

The Gospel of John

Questions for discussion & reflection

Intro to the Gospel of John

- What similarities and differences do you notice between the beginning of the Gospel of John and those of Mark & Matthew?
- What themes do you pick up from John's prologue (chapter 1)?
- Who is God to you? Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus according to the first chapter of John? How is your understanding different or similar?
- Re-read 1:12. How does this compare to the requirements you might have grown up with (or heard from different forms of Christianity) for being considered a child of God?
- How might God be calling you to share the light of Jesus in your community?

The Crisis of the Encounter

- Read John chapters 3 & 4.
- Why do you think the author mentions that Nicodemus goes to Jesus at night?
- What similarities and differences do you find between the story of Nicodemus and the story of the Samaritan woman?
- In what areas are you vulnerable?
- Is it possible that Jesus is meeting you in these places, in these arenas?
- When/where have you encountered Jesus? What was this experience like for you?
- How would you describe your faith?

Outsiders Inside

- Why do you think churches tend to be places for "insiders?"
- How can we remove any boundaries that might exist? How can we become a church that welcomes "outsiders?"
- What experiences have you had that have helped deepen your faith?
- Re-read John 6:1-14. What jumps out you most when you read this passage?
- What do you have to share with others?

Love After Hate

- Read John 5:9-17 and Matthew 5:43-47. What similarities and differences do you notice between the two passages?
- Do you agree with this idea that it might be hardest to love those who are like us but just a little different? Can you think of someone (or a group of people) who fall into this category? What is it about them that you find difficult to love?
- Consider this quote by A.W. Tozer: "Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers met together, each one looking away to

Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become 'unity' conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.”

- Are we looking in the right places for our unity? Are we looking at the unity that exists within the trinity and trying to model that in our churches?
- Are we embodying the kind of self-sacrificial love that Jesus embodied on the cross when it comes to dealing with the people who are like us, who are very similar to us, but just different enough to get under our skin?
- If we can't love those who are in our own churches, how are we modeling love to those in our surrounding communities?
- What can you do differently this week to show love to one of those people (or groups) that came to mind when you answered question #2?

Cruciform Exaltation

- How did the death of Jesus unify his community? How does it unify the church today?
- Read John 15:18-20, 24-25. What if we responded to this not by blaming “the world” (i.e. whoever is against you), but by embracing suffering and loss as an opportunity to reveal Jesus? What if our response to hate was love, the kind Jesus modeled?
- Read John 17. Verse 20 says: “I’m not praying only for them but also for those who believe in me because of their word.” How does it make you feel that Jesus prayed this prayer not only for the disciples, but also for you?
- Read John 21: 15-17. In what ways does the church feed God’s sheep? In ways can you feed God’s sheep? Who are you feeding?