

Union United Methodist Church
 Spring FOCUS Bible School, 2023
 FOCUS: Followers of Christ Understanding Scripture
 Study: Gospel of John

Week 3: March 15, 2023

Signs Confirming Jesus Is The Messiah

This Week's Study: **John 4 & 5**

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1. Overview of the Gospel of John

○ **The Purpose of the Gospel of John**

To appreciate John's Gospel, it helps to start from the purpose of the book as stated by the author:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. **31But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.**" John 20:30-31 NRSV

The table below gives a breakdown of the chapters of John, with themes that we shall be exploring in this study. We shall cover one theme per week.

Week	From	To	Theme
1	1	1	Who Jesus Is; First Disciples Sign 1: Wedding at Cana;
2	2	3	Nicodemus & New Birth; Jesus & John the Baptist Sign 2: Royal Official's Son; Samaritan Woman at the well
3	4	5	Sign 3: Healing at Bethesda on Sabbath day Sign 4: Jesus Feeds 5,000; Bread of Life
4	6	7	Sign 5: Jesus walks on water; water & light teachings, Jesus at feast of tabernacles; Adulterous woman Sign 6: Healing of man born blind/
5	9	11	Sign 7: Lazarus raised from the dead Anointing; Triumphal Entry
6	12	13	Last Supper
7	14	14	Jesus Teaches – good Shepherd, on heaven, keep his words, etc.
8	15	15	Jacob's Family; Reconciliation with Esau
9	16	17	Teaching discourse and prayer
10	18	19	Jesus is arrested, tried, mocked, crucified, buried
11	20	20	Jesus' resurrection; appears to witnesses.
12	21	21	Second ending of gospel; Jesus appears in Galilee

2. John 4 & 5 Overview

- **Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)**
 - **Jesus Our Source of Living Water**

Please refer to the sermon of last Sunday, March 12th, which covered this subject in some detail.

13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,
14 but **those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.**"

John 4:13-14 NRSV

"Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but **whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**"

John 4:13-14 NKJV

Living Water refers to both eternal life and the Holy Spirit in us:

- **Eternal Life (zōē - "divine, eternal life" - the life of God¹)**

The living water is the divine eternal life of God that Jesus as a human had in him (John 1:4). It is the life referred to in John 3:16. It is the life we receive into us when we receive and believe in Christ and become the children of God. It is the life we receive when we become born again:

"Jesus answered [Nicodemus], "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being **born of water and Spirit. 6What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. "**

John 3:3-6 NRSV

¹ Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined And Explained

- **The Holy Spirit**

On becoming Christians, the Holy Spirit engages (“bears witness”) with our human spirit. That is how we know that we are the children of God.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”** 16**The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God”** Romans 8:14-16 NKJV

“In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.”
Ephesians 1:13-14 NRSV

- How do we keep drinking from this living running water that Christ gives?

“Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, 19as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, 20giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Ephesians 5:18-20 NRSV

- **Dealing with the Past**

In response to the woman’s request for the living water, Jesus wanted to deal with her past:

“Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” 4:16 NRSV

This started an interesting and important dialog. Receiving eternal life and the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives requires properly confronting our past.

- **Concealment won't help - The Lord already knows our past.**
 "The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" 4:17-18 NRSV
- **Acknowledge, Don't Deflect**
 "The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." 4:19-20 NRSV.

In saying that "I see that you are a prophet," the woman was acknowledging that what Jesus said was true. However, she quickly moves on to another subject.

- Considering what she wanted to talk about, was she just interested in that theological question about the right place of worship?
- Was this because she was embarrassed?
- Was it a deflection away from what Jesus was interesting in talking about? Could this be because she was ashamed of her past?
- Was it because of an ongoing sense of guilt?

We know that the Lord wants us to face our past squarely and do what is right once we acknowledge our failings.

"If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 NRSV

- **True Worship**

"21Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is

from the Jews. 23But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.**"

Some Key Points:

- "Salvation is of the Jews"
God chose to bring salvation to the world through the Jews. Jesus was born a Jew and was practiced the faith of Abraham and his descendants.
- God seeks sincere worshippers who worship in spirit.
Our worship must be from the inside out.
It must be sincere from within.
We must worship in line with divine truth as revealed to us in Jesus and the scriptures.
- God is Spirit - acceptable worship must be truthful and spiritual.
Recall: "Blessed are pure in heart, for they will see God"
Matthew 5:8 NRSV

○ **Jesus confirms he is the Messiah: "I AM he."**

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." 26Jesus said to her, "**I am he, the one who is speaking to you.**" 4:25-26 NRSV

○ **Reaction of Disciples & Jesus' Response**

• **Reaction to Jesus Speaking with a Woman**

"Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?"

Who would Jesus interact with that we won't?

- **to Jesus's Focus on God's will (calling & ministry)**

"Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" 34Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work."
4:31-34 NRSV

Jesus' intense focus on God's call is a model for us.

What is God calling you to do, and are you intensely focused on that?

Note the satisfaction that comes from fulfilling God's will and ministering to others - "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

- **The Fields Are Ripe for Harvesting – Stop Procrastinating!**

"Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, **look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.** 36The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." 4:35-38 NRSV

Jesus here cites some of the excuses people for not reaching others with God's love and the message of salvation.

What is our excuse for procrastinating or doing nothing?

- **Samaritan Woman Turns Evangelist; Her Testimony Causes Many to Believe**

"**Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony,** "He told me everything I have ever done." 40So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. 41**And many more believed because of his word.** 42**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 truly the Savior of the world." 4:39-42 NRSV

Note:

- **Many believed because of her testimony.**

We have to let others know what God has and is doing in our lives. Our spoken testimony will cause many to come to the Lord.

- **Many more believed because Jesus' own words.**

The Lord can speak to people directly through the words of Jesus. In our time, the scriptures are vitally important as they teach us what Jesus taught that caused people to believe. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Lord can speak to people and draw them into faith in Christ as we faithfully share the gospel and our testimony with them.

- **Sign 2: Healing of Royal Official's Son - John 3:46-54**

The interaction of Jesus and the official who's son was sick is interesting.

Context

Jesus had returned to Galilee after the Passover festival in Jerusalem. The royal official's son was in Capernaum, some distance away.

The official "went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." 49The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies." 50Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way."

4:47-50

- **The man begged Jesus to come and heal his son. This is the equivalent of prayer for us.**

- **Jesus pointed out the man's problem:**

"Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

The man's request was specific: for Jesus to go to his house.

From Jesus' response, the man's faith depended on Jesus being there in person and doing something amazing.

- **Solution: Jesus gave his word, the man believed, the desired miracle happened.**

50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way

51 As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. 52 So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." 53 The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." **So he himself believed, along with his whole household.**" 4:50-53 NRV

Many lessons for us in this, including:

- Many want to see before they believe. God expects the reverse.
- The thing to believe and act on is God's word to us in any situation.
- Obedience to the word is indication of faith, and God honors faith.

- **Sign 3: Healing at Bethesda on Sabbath day - John 5:1-18**

- **Context: Bethesda Pool in Jerusalem near Sheep Gate**

"1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had." 5:1-4 NKJV

The NKJV is quoted here because it includes verse 4 which some versions don't.

So here we have a well-known phenomenon: an angel came and stirred the water periodically. When this happened, the first person to get into the pool was completely healed, no matter what disease they had.

- **Jesus Homes In On One Lame Man - this is a sign**

There were so many sick people there. Jesus did not heal them all. In fact, he seems to have gone there with a specific purpose.

Unless other situation where we see many coming to Jesus and getting healed, Jesus went to seek this person out

- **"Do you want to be made well?"**

"One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. 6When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" 5:4-7 NRSV.

This is an important question.

One might assume that the answer is obvious because the man had been ill for so long. But it is possible that he didn't really want to be well ... we can get too comfortable in a particular state in our lives.

Thus, the Lord's question is a challenge to the man to own up to what he really wanted.

- **Excuses don't wash with the Lord.**

"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 making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." 8Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." 9At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk." 5:7-9 NRSV

The man's response is interesting.
He does not say YES or NO to Jesus' yes/no question.
Instead, he starts giving excuses.

Jesus commands him to "stand up, take your mat and walk."
The man obeyed and was healed.

How was a lame man going to get up and take his mat?

- He had to make an effort.
- When he made the effort, the power of God came into effect and he was healed.

This is an important lesson for us all. We need to make an effort to see God work in our lives - an effort in obedience to God's word to us.

- **Trouble: Healing on the Sabbath**

Now that day was a sabbath. 10So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." 11But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.' " 12They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take it up and walk?'" 3:3-8 NRSV

The reaction of the Jews is interesting.

- Was there any mercy and love in complaining about the healing of a man who had been lame for 38 years?
- They seemed to care more about the strict observance of the law than to see this man healed

Jesus teaches us an invaluable lesson here.

Love, mercy and grace are more important than strict observance of the law or the correctness of doctrine.

- **Jesus' Persecution Starts**

5The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. **16Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath.** 17But Jesus answered them, **"My Father is still working, and I also am working."** **18For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God."** 5:15-18 NRSV.

The Jews sought to kill Jesus because of his claims about his identity. His use of the "I AM" and claiming that God is his Father was in essence saying that he is God. This is why they wanted to kill him.

- **Jesus's Teaching about Himself - John 5:19-47**

In the rest of John 5, Jesus made many statements about himself.

This portion of chapter 5 will be homework and for group discussion next week.

3. Daily Study Schedule & Questions

- **Day 1: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)**

As you read and study the verses, here are some suggestions of themes to reflect on:

- Jesus's interactions with the Samaritan woman
- Jesus as the source of Living Water, what the Living Water is and how we are to keep drinking it
- The importance of facing and dealing with our past properly as Jesus challenged the woman to
- The disciples' reactions, Jesus' teaching on the ripe harvest. What should our attitude be when it comes to helping people find Christ?
- The power of our testimony of God's work in us as well as our sharing the good news with others

○ **Day 2: Sign 2: Healing of Royal Official's Son - John 3:46-54**

As you read and study the verses, here are some suggestions of themes to reflect on:

- Jesus's reaction to the man's pleadings for his son's healing
- What Jesus required of the man
- The role of faith in receiving from God
- The role of obedience to God's word in receiving from God

○ **Day 3: Sign 3: Healing at Bethesda on Sabbath day - John 5:1-18**

As you read and study the verses, here are some suggestions of themes to reflect on:

- Did Jesus heal everyone at the Bethesda Pool? Why did he just pick one person?
- What does "do you want to get well" mean to you personally, in any challenge you might be facing? Does God require our willingness to receive from the Lord?
- What did the man have to do to get well? What do you have to do to get a need met?
- What do you think of Jesus healing on the Sabbath? Was he doing away with the sabbath in so doing?
- What do you make of the attitude of the Jews to the man's healing?

○ **Day 4 & 5: Jesus's Teaching about Himself - John 5:19-47**

As you read and study the verses, here are some suggestions of themes to reflect on:

- Jesus's teachings about his authority
- Jesus' teachings about who bore witness to him.
- Note any statements of Jesus that strikes you as significant for discussion with your group next week.