19:1–42

___Day 20 . . . . . John 20:1–31

___Day 21 . . . . . John 21:1–25

21 DAY JOURNEY TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT WHO JESUS IS:

Before we get started here are some words and thoughts for you to consider.

So who is Jesus? It's the question we are going to be wrestling with throughout this 21 day challenge. There are a lot of opinions about who Jesus was and who He is. Some people just summarily dismiss Jesus and think that takes care of it. Wouldn't everyone have to agree that, at the very least, Jesus was one of the most significant people in all recorded history?Let's face it, our whole way of dating goes back to before Him and after Him. There's a movement He started that has permeated every area of the globe, penetrated every culture of the world. The world celebrates two international holidays, dealing with His birth and His claim of resurrection. Even if you are a skeptic, you would have to admit, historically, He is one of the most significant people ever to live. So to have intellectual credibility, you can't just summarily dismiss Him. You would have to investigate who He was, what His claims were, and whether He was telling the truth or not.

But, it isn't just the skeptics that wrestle with this question; there're lots of very religious people who are very confused about the answer of the question: Who is Jesus? We could narrow the scope further and say there are many Christians who still are very confused about who Jesus is. There are many myths that need to be dispelled in order to better understand the truth of who Jesus is. Someone might ask the question, "What difference does this make?" The answer is, "It makes all the difference! Only when one cultivates a right view of Jesus do you begin to experience the intimacy and the life that your soul longs for. It makes all the difference."

–Pastor Bryan Clark

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DAY 1 – JOHN 1

In today's reading, John 1:18 stands out. "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

Did you know that the responsibility of Jesus was to explain God for us? Jesus' life as a man was God's way of putting on sandals, walking around on this earth and saying, "This is Me! This is my heart! This is my compassion! This is my love! This is my kindness!" Sometimes we can get some crazy ideas about who God is. But if you really want to know who He is, there's no better place to look than at the One who's assigned the responsibility to explain God for us: Jesus.

PRAYER

Our Father, we are thankful that You love us, that You sent Jesus to be the Word made flesh in order to explain your heart to the world. Lord, I pray over the next several weeks that You would open our eyes to the truth of who Jesus is. We pray that for the next 21 days our hearts and our minds would be opened in a new and fresh way, that we would find Jesus irresistible. We pray we would fall more deeply in love with the One who has poured out grace upon grace to us as sinful people. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

As you read through the Gospel of John in this 21 day challenge, pay attention to how Jesus lived. Look at how He treated the sinners and the strugglers and the misfits. Look at how they responded to Him! And as you watch Jesus and His ministry remember that you're not just seeing the actions of man, but you are seeing the heart of God on full display for everyone to see.

DAY 2 – JOHN 2

Today we continue to get to know Jesus in our study of the Gospel of John. A lot happens in today's chapter (John 2) including the very first miracle Jesus performed: turning water into wine at a wedding feast.

In John chapter 2 we see Jesus celebrating a wedding with friends and family. It's not uncommon to think that we as Christians must always be serious as we go about Christ's work. But then we miss out on the joy and fellowship that comes from celebrating God's good work!

We learn more about Jesus in the second half of the John:2 when He visits the temple in Jerusalem. As John describes Jesus chasing out the merchants, he quotes a verse from the Psalms: "zeal for your house will consume me." When Jesus saw people dishonoring God in the very place designed for worship, He couldn't let such a thing stand.

The Apostle Paul would later describe our own bodies as a temple to God. So, how are you honoring God today?

PRAYER

Our Father, We understand that we can't provide our own internal fulfillment and joy and that we need you. You are the only one who can bring joy and fill all the empty parts of us. We pray that as we continue in our reading of John that our faith in you would deepen and that we would get continue to know and understand who you were and your heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now here's a memorable story: Jesus turns water into wine. But has it ever struck you as kind of an odd miracle? I mean, Jesus is known for healing the sick and the lame and for driving out demons. But did He really get his start performing "social miracles" like this? It's a bit like watching a Before They Were Stars special.

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DAY 2 – JOHN 2 CONT.

So, why is this story important? That's a good question, but there's a danger to avoid in answering it. Be careful how much you read into the specifics of any Bible story. If you wanted to, you could launch an in-depth study of how the word "water," for instance, is used in the Bible. What was wine like in Jesus' day? The word "bridegroom" comes up elsewhere in Scripture--in Revelation Jesus is seen as the bridegroom of the Church. Is that important here?

These are interesting questions, but the Bible actually tells us quite plainly why this story is here. "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (2:11, ESV). This miracle was done for the disciple's benefit.
A lot of bad theology comes from reading too deeply into the words of the Bible. But God hasn't made the truth hard to find. You just have to accept it when you see it.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
Think about what you read today, Does it change how you view Jesus at all? Do you find yourself becoming too serious sometimes? Have your forgotten God created joy and fun and fulfillment? Or are you like the merchants in the temple? Uncaring and unconcerned about how your actions reflect upon God. We need to have a healthy respect and awe of God but we should ask ourselves is this God's Kingdom I'm living in our my own? Do I let God fill me with Joy or do I look to this world?

DAY 3 – JOHN 3

In today's Chapter 3, there's one quality of Jesus that stands out above all the others; can you guess what it is? It's love! "For God so loved the world..." is a phrase familiar to many people whether or not they've spent any time in a church. But do you remember the rest of the verse? "...that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." This verse is, of course, John 3:16.

This is an incredible promise! As you read through John 3, count the number of times this promise is restated (John 3:15 is a good place to start.) As you do, you'll start to see a bigger picture here: God's not just providing salvation--eternal life--to you and me for no reason. He's providing it because we need it; we're doomed otherwise! And given that we cannot save ourselves, it's up to God to provide it. Jesus is God's provision for eternal life and all you have to do is believe it.

PRAYER
Father, as we read through these verses, help us begin to grasp the enormity of your love. Lord, we are so grateful for the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. We pray also for opportunities to share this truth with others. Bring others into our lives--or show us who's already there--who needs to know of Your love and Your salvation.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
Meeting Jesus is a central theme of the Gospel of John. But meeting Jesus is a lot like meeting anyone. An introduction and handshake doesn't mean that we trust our new acquaintance. And Jesus won't settle for being among our acquaintances. That's not why He came. He came to provide eternal life to all who go beyond meeting Him to believing in Him. How would you describe your present relationship with Jesus?

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DAY 4 – JOHN 4

We have a tendency to think everybody's fine and nobody really wants to hear the message of Jesus. I would say that's totally false. As a matter of fact, it's completely backwards. I don't think most people are fine. I think most people are experiencing deep pain, frustration, despair, hopelessness and, actually, they would very much like a meaningful, respectful, compassionate conversation about Jesus. I think, if you look at our culture, the evidence of pain is everywhere--from our addictions, from our busyness, to our materialism, to our immorality, there are so many evidences that we are a people in pain.

Our challenge is to see people through a biblical lens rather than this lens that is so driven by the media that divides the world into "us" and "them." If you take away the behaviors and the labels, at the end of the day, we're people that want to love. We want to be loved; we want to find happiness; we want to find joy; we want to have meaning and purpose in life. If we separate all that other stuff that divides us, we're very much alike, we're a people in pain. It is sobering to realize that we, as Christians, have the message of hope to carry into the darkness to meet people at their point of pain and to let them know there is hope. When you read John 4, you'll be able to see Jesus put this love into action.

PRAYER

Father, as we read of Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well, we pray that You'll remind us of those in our lives who have yet to meet Jesus. We pray that you would provide opportunities to share the Good News with our friends and family. Help us to see the world as You see it; to see the hurts and pains might otherwise go hidden. Give us the words to say to shine the message of hope brightly to the world around us.

DAY 4 – JOHN 4 CONT.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

In the last chapter, we saw a theme begin–the theme of a new spiritual life, of being born again into an everlasting life through belief in Jesus. In this chapter, we find that spiritual lives, like physical lives, need nourishment. Jesus begins by discussing spiritual thirsts. The woman Jesus talked to at the well had a spiritual thirst for a relationship, but after five husbands, she was still thirsty. That's the thirst Jesus wants to quench--the thirst for a deep, meaningful relationship.

Jesus talks later to His disciples about spiritual hunger that is satisfied through doing the will of God.

There's many people who have yet to hear about God, many opportunities yet for the spiritually hungry to be filled. Is your spirit being nourished today?

DAY 5 – JOHN 5

There's a great irony found in today's passage from the Gospel of John. In verses 39 and 40, Jesus is talking to the Pharisees--the religious leaders of the day. The Pharisees were angry at Jesus for two reasons: He broke the Sabbath (by healing a man who had been unable to walk for 38 years), and He referred to Himself as equal with God. To see a man flaunting religious tradition and yet declaring Himself God was blasphemy in their eyes.

But in confronting them, Jesus says: "'You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.'" The Pharisees had become so caught up in trying to please God by following the religious law they missed the point of the Scriptures they loved. It's no wonder that wherever Jesus went, more and more people followed Him, worshipping their Savior.

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DAY 5 – JOHN 5 CONT.

PRAYER
Heavenly Father, thank you for being a compassionate God who not only provides our spiritual necessities, but can heal our broken bodies as well. We pray that as we go about this day that we will be able to exercise the same compassion you showed to those we encounter.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
Jesus identifies Himself with God the Father several times in this chapter.

How do you see God's heart on display through Jesus' actions here?

Why do you suppose Jesus didn't just say to the crippled man, "stay here, I'll be back tomorrow," but instead healed the man immediately?

It's important to show proper reverence for God in our actions, but part of that means following the example Jesus set while He walked the earth.

DAY 6 – JOHN 6

If you grew up going to Sunday School and VBS, this is probably a very familiar chapter to you: Jesus feeds the 5,000! With only five barley loaves and two small fish, a multitude was served with enough leftovers to fill twelve baskets. And then we get to this verse: "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."

They missed the point. You don't force Jesus to be your King, you accept Him as the Son of God. When those people caught up with Jesus the next day, His response drove the point home in a dramatic way--and caused many people to turn away.

DAY 6 – JOHN 6 CONT.

I hope you spend time reading and rereading this chapter; it is so rich that a quick summary can't do it justice (we didn't even mention Jesus walking on the water!) And as you do, prayerfully ask God to help you see the meaning in Jesus' words from so long ago.

PRAYER
Dear heavenly Father as we read through this passage of Scripture please help us to see what it means to accept Jesus on His terms and not our own. And help us to understand our own motivations for following Jesus. Help us to be able to recognize, like Peter, that only in Jesus are the words of life to be found.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
As you read through this chapter ask yourself about motivations: what motivated Jesus to provide food for the crowd?

Why did He slip away when He say they would make Him King?

Why did Jesus teach the way He did even knowing that some people would turn away?

And ask yourself about your own motivations: Why are you following Jesus?

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DAY 7 – JOHN 7

One of the goals of this 21 Day Challenge is to help you gain a clearer idea of who Jesus is based on the Gospel of John. We've considered His divine nature, and His humanity. We've seen Him heal the sick, feed the hungry, and cleanse the temple. And though we're only a third of the way through this Gospel, we hope that by the end, you'll know enough about Jesus to make a decision about Him.

In fact, "decisions" are a main focus of chapter seven. In verse five, we see that Jesus' brothers had already made a decision about Him. In 11-12, we see Jews talking about Him trying to come to a decision. The Pharisees had made up their minds a long time ago, but when they sent men to arrest Him, they returned empty handed saying, "No one ever spoke like this man!" (v. 46) They had made their decision too.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for not keeping yourself hidden, but revealing yourself to us through Scripture. Help us to see clearly the life you offer and to recognize the lies of those who have us turn away from you.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Right at the center of this chapter, Jesus makes this statement: "'Do not judge by appearances, but make a right judgment.'" He said this to the pharisees to point out their hypocrisy when they condemned Him for healing a man on the Sabbath (see chapter 5). But it's a reminder to all of us to think clearly about our decision regarding Jesus. The Pharisees rejected Jesus because He didn't live up to their standards. But if they had truly understood the Scriptures, they would have recognized Jesus as the Son of God right away.

DAY 8 – JOHN 8

Before you jump into today's chapter in the Gospel of John, I want you to go back to chapter 1 and re-read verses 9-13, because they provide a wonderful summary of what Jesus talks about in the temple in chapter 8.

Jesus also reiterates something about Himself in chapter 8 that you may remember from chapter 3. In 8:15 Jesus says, "I judge no one," which is an echo of what He said to Nicodemus back in 3:17 "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."

Keep these things in mind as you read today's chapter.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for sending the light that brings life. Thank you for offering a way of salvation so that we do not have to die in our sins. We pray that you would shine your light through us as we interact with our friends, family and coworkers and that you would give us the words to say when they ask about the hope they see in us.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Today's chapter builds on a lot of things we've already learned about Jesus. He is the light that brings life. He didn't come to condemn the world, but to offer a way to salvation. And then there's verse 31: "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." That word "abide" is an important word in the Gospels and it means to "stay, remain, or continue." Think of how a plant thrives by "abiding" in the sunlight and ask yourself "how do I remain in the presence of Jesus? How do I walk with Him; continue on with Him?"

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DAY 9 – JOHN 9

The disciples begin this chapter by raising a question a lot of us have asked. They see a man who was blind from birth, and they feel pity for him. It must have been terrible living in such a state, and such misery could only be the result of sin. Right? Jesus' answer to the disciples' question is understandably hard to swallow.

"'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.'" In other words, this man was born blind and lived blind so that one day Jesus could heal him. It wasn't punishment for someone's sin or the result of someone's carelessness; he was blind so God could display His glory. Does that sound cruel of God?

The fact is, all of us are born in an equally miserable state. We're all born blind to spiritual matters. We're all born with a sinful spirit and a rebellious nature awaiting the day we meet Jesus. The problem is, some people, like the Pharisees, don't recognize their own blindness.

PRAYER
Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus into the world to be our light and to show us your glory. Help us to see the need for your forgiveness. We pray that, like the man in today's passage, we may one day be able to say, "I was blind, now I see."

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
It's easy to look at a physically challenged person and see his or her limitations and feel sorry for that person. But as Jesus pointed out time and again, it's possible to be physically whole yet spiritually disabled.

Do you know someone who hasn't yet met Jesus? Maybe you're in his or her life to make the introduction. More than anything, Jesus wants to restore that person's sight and show him or her the glory of God.

What are some ways you can make that introduction?

DAY 10 – JOHN 10

A common mistake people make in Bible reading is to assume that when a chapter ends, so does the story or lesson. Sometimes that's the case, but today it's not. So, take a moment to remind yourself of what happened in chapter 9: it involved a blind man and a confrontation.

For several chapters now we've seen Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Jews. It would seem that the Pharisees would be delighted to have Jesus, the Son of God, among them. The Pharisees had devoted their lives to serving God and following His law and teaching others to do the same. But Jesus revealed the truth about them. They weren't serving God with all their religious practices; they were serving themselves.

The parable is also a warning for today. There are many religious leaders out there who claim to be serving God but are really only serving themselves. How can you and I avoid them? "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (10:27, ESV). Become familiar with the voice of Jesus by spending time in His Word. And when you listen to the men and women claiming to be servants of God, listen to the Spirit's prompting in your heart. He knows the voice of God, and will recognize those who speak for Him.

PRAYER
Dear Heavenly Father, as we read today's passage, open our ears to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. Guard our hearts against those who would seek to harm us and cause us to doubt the goodness of Jesus.

REFLECTIONS & APPLICATION
According to Jesus, what are some characteristics of the Good Shepherd? What are the promises that Jesus makes to the "sheep" in this passage?
As a Christ-follower, the reality is that there are wolves out there looking for opportunities to attack the sheep. But our Shepherd is greater than the wolves! What can you do today to stay near Jesus and listen to His voice?

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DAY 11 – JOHN 11

When we think about Jesus, it's easy to go to one of two extremes. One extreme emphasizes His humanity. People who do this will read the Gospels and especially notice where Jesus talks about His compassion for others, His tiredness, the pleasure He gets from being in the company of others. When they read John 11, they'll be particularly moved by the verse, "Jesus wept" (11:35, ESV). Who wouldn't weep at the tomb of a good friend?

Others will focus on the divine nature of Jesus. They'll look at the miracles of turning water into wine or giving sight to the blind man and declare that only God can do such things. When they look at John 11, they'll key in on verse 43 where Jesus "cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out'" (ESV).

PRAYER
Lord Jesus, it's hard to comprehend the sheer magnitude of your being; how you can be fully human and yet fully God at the same time. As we read today's passage help us to see Jesus in a new light. Allow us to experience again the wonder and awe of the miracle of Jesus' life and sacrifice on our behalf.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
It's not entirely wrong to lean toward one or the other view of Jesus. On different days, in different situations we need God in different ways. Some days we need a miracle! Some days we need a friend to listen and reassure. Look at where you are in your walk with Jesus today and pray to God according your needs. And pray that not only would your needs be met, but that God would be glorified through your life.

DAY 12 – JOHN 12

In this chapter we see into the hearts of several people. In 12:3 we see Mary's heart for Jesus--He was worth an extravagant sacrifice. This in turn reveals something about Judas' heart.

In the rest of the chapter we see the crowds turn out at Jerusalem's gate to welcome Jesus; we see men from Greece asking for an introduction. And we see the chief priests still plotting to kill Him, and now plotting to kill Lazarus as well! (See 12:10-11.) We also see that many believed in Him, but were afraid to say so publicly. (See 12:42-43)

Finally, in the end, we see again in Jesus' heart: "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." (12:46)

PRAYER
Lord, you know my heart. You know how unworthy and sinful I am. But your love was so great that you gave Jesus to die for my sins. Help me to see your Son more clearly. I pray that day by day I would grow closer to Him.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
It's impossible to have an encounter with Jesus without being affected in some way. Some people turn and run, but return later. Some welcome Jesus with open arms, but later abandon Him.

Where are you at in your walk with Jesus?

If you worship Jesus privately, what's keeping you from worshipping Him openly?

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DAY 13 – JOHN 13

At this point in the Book of John we've seen Jesus turn water into wine, feed more than 5,000 people with only a couple loaves of bread and fish, walk on water, chase the money-changers out of the temple of Jerusalem, and, in chapter 11, call a dead man out of his grave. So, it's understandable surprising when in this chapter, Jesus wraps a towel around his waist and begins washing the feet of the disciples.

Peter is also surprised and even rebukes Jesus. We do the same thing today when we try to dictate the means of our salvation. We say, "I must do this great deed, to be worthy of your attention!" And Jesus' response to us is the same as His reply to Peter, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

In the rest of the chapter, Jesus goes on to explain that this kind of sacrificial service will be the distinguishing mark of the disciple. "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

PRAYER
Jesus, thank you for the wonderful example of your life. Please help us to humbly accept your sacrifice for our sins, and give us opportunities to demonstrate your love for others.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
At the heart of the Gospel message is the idea of sacrificial love. Jesus, the Messiah, took on the role of a servant. He suffered death because He knew it would provide salvation for us.

What are some ways you can show this kind of love to those around you?

Have you ever been served in this way by another? How did it make you feel?

DAY 14 – JOHN 14

Some people who are critical of the idea of the Trinity (one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit) will rightfully point out that the word "trinity" is never used once in the Bible. But after reading a chapter like John 14, it's abundantly clear that there is something unique and wonderful about the person of God that deserves it's own word.

All throughout this Gospel Jesus has reminded us that He and the Father are one; He speaks for the Father; and to see One, is to know the other. And in this chapter Jesus mentions the Holy Spirit who would be sent after He has returned to Heaven. Jesus says, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

Just as Jesus came in God the Father's name, the Spirit comes in Jesus' name. The Spirit will continue to teach us and remind us of what Jesus taught. The Spirit won't be God in the Flesh; He will be God in the hearts of those who love Him.

Our job now is to continue living the way Jesus demonstrated, showing love for Him and compassion for others. And when you need help, the Spirit, the Divine Counselor will be there to assist.

PRAYER
Jesus, thank you for the comforting words found in today's chapter. Thank you that these words you spoke 2,000 years ago have been preserved for me to read in the first place! Thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit and we pray that we will continue to grow in our knowledge of You.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
The Holy Spirit wasn't the only thing Jesus promised in this chapter. Take a look back through the verses and find Jesus' other promises. What comes to mind when you imagine Jesus preparing a place for you? On what basis does Jesus tell the disciples to not be troubled or afraid?

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DAY 15 – JOHN 15

Jesus says in today's chapter of John. "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (15:5, ESV). And later He says, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (v. 11, ESV).

Walking with Jesus, living the way He lives and loving the way He loves is impossible without the Bible. Though Jesus is now in heaven with the Father, do you remember how He promised to help us until His return? The Holy Spirit, as we learned in chapter 14, will "bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26, ESV). The Holy Spirit is accomplishing this mission every day by speaking to you through the Bible. So, let's read!

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, as we open your Word again help us to hear your voice speaking to us. Help us to hear your wisdom in these words and to know that joy that comes from abiding in You.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

A life without Jesus is a life without joy and one full of spiritual frustration. That's why we need the Bible, not just for 21 days, but for a lifetime! Each day allow the Holy Spirit to remind you of God's love and Jesus' life. And then take those lessons into the world, and let others see.

What are some ways you've grown in your relationship with God through this study?

DAY 16 – JOHN 16

It's been close to 2,000 years since Jesus spoke the words in John 16 to the disciples gathered with Him in the Upper Room just hours before His death. And so we take it for granted that, of course, the disciples would go on to be Apostles, and spread the Good News to the surrounding nations. That the Apostle Paul would travel the known world preaching Jesus. For us, the formation and the spreading of the Church is ancient history.

But imagine being one of the disciples in that room on that night. The way Jesus has been talking makes it clear that something is about to happen, and now He's talking about going away, and coming back? How were the disciples supposed to carry on the work that the Son of God Himself had begun? Talk about big shoes to fill! Keep those fears and concerns in mind as you read today's chapter.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly father, thank you for these words of Jesus and the encouragement they provide. Help us to remember in our dark days that you are present, and grant us the peace you promise.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

In the first verses of this chapter, Jesus talks about how the disciples will be driven from the synagogues and even killed. But in the last verse, Jesus reminds them, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Have you ever experienced this supernatural peace?

What trials have you faced? What helped you keep your focus on Jesus?

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DAY 17 – JOHN 17

Have you ever been in a tough situation and asked a friend to pray? It's comforting to know that someone cares about you and is willing to pray on your behalf. It's a uniquely Christian experience too. It draws us together knowing we have a Father in heaven who not only listens to our prayer but actually asks us to give them. Did you know that Jesus said a prayer for you?

In John 17 we see Jesus pray, first for Himself and for God's glory, then for His disciples and then He turns His eyes to the future. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word" (17:20, ESV). Jesus knew that after He was gone, the message of Christ would spread like fire to the ends of the earth. That includes us today. Jesus went on to pray for us.

"That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (v. 21, ESV).

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for hearing our prayers! Thank you for loving us so much that you would send Jesus to die on our behalf to provide eternal life. We pray that you continue to support and guide us through our daily life.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Believers from all corners of the world, despite their differences, are united by their love of God and their desire to see His Kingdom spread on earth. And one of the best ways to maintain that unity is simply by praying for each other, which is exactly what Jesus demonstrated here.

DAY 18 – JOHN 18

Though the focus of this chapter is on Jesus and His arrest, the author, John, spends a significant amount of time following Peter as he reaches his low point. First, in verse 10 when Peter raises his sword and strikes a servant. And later, in verse 27 when Peter denies knowing Jesus for the third time. Peter still hadn't grasped the reason Jesus had come to earth.

Even though Peter wasn't in the room when Jesus spoke these words in verse 36, it's not too hard to suppose that Jesus was thinking of Peter when He said them: "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.'"

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the example Jesus set for us. As we meet the challenges of today, please give us the wisdom and strength we need to meet them in a way that honors You and the sacrifice You made for us.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Decades later, the following words would be written and would eventually be included in the Bible we hold today: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people."

That's 1 Peter 2:13-15 a letter Peter wrote encouraging other believers in the burgeoning new church. Though Jesus' death and resurrection had the specific purpose of providing salvation for all mankind, it also serves as an example for how to behave as believers today. Though Peter didn't get it at first, he got it eventually, that God's kingdom is a kingdom of peace, not war.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you wanted to fight, but chose not to?

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DAY 19 – JOHN 19

In today's chapter about the crucifixion of Jesus, we are told of four specific prophecies, or predictions, that came true about Him.

When soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothes, this was a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. When Jesus says "I thirst," in verse 28 and given sour wine, this is a fulfillment of Psalm 69:21. Verse 37 is a fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10: "They will look … on him whom they have pierced" (ESV), referring to the soldier who stabbed Jesus in the side with a spear.

As you read through John 19, look for the fourth prophecy.

PRAYER
Dear heavenly Father, as we read about the death of your Son remind of the purpose of His death; to save us from our sins. Thank you for loving us so much that You would make this sacrifice. Help us to see each day how we can bring glory and honor to Your name.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
The most significant fulfillment of prophecy is in verse 36 where it mentions that none of Jesus' bones were broken. Exodus 12:46 says, "you shall not break any of its bones." At first, this doesn't sound like a prophecy at all. It's talking about how to prepare the Passover lamb. The lamb itself was to be a perfect one with no spots or blemishes. And when it was killed, its blood was to be spread on the doorposts of the house. On the original Passover, an angel from God went throughout Egypt. In any house that didn't have blood on the doorposts, the firstborn was killed. The blood of the lamb was the symbol of God's redemption and protection.

Jesus was the Passover lamb for the world. His blood has redeemed us from hell and the consequences of our sins. All we need to do is believe.

Why is prophecy important in the Bible?

DAY 20 – JOHN 20

This study of John has all been about getting to know Jesus. And today we learn probably the most important fact about Him: He is alive!

Normally, when a person dies and is laid to rest, you expect the story to end. But this is not a normal story, and Jesus was not a normal man. One of the first descriptions of Jesus in the Book of John was, "In him was life" (1:4, ESV). Throughout His ministry, Jesus restored many people to health and even brought a dead man back to life. It comes as no surprise then that Jesus, life incarnate, could not stay dead.

John ends this chapter by telling us why he wrote his Gospel in the first place. "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31, ESV).

PRAYER
Hallelulah! Heavenly Father thank you for the wonderful testimony in your Word and for the life-giving forgiveness available to us because Jesus is alive!

REFLECTION & APPLICATION
This isn't the first time in the Book of John that life is offered to those who believe in Jesus. But if Jesus hadn't been raised from the dead, those earlier promises would have meant nothing. Any man can promise you life and salvation, but only one Man proved that He actually had the power to give life. That man was Jesus, and death couldn't hold on to Him. It's because of that we can believe that He truly has the power to give eternal life to those who believe in Him.

If you've met Jesus, tell us about it! When did you make that decision to follow Him? What convinced you?

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DAY 21 – JOHN 21

OK, be honest. When you started this challenge, did you think you'd make it to day 21? We're glad you stuck with it, because you have taken a significant step toward making Bible reading a daily part of your life. Whether you feel it now or not, your time in the Word will prove to have been time well spent.

Here in the last chapter of John, we see that at the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus' message to the disciples was the same as at the beginning: "Follow me." As we read this last chapter of John, ask yourself, what does following Jesus look like today?

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for the Words passed down to us by John. Thank you for this marvelous revelation of your love for us. We pray that as we read your Word, our ears will be more attuned to the voice of Jesus, and our hearts motivated to follow Him wherever He leads.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

At the beginning of the chapter, the disciples are out on a boat fishing, but had not caught anything. Then, as dawn was breaking, a voice calls out from the shore saying, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat." And the disciples listened, obeyed, and when their nets came up full, they recognized it was Jesus who had called to them.

The Good Shepherd spoke, and His sheep recognized the voice of the One who had given His life for His sheep.

Today, we are surrounded by voices vying for our attention and it may seem impossible to hear Jesus' voice over the din. But with regular time in the Bible, for 21 days, 21 months, 21 years and more, Jesus' voice will be as clear to you as if there was no else speaking.

THANK YOU!

We're glad you joined us for these 21 days! We hope and pray you plan to continue spending time in the Word on your own on a regular basis. You may want to choose another one of the Gospels--the different authors tend to focus on different aspects of Jesus' ministry and through their eyes you can build a more complete picture of our Savior. Or maybe you'll want to continue the story in the Book of Acts which begins with Jesus' ascension into heaven and continues with the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit.

– Pastor Bryan Clark & Back to the Bible Team

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