

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 16: The Journey Is the Way

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

DVD option: *Luke: Gospel of Resassurance* with Michael Card:
#5 – Ministry of Mercy

They Have No Wine

There are many one-liners of wisdom: “Nothing ventured, nothing gained” or “Look before you leap” or “Experience can be a hard teacher: it gives you the test first and the lesson last.” In what written word can we place our trust? Why?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

The Luke passages tell us of Jesus’ teaching, some in parable form:

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS **Luke 9:57-62**

- “Before you follow me, count the cost”
- One man wanted to bury his father; one wanted to say good-by to his family
- Jesus sounds harsh, but most likely the father was not yet dead
- One who cannot come to a decision will suffer for it, as in I couldn't make up my mind, and now the offer has expired—he who hesitates is lost. Although the idea is undoubtedly older, the present wording is a misquotation or an adaptation from **Joseph Addison's** play *Cato*(1712): “The woman that deliberates is lost.”
- How does this apply to us in today’s world?

DEFINITION OF A PARABLE A “parable” is an illustrative story, by which *a familiar idea is cast beside an unfamiliar idea* in such a way that the comparison helps people to better understand and grasp the unfamiliar idea. A simple story is told, certain features of which are *analogous or parallel* to the points or principles one wishes to drive home.

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN **LUKE 10:25-37**

- Who is my neighbor?
- This story take place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho which was a notoriously dangerous road.
- Jerusalem is 2,300 feet above sea-level; the Dead Sea near Jericho is 1,300 feet below sea-level.

- Therefore, when one was traveling “up” to Jerusalem, they were literally going up 3,600 feet. It was a narrow and rocky road with hairpin turns. Robbers often preyed on travelers on this desolate road.
- The characters in this story: **The traveler** (a foolhardy person for traveling alone); **the priest** (who remembered that if he touched a dead man he was unclean for service in the Temple); **the Levite** (descendant of Levi who assisted priests in the Temple and may have thought this was a decoy of robbers) and **the Samaritan** (the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans)
- **Which** of these had compassion on the wounded traveler?
- **Rabbis who sought to define who a man’s neighbor was confined the word to their fellow Jews.**
- **What is the lesson of this parable?**

PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL LUKE 12:16-21

- **This parable is full of I, me, my and mine**
- **A schoolboy was once asked what parts of speech *my and mine* are. He answered “aggressive pronouns.” (They are possessive pronouns, but he was right in this case!)**
- **What is the lesson from this parable?**

Parable of the Lost Sheep Luke 15:1-7

Parable of the Lost Son Luke 15:11-31

- These two parables rose out of definite situations
- ***People of the Land*** were those people who did not keep the Law or could not fully keep the law because of the physical work required to sustain them
- **This created a complete barrier between the Pharisees and the People of the Land**
- **This is one of the reasons the Pharisees were shocked to the core when Jesus had contact with these types of people who were not only sinners but rank outsiders who would defile a “righteous” man**
- **Jewish law prescribed that the elder son must get 2/3 and the young son 1/3 of his estate; the father had was not free to leave property as he liked**
- **It was not uncommon to distribute this before his death, but it was usually done when the father wished to retire from the management**
- **It is callous for THE YOUNGER SON so make this request**
- **The lost went lost through *foolishness*; the son *deliberately went lost***
- **In both cases, each is welcomed back by the “Father”**
- **What does this tell us about God’s love even in the deliberate rebellion of the heart?**

Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector Luke 18:9-14

- **This is a contrast of two attitudes about prayer**
- **The Pharisee: was he praying to God or to himself? Was he confessing or informing?**

- **The Tax Collector: Where did he stand? What does this say to us? Why did he not lift his eyes to God? To whom was he praying?**
- **What is the take away from this parable?**

The Journey Is the Way

“Discipleship IS the journey in the Jesus’ way.”

- Luke suggests that discipleship is “**a journey in the Jesus way.**” Create a definition of “discipleship in the Jesus way.”
- What is the cost of following Jesus?
- Jesus was met with opposition to healing on the Sabbath. What *is* the purpose of the Sabbath?.
- Good News; Bad News
 1. What is the “bad news” about Jesus’ teaching?
 2. What is the “good news” about Jesus’ teaching?
 3. On page 141 of the Study Manual, we find a list of Jesus’ parables found only in Luke. What has Luke added to your picture of who Jesus is?
- Sirach 5:1-13. Everyday living
- Sirach 13:12-22. Caution in associates

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

Read the statement on page 140 of the Study Manual. How does Jesus shape *your discipleship*?

Close with prayer on page 141

DISCIPLE 5
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Week 17: Destiny Symbolized

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

Creator God:

We invite you into our presence this morning as we come together to study your word. Let us hear your voice from the pages of the Scripture. Write on our hearts what you would have us know. We give grateful thanks for Jesus who is the author of our salvation. We lift up those in our midst and those in our extended families who are in need of your love, your healing, your comfort, your peace. We pray they will feel you surrounding them and lifting them in the palm of your hand. Forgive us when we stumble; set us on the right path. In the blessed name of Jesus, AMEN

They Have No Wine

Read the statement on page 142 of the Study Manual. In what ways can we guard against losing our sense of the Holy One so we *do not run out of wine*?

DVD option: *On the Death and Resurrection of the Messiah* – Ray Vander Laan : #6 – Lamb of God

DESTINY SYMBOLIZED

Turn to Gospel Comparisons: 17-1, page 78

QUESTION: What new information did you learn about the event of Jesus' entering the city of Jerusalem?

- Day the lamb was selected for Passover
- At first the crowds were quiet; then Jesus comes and disciples praise God in loud voices – suddenly the crowd join in shouting “Hosanna”
- Hosanna – save us, deliver us, give us our freedom
- Palms branches – national symbol; what the stars and stripes are to an American
- Kings came riding horses in war; but in peace they came riding on donkeys
- **READ Zechariah 9:9** In Jewish literature, the image of a king approaching Jerusalem on a donkey was understood to signify the arrival of the Messianic King.

- “Hosana” is translated “Save us now!” Palm branches are to Jews what the Stars and Stripes are to Americans.

QUESTIONS:

- How do we celebrate this event even today? What is the significance of this event for us in our world today?
- Imagine yourself as one of the crowd: What do you see? What do you hear?
- How would you explain this event to someone who was not there?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

GC 17-G The Fig Tree Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-24

- This is a baffling story. A full-leafed tree usually had figs, yet this tree had none.
- This was Passover Season, the middle of April
- The fig tree bears leaves as early as March, but never figs until late May or June; *it was not the season of figs*
- This is an *enacted parable*: condemnation of promise without fulfilment
- The leaves on the tree are promise of fruit, but there was no fruit
- This is a condemnation of the people of Israel ---- all their history was a preparation of the coming of God’s Chosen One.
- BUT, when he did come, that promise was tragically unfilled.
- “If the tree does not bear fruit, it is destroyed”
- In what ways does this apply to the church today? What is the expected “fruit?”

The cursing of the fig tree happened when Jesus was on his way into Jerusalem. It was there event of the confrontation with the money changers took place.

- When does the fig tree wither according to Matthew’s account?
- What does Mark say about the time of the withering of the fig tree? (Remember Mark is recording the stories he heard Peter telling the Roman believers).

READ:

- Hosea 9:10 *When I found Israel it was like finding grapes in the desert (grapes are the early fruit of the fig tree) When I saw your fathers it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree.....they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol [Baal] and became as vile as the things they loved.*
- Amos 5:21-22 *I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring your choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.*

QUESTION: In what ways does these passages speak to the problems Jesus was encountering the Temple; with the religious leaders; with the attitudes of the people?

GC 17-2 The Money Changers

Set the Scene: Animals for sacrifice were sold in the outer court of the Gentiles. Temple coin was required for purchase. Money was changed from the Roman currency to Temple currency with a built-in surcharge; some of which went to the High Priest. In addition, the animals were sold at exorbitant rates in the court, further gouging the worshippers. Imagine a marketplace with noise, chaos, confusion!

Above each Gospel account, pencil in the following

- **Mark:** written from Peter's testimony in Rome [written about 60AD]
- **Matthew:** eyewitness account [written about 60-65 AD]
- **Luke:** written from interviews with many people who were with Jesus [written about 60-65 AD]
- **John:** eyewitness account [written about 85-90 AD; after the Temple had been destroyed by Rome]

What does each Gospel say Jesus did when he entered the Temple?

- **Mark:** began to drive out those selling; overturned the tables of money changers
- **Matthew:** drove out all who were selling and buying; overturned the tables of money changers
- **Luke:** drove out those who were selling things there
- **John:** made a whip of cords; drove all out of temple even the animals; poured out coins; overturned tables

What does Jesus say to those he was throwing out of the Temple:

- **Mark:** *house of prayer for all nations; you have made it den of robbers*
- **Matthew:** *house of prayer, making it den of robbers*
- **Luke:** *house of prayer, making it den of robbers*
- **John:** *Stop making my Father's house a marketplace*

READ ISAIAH 56:6b-7

...all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and hold fast to my covenant ---these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.

There burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

QUESTION:

It seems Jesus was drawing from the Hebrew Scriptures as his authority for what he did. Why was it necessary for Jesus to resort to aggressive behavior to make his point? What does my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations mean?

What was the reaction of the priests?

- **Mark:** they were afraid of him
- **Matthew:** became angry with Jesus
- **Luke:** began looking for a way to kill him
- **John:** give us a sign! What was Jesus response? What did the priests understand about this response? What did Jesus mean?

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

Read the statement on page 150 of the Study Manual. We have 2 images of Jesus in this lesson: peaceful, compassionate and angry, aggressive. ***Who is this Jesus who comes in peace riding a donkey and who overturns tables in anger in the Temple and curses a fig tree?***

Close with prayer on page 151

DISCIPLE 5
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Week 18: Sharp Words in the Temple

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

DVD: *Gospel of Matthew*: Matthew 21:23 (authority questioned) to Matthew 22:34 (greatest commandment)

They Have No Wine

Questions, questions, questions! How do we find answers? What do we believe when we get answers? Do we always know which questions to ask? What is your “formula” for sorting through information to know what you can believe or cannot believe?

- **Have you ever known someone who always had the right answer?**
- **How annoying was that??**

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

The religious leaders were always looking for ways to trip up Jesus:

- **Paying taxes**
- **His authority for his teaching**
- **Following the Law**
- **Levirate marriage**

GC 18-1. **Mark 12:1-12; Matthew 21:28-46; Luke 20:9-19**

We look at Jesus through the lens of the Pharisees: He spoke with authority, with certainty, with knowledge of the Law and its essence. But was he right? Compare the Story of the Tenants in Mark, Matthew and Luke accounts:

- Who is the landlord? **God**
- Who are the Tenants? **Religious leaders**
- What is the vineyard? **People of Israel**
- Who are the servants? **Prophets**
- Who is the son? **Jesus**

Why did Jesus teaching this truth in parable form?

- **Isaiah 5:7** *The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel*
- **The chief priests and the Pharisees well knew what Jesus meant for this parable to say to them**
- **On the surface, this was a very familiar circumstance of absentee landlords who let out their estates and were interested only in collecting the rental at the right time**

- However, Jesus' intent was to those who were in charge of the welfare of the Israelite nation.
- Prophets sent by God were so often rejected and killed.
- The son who came last is none other than Jesus himself and foreshadows his fate at the hands of the religious leaders

In Matthew 21:42, Jesus speaks of the cornerstone:

CAPSTONE/CORNER STONE

- **Capstone:** the uppermost stone in a building, sometimes use to tie two intersecting walls together. The capstone was the crowning point
- **Cornerstone:** a stone placed at the corner or the intersecting angle where two walls of a building come together. By uniting two intersecting walls, a cornerstone helped align the whole building and tie it together

Explain Jesus' use of this metaphor? Who is the cornerstone?

Sharp Words in the Temple

Mark 12:13-17. The actual taxes were three:

- A ground tax which was a tenth of produced grain and a fifth of produced wine and fruit.
- An income tax equal to 1% of yearly income
- A poll tax: one denarius, or one day's wages per person simply for the privilege of existing

If Jesus said it was lawful to pay tribute, he would become a traitor to the people;

- **if he said it was unlawful, the Pharisees could report him to the Romans for treason.**
- **The Pharisees thought they had a trap from which there was no escape!**
- **What happened with their perfect plan?**
- **The Pharisees were so astounded they no longer dared to ask questions.....**

GC 18-2 LEVIERATE MARRIAGE

READ Deuteronomy 25:5-6

- **It is interesting the Sadducees broached this question for they did not believe in the resurrection or life after death!**
- **How much this law was carried out in practice is unclear but any children born of the union of a widow and her husband's brother were legally regarded as the husband's children.**
- **First, continuity of control of the land/inheritance through family ownership was basic to the Mosaic economy. Second, this legality did not dilute the inheritance of the brother of the deceased man.**

ONE BASIC ERROR Matthew 22:29; Mark 12:24

- **Jesus starts from a basic error in thinking of heaven in terms of earth**
- **What does he say about relationships in heaven?**

THE LIVING GOD

- **The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: not a “God of the dead but the living”**
- **What does Jesus mean?**
- **What was the response of the Sadducees and the religious leaders?**

GC 18-3 The Greatest Law

- **READ Mark 12:28-31; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18**
- The profession of the scribes was to interpret the Law and its many regulations; to know and to apply the oral Law. The question proposed was often debated in rabbinic school.
- **Hillel: a Dr. of Law at Jerusalem at the time of King Herod and founder of the school called after him**
- **At the age of forty Hillel went to Jerusalem and spent 40 years in study; his intention was to perfect himself in the science of Biblical exposition and tradition**
- **He was given the title of “Ha-Zaken” or The Elder to express his position among the leading scribes**
- **Hillel once said, “What thou hatest for thyself, do not do to thy neighbor. This is the whole law, the rest is commentary.”**

Read these Scriptures and paraphrase Jesus’ teaching in your words. **What does “love your neighbor as yourself” look like?**

- **Warm fuzzy?**
- **Loving kindness?**
- **Caring concern?**
- **Concern for other’s well being?**

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

- **What are your most urgent questions of Jesus at this point of your faith journey?**
- **In what different ways do you view Jesus at this point of the study?**
- **Add new words to the list you made at the beginning of this lesson: what new words describe the Jesus you are beginning to know?**

Close with prayer on page 162

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Week 19: Signs of Danger and Dangerous Signs

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

Creator God, Maker of All, we come to you with deep thankfulness for the blessings you have bestowed on us. There are so many in this world who are in such need, who are hungry, who don't have adequate housing or clothing; yet we have more than is adequate. Help us to see the needs around us and give of ourselves as an offering. For those within our midst and those in our extended circle, we lift up those who need healing, those who need comfort, those who need guidance, and those who need to feel your love and grace surrounding them. Forgive us when we stumble and fail; lift us up and set us on the right track. We give thanks for your Grace.... and all the people said, "AMEN."

DVD GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: CHAPTERS 24 & 25

They Have No Wine

Global warming is a great threat to our planet. The ocean waters are rising. New terrorist threats are reported nightly on the news. The ozone in the atmosphere is being destroyed. Our economy is doing well....our economy is in the tank...taxes must be raised...taxes must be lowered. Which DO you believe? Which CAN you believe? The more we fear the future, the more susceptible we become to false promises? Agree? Disagree?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

As Galileans, the disciples would have been awed by the Temple:

- **The summit of Mt. Zion was dug away to leave a plateau of 1,00 feet**
- **Some of the stones used in the wall and in the Temple measured 20-40 feet in length and weighed more than 100 tons.**
- **How these were cut and put into place is one of the mysteries of ancient engineering**

History of the destruction and plundering of the Temple:

- **587 BC - Babylon destroyed Temple and carried Israelites off into exile**
- **516 BC - Exiles returned and began to rebuild the Temple**

- 145 BC - Antiochus desecrated the rebuilt Temple with pagan worship rituals and slaughtering a pig on the altar
- 20 to 19 BC - Herod had enlarged and rebuilt the Temple into a magnificent structure
- In 70 AD [some 30+ years after the death and resurrection of Jesus] the Roman General Titus completely burned and plundered the Temple, razing it for all time
- Dome of the Rock mosque was built on Temple mount in the late 7th century

GC 19-1.

QUESTION: What is happening in this scene? Summarize the warning Jesus gave his Disciples.

READ: Daniel 11:31; and 1 Maccabees 1:10-40.

- Antiochus tried to stamp out the Jews and desecrate the Temple by offering swine's flesh on the great altar and by setting up brothels in the sacred courts.
- When Jerusalem fell in 70 AD, it was one of the grimmest times in history: 97,000 were taken captive and 1,100,000 perished from starvation and the sword. It was the original holocaust.

QUESTION:

- It has been said, "Wet concrete will be shaped by something." What happens to a culture when it begins to cave in to dishonest, cruel, immoral behavior?
- What happens to a culture when it constructs doctrine to suit its desires, to gain popularity, to be attractive?

GC 19-2.

In the Old Testament there were many pictures of the "Day of the Lord."

- The Jews divided time into 2 ages: present age and the age to come
- The present age is wholly bad and beyond hope
- Between present age and the age to come will be a terrible and fearful upheaval, like birth pangs while giving birth.

Between these ages there will be

- Time of terror
- A sudden event
- The universe would be shattered
- Moral chaos would reign

Once again the fig tree is mentioned. Why?

Read Isaiah 13:9-10; Luke 21:25-28.

- In what ways does Luke view these events as occasions of hope?
- Why do the succeeding generations of Christians still need these reminders of God's expectations?

- What does Jesus say about trying to predict when these events will happen? (Mark 12:32; Matthew 24:36; Luke 21:34-35)

Signs of Danger and Dangerous Signs

GC 19-3. Again Jesus uses a parable which causes us to stretch to learn the meaning:

- A talent was a weight which is approximately equal to \$350
- The nobleman gave three men varying amounts: 5 talents, 2 talents, 1 talent ---- *according to his ability.*
- Accordingly God give men differing gifts to serve.
- God never demands from a man abilities which he has not got BUT he does demand that a man should use to the fullest the abilities he does possess.

QUESTIONS:

- Why are the two servants who had done well are given greater responsibilities?
- What is the servant who was afraid, unwilling to take a risk told? (He is punished because he did not try)
- What does this parable imply about the gifts we receive from the Holy Spirit and what we do with them?

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

Read Matthew 25:34-45 (page 97 in *Gospel Comparisons*)

- The *doers* are surprised!
- They did not *use* the needy; did not regard service to the needy as a *way of earning Christ's approval.*
- They were doing because it was in their *heart* to provide for other's needs.

QUESTION:

- What does Jesus require of us in serving others?

Close with prayer on page 175

DISCIPLE 5
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Week 20: Destiny Seized

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER

Gracious Jesus, as we begin this time of Lent, we bow down to you when we remember the unfathomable gift you have given us. Help us, as we live through this season, to be mindful each and every day of your sacrifice and be joyful that we are the receivers of this wonderful give of grace! We ask forgiveness when we, like Peter, can be brash, unseeing, wildly extravagant with our promises of faithfulness. Help us to seek humility in your presence. We give thanks for the joys and blessings within our circle, and yet there are those in our families and acquaintances that need healing, comfort, love, and the knowledge they are loved. Lift them in the palm of your hand and surround them with peace. We bow down in gratefulness, AMEN

DVD option: *The Path to the Cross with Ray Vander Laan : #4 The Last Passover*

They Have No Wine

- Self worth [confidence in personal value or worth as an individual]
- Self esteem [confidence in your own merit as an individual person]
- These are important “buzz” words in today’s world.
- In what ways are these important to you?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

Jesus was not “caught off guard” by what happened at Passover; He was in complete control: He was fulfilling prophesy in the Old Testament.

- Read Isaiah 53:5-7
- Read Mark 8:31
- Matthew 16:21
- Luke 9:22

After all these predictions, what do you think the Disciples thought? Or were they afraid to ask what he meant? What would you have done?

GC 20-1. We will be comparing and discussing the cast of characters on this important night.

Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; (Bible: John 12:1-8)

Mary, the Anointer. During Passover, Jerusalem thronged with people. Not all could be lodged in the city. Jesus stopped at the house of his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. (Locate Bethany outside of Jerusalem on a Bible map). Only John 12 identifies this woman as Mary, sister to Martha and placed the event in the home of their brother Lazarus. Some of the details vary in Matthew and Mark; Luke labels her as a notorious sinner. There is no indication, according to William Barclay in *The Gospel of John*, this was true of Mary.

- Explain why Jesus allows her to perform this seemingly outrageous service.

Matthew 26:36-42; Mark 14:32-36; Luke 22:39-42

Jesus In Control.

- Did Jesus know his betrayer would be Judas?
- In John 6:64, Jesus knew "...who would not believe."
- At no point did Jesus rebuke Judas.

Matthew 26:14-16; 48-50 Mark 14:10-11; 44-45 Luke 22:47-48

Judas the Traitor. When a disciple met a beloved Rabbi, he put his hands on the Rabbi's shoulders and greeted him with a kiss. Why did Judas betray Jesus? (Mark 14:10). It is almost certain he was a fanatical nationalist. Jesus was the one to make his dreams of power and glory come true.

- Was Judas' dream dying? He was a thief (John 12:6).
- Could it be he did not truly believe?
- Both Luke 22:3 and John 13:27 say quite simply "the devil entered Judas."
- Did Judas present an opportunity to the Pharisees to do what they had already planned? How do you explain the mystery that is Judas?

Matthew 26:69-75 Mark 14:66-72 Luke 22:55-62

Peter the Denier. Peter, the "rock."

- Brash, headstrong, leader, devoted to Jesus, denier of God's son.
- What a resume!
- Read Matthew 26:33 GC page 100
- In what ways is Peter everyman?
- Is following Jesus a slippery slope? What is the good news?

Destiny Seized

GC 20 G.

- Jesus "took the bread...this is my body..." This becomes a sacrament – a very ordinary thing which has acquired a meaning far beyond itself. Protestant Christians

consider the Lord's Supper and baptism are the only actions involving visible symbols that were clearly observed by Christ.

- **“he took the cup....”** The cup is a new covenant – a relationship between man and God, based on the death and resurrection of Jesus. **A covenant, in the biblical sense, is more than a contract or simple agreement. A contract always has an end date; a covenant is a permanent arrangement. The new covenant accomplished what the old covenant could not: removal of sin and cleansing of conscience.**
- How do Jesus' actions enact the meaning of his death?
- What actions help you to understand that Jesus is in charge of these events?

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

Jesus' "trial" broke the following Sanhedrin Laws:

1. **The full assembly was not present**
2. **They met at night, not during the day as was proscribed**
3. **They were to meet in the Hall of Hewn Stone – yet this “kangaroo court” was held in the high priest’s courtyard**
4. **There was a rule – a sort of 5th Amendment – which said the accused could not be asked incriminating questions. See Mark 14:61.**
5. **The sentence was carried out before the proscribed time after conviction had elapsed.**
6. **The verdict of blasphemy called for death by stoning; Jesus was crucified.**

Describe the whole Jesus you see thus far.....

Close with prayer on page 187

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
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Week 21: Destiny Achieved

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

DVD option: *The Path to the Cross* with Ray Vander Laan: #5 – The Fifth Cup

They Have No Wine

Read the statement.

- **Guilt:** “The state of having done a wrong or committed an offense. A feeling of self-reproach from believing one has done a wrong thing.”
- What is “guilt” from a Christian prospective?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

We look at a cast of characters in this hard to believe sequence of events:

GC 21-1.

Pilate. Read Isaiah 53:7; In GC 21-1: Mathew 27:11-14; Mark 15:1-5.

Read the information about Pilate in the Study Manual page 192. Was he a villain? A weak leader? A pawn?

- **Sanhedrin could not put any one to death; Pilate must carry out verdict**
- **Although the Sanhedrin agreed Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, they would not have exceeded their authority by stoning Jesus**
- **But the Sanhedrin did not want to be responsible for Jesus death!**
- **The Romans did not care about the charge of blasphemy; only treason would be a reason for a penalty of death**
- **Luke 23:13-17. Why did Pilate choose to flog Jesus?**

- **Assess Jesus’ silence throughout this sham trial.** Was it a silence of contempt? Fear? A broken heart? A sense of tragedy? Give reasons to support your answer.

Barabbas. Mark 15:6-15.

- **Why did Pilate make this offer?**
- **In what ways did it backfire on him?**

The Soldiers. Read Matthew 27:27-31.

- **The Roman soldiers probably had no idea who Jesus was. They were most likely conscripts who came from the ends of the earth.**
- **Mercy was considered to be a weakness in the Roman and Greek cultures. What do you understand about Jesus' suffering in this passage?**

Simon of Cyrene. Read Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 27:21.

- **Cyrene located in Libya was a Greek colony but had a Jewish community of about 100,000 Judean Jews. The Cyrenian Jews had a synagogue in Jerusalem where many went for the annual feasts.**
- **Mark 15:21 states that Simon's sons were Alexander and Rufus. Tradition says they became missionaries**
- **Paul speaks of "Rufus" in Romans 16:13 "who worked very hard in the Lord."**
- **When a criminal was condemned to be crucified, the cross bar was laid upon his shoulders in the judgment hall. He was then marched to the place of crucifixion by the longest route possible. This was to be a terrible warning to all who saw.**
- **When Jesus could carry the bar no longer, probably due to blood loss from the flogging and from shock, a Roman centurion found someone in the crowd – Simon of Cyrene (modern day Tripoli).**
- **Simon most probably was in Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. If you had been in that crowd; if a Roman soldier suddenly said, "Get over here! Carry this bar!", what reactions or thoughts would you have?**

The "Other" Criminals. Read Luke 23:39-43.

- **The bar was usually the top part of a cross shaped like a T. The cross was quite low – 2 or 3 feet off the ground. The hands were nailed, but the feet loosely bound. As fluids filled the abdominal cavity, suffocation began. The victim would try to push up to breathe, but weakness soon prevented this. Hunger, thirst, heat, cold, flies, gnats – all these and immense pain took a toll. It might take hours; it might take days to die.**
- **Was it deliberate purpose to crucify Jesus between two known criminals so he would be ranked with robbers? Treason was the usual crime that required crucifixion.**
- **What was Jesus' conviction?**
- **Why did one criminal see Jesus for whom he was? Luke 23:40-43**
- **What was Jesus' answer? In what ways is there always hope?**

The Temple Veil. Read Matthew 27:50-53.

- **The Temple Veil covered the Holy of Holies.**
- **The Temple curtain situated between the holy and the holy of holies was 10 meters by 20. Its thickness was approximately 8 centimeters. That would make the weight**

approximately between **4 to 6 tons** depending on the material used. In fact the Talmud teaches us that it took some 300 priests to carry it to its place.

- **Only the High Priest went behind the veil and only on one day a year, the Day of Atonement. This was God's dwelling place in the Temple.**
- **What do you understand about this dramatic tearing of the veil?**

Joseph of Arimathea. Read John 19:38-42.

- **Joseph of Arimathea was rich. He was a member of the Sanhedrin.** He had a newly constructed tomb. He came with the offer to claim the body of Christ.
- **John 19:38-39 speaks of Nicodemus (also of the Sanhedrin) coming with Joseph of Arimathea.** Remember Nicodemus from John 3? What does this tell you about Nicodemus?
- **Read Isaiah 53:9. How is Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled?**
- **Tradition says Joseph later became a disciple of Jesus. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?**

Destiny Achieved

The Message: Isaiah 53:11-12.

Out of that terrible travail of soul, he'll see that it's worth it and be glad he did it.

**Through what he experienced, my righteous one,
My servant will make many "righteous ones,"
As he himself carried the burden of their sins.
Therefore I'll reward him extravagantly ---
The best of everything, the highest honors---
Because he looked death in the face and didn't flinch,
Because he embraced the company of the lowest.
He took on his own shoulders the sin of the many,
He took up the cause of all the black sheep**

- **What questions do you still have about the crucifixion of Jesus?**
- **If we had more information about this week of Jesus' passion, would we find it easier to believe and become his followers? Why or why not?**

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

- **Having studied the story of Jesus' crucifixion, how do you understand Jesus' call to "take up your cross and follow him"? How would this look in your life?**
- **We are still faced with some of the hostile realities of life that Jesus experienced: ridicule, discrimination, unbelief, aggression, hatred, false accusations. When has this been true for you? How did you handle the situation?**
- **Why is this crucified Jesus the one you look to and follow?**

Close with prayer on page 199

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 22: This Jesus God Raised Up

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER - For Lent

Heavenly Father,

Jesus taught us to be in the world, but not of the world. Yet, daily I am caught up in worldly and secular pleasures and ideas that bombard me from every direction. I pray you will keep me alert and diligent in reading and learning your word so that I might avoid being seduced by false teaching and rhetoric. Keep me strong that I may be like the Apostle Paul, willing to denounce those things which are not in keeping with your commands. I thank you for your amazing love and the gift of your Son. I thank you for Jesus who nailed all my sins to the cross. I thank you for the promise of salvation and of eternal life. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN

DVD option:

Death and Resurrection of the Messiah with Ray Vander Laan:
#8 Garden Tomb

They Have No Wine

Read the statement: **Anger. Revenge. Alienation. Hurt. Isolation. These are all emotions of human relationships gone wrong.**

- What is the answer?
- How are we called as Christians to resolve these issues?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

“Without the Resurrection, there would be no Christian Faith.”

- Do you agree? Why? Why not?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-7; Romans 6:8-9; Philippians 2:5-9

Resurrection

Nelson New Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines *Resurrection* as “being raised from the dead. There are three primary meanings:

Miraculous healings Refers to individuals who have been brought back to life (*resuscitated – to revive someone from unconsciousness or apparent death*)

- the widow's son (1 Kings 17:20-24),
- Jairus' daughter ((Mark 5:41-43),

- Lazarus (John 11:43-44),
- Dorcas (Acts 9:40-41).
- There is no suggestion that the person will not again experience death.

Jesus' Resurrection

- Jesus' resurrection clearly is the overcoming of the powers of evil and death.
- Paul believed Jesus' resurrection was the basis for the doctrine of resurrection

General Resurrection

- **The Sadducees** (who were oriented to the world) rejected any belief of resurrection and did not believe it was part of the Law that God gave to Moses. (Remember how they tried to entrap Jesus with the question of the seven brothers who married one woman (Mark 12:18-27)?)
- **The Pharisees** believed in resurrection and proclaimed a life after death that required a resurrection.

However, the New Testament consistently teaches hope in the resurrection of the believer based on the resurrection of Christ as the “firstborn from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:12-58)

QUESTION: How do you understand the promise of resurrection?

GC 22-1

WHO WAS AT THE TOMB?

Mark opens with the women making their way to the tomb. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, if the stone had not been rolled away from the opening, the women would have never known! They could not have moved the stone.

Contrast and Compare the parts of the story as reported:

Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Who went to the tomb?			
Mary Magdalene Mary mother of James Salome	Mary Magdalene Other Mary	They/women	Mary Magdalene
Who was there?			
Young man in white	Angel of Lord	Two Men in dazzling clothes	2 angels in white
What did they find?			
Stone rolled away	Earthquake; angel rolled stone back	Stone rolled away	Stone removed

What happened?

“Go tell Peter/Disciples” “He is not here” “He is not here” Ran to get Peter

QUESTION:

- There are similar events and there are events that seem different. How do you reconcile this?
- What is typical when several people witness a traumatic event – such as a car wreck or a person committing a crime? How often are their stories identical? Why or why not?
- Had you been one of the witnesses at the empty tomb, would your story match that of another witness?

ROAD TO EMMAUS Luke 24:13-31 [MAP]

- Emmaus is west of Jerusalem.
- The men were walking into the setting sun. Is this why they did not recognize Jesus?
- These men had no explanation of the events of the last few days. Were their hopes and dreams shattered?
- How does this passage give us insight into the disciples’ thoughts, confusion and lack of direction during the period immediately following the crucifixion?

DOUBTING THOMAS John 20:19-29

Faith was never easy for Thomas – he was a man who had to be sure. But once he had counted the cost, he was a man of ultimate faith.

- Again the disciples are behind locked doors
- Read Thomas statement in Verse 24-25
- Why do you think it was so hard for Thomas to believe unless he had concrete proof?
- “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe” (Verse 29)

QUESTION: In what ways are we like Thomas today? What “proof” do you need for your belief in Jesus as the Savior?

This Jesus God Raised Up

GC 22-1

The Christian Church is the best proof of Resurrection. What else could have turned that despairing band of followers into men and women on fire to spread the Good News?

Read (page 116-117 in Gospel Comparisons)

- **Mark 16:19-20**
- **Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission)**
- **Luke 24:49-51**

This was a staggering request for eleven humble Galileans! Did their hearts fail them? Who or what is responsible for the incredible success these men had?

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

Grace – “favor of kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one receiving it and in spite of what that person deserves.”

God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

Explain how grace worked for:

- The thief on the cross - Luke 23:29-43
- Peter's Denial - Matthew 26:69-75
- The Pharisee Saul who became the Apostle Paul - Acts 9
- The woman caught in adultery - John 8:1-11

Close with prayer on page 210

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 23: In the Beginning Was the Word

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER

Creator God, Giver of Grace: As we approach Holy Week, help us to slow down...to see your beautiful creation, to see a sunset, to see a baby smile and feel joy! Help us not to hurry past these gifts in everyday life. We pray to become aware of Your Holy Spirit's presence and direction...to be obedient and to live in your presence. Help us to be stretcher bearers for those who are hurting, who are struggling with sorrow and the difficulties of life, for those who are in need of healing and comfort. May we joyfully live each day with patience, gentleness, self-control and love all the days of our lives. And all the people said..... "AMEN"

DVD option: *The Gospel of John: Chapter 1*

They Have No Wine

Read the statement. Finish the last sentence: "To spend our whole life looking for something to live by and live for, yet never finding it, is well....."

- Greek the word *Sophia* means wisdom
- Skim the Wisdom of Solomon for the words which define *wisdom*
- In Sirach, from where does *wisdom* come?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

John 1:1-2. This beginning has such importance and depth, we must look at it almost verse by verse:

- "*In the beginning....*" Read Genesis 1:1-2. When was the beginning? Who was there in Genesis? Who was there in John's beginning? Do you find a picture of the Holy Trinity? Explain.
- "*The Word was with God...*" The Greek word *logos* (translated "word") means "to know" and was applied to the spoken as well as the unspoken word – reason.
- Sirach says wisdom came from the mouth of the most high.....Jesus as the Son of God came from the Most High

- John is conveying the *pre-existence of Christ*.
- *“The Word was God...”* John says Jesus was so perfectly the same as God in mind, in heart, and in being that in him we perfectly see what God is like.
- **Although the Scripture does not use the word “Trinity”, we see the implication of the Three-in-One. Remember the Genesis 1:1 which mentions the “Spirit of God” hovering over the waters.**
- **In what ways can we “see” the Trinity in these verses?**

John 1:9. *“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.”*

- Darkness is always associated with sin, evil and bad events. Criminals love to operate in darkness!
- The “dark” world was deep in SIN.,.....Jesus brought light for the people of the world who were living in darkness

John 1:14. *“The Word became flesh....”*

- This was shatteringly new! **God could and would become a human person??**
- Many conflicts arose: some said Jesus was a spirit – not human; others asked how God could be confined within an evil, human body?
- **Greeks could not understand a *god* who could or would become flesh**
- **Jews could not understand the one God whose name could not be spoken would walk among them**

Read John 18:37. What is your understanding of why Jesus took on human form?

Jesus answered, “You said I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

In the Beginning Was the Word

Read Colossians 1:15-20. What does Paul say about Christ regarding: Creation? As first born? The resurrection?

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation...

He is the beginning and the first born among the dead

God was please...to reconcile to himself all things...by making peace through his blood shed on the cross

Hebrews 1:1

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son whom he appointed heir of all things.....

Read John 1:14. How does John validate Paul’s writings regarding Christ’s Incarnation (becoming flesh)?

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us....the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:19-23

John, the Baptizer

Who was John the Baptizer?

- **Not Elijah or Prophet**

Isaiah 40:3.

- **I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, “Make straight the way for the Lord”**
- In those days, representatives went ahead to prepare the way for a monarch who traveled throughout his country. **How do you see Isaiah’s prophecy fulfilled?**

GC 23-2

John Explains Who Jesus Is

- **What does John have to say about just who this Jesus is??**

GC 23-1.

Calling the Disciples

- **Read John 1:37-49; Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11**
- **What were the circumstances in which each disciple was called?**

John

1. **Two disciples with John the Baptist (one was Andrew brother of Peter)**
2. **Andrew found Simon and brought him to Jesus (who called him Peter)**
3. **Jesus found Philip in the city of Andrew and Peter**
4. **Philip went to Nathanael**
5. **The all spent time with Jesus where he was staying**

Matthew

1. **Jesus found Simon and Andrew fishing**
2. **Then he found James and John fishing.....come follow me**

Luke

1. **Jesus saw Peter fishing and gave him instructions**
2. **Also James and John were there – come follow me**

- **Assess Jesus’ method of calling his disciples. Why does he choose men who are untrained, uneducated, and of lower socio-economics means?**
- **Why are these men so willing to “leave everything” and follow him?**
- **How would you respond to such a calling?**

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

Read 1 John 1:8-10, 15-17, 23-24.

John 1:8-10 He [John] himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives to every man was coming into the world/ He[Jesus] was the light of the world though the world did not recognize him

John 1:15 John [the Baptist] testifies concerning him. He cries out saying, “This was he of whom I said, “He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.”

John 1:23-24 *John [the Baptist] replied in the words of Isaiah the Prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the desert. Make straight the way for the Lord.”*

QUESTION: How do you perceive the roll of John the Baptist in the coming of Christ? The priests asked John why he baptized --- what was his answer?

The Greek verb *baptisein* means to *dip* or *to submerge*. John the Baptizer’s baptism meant cleansing, it meant dedication. It meant going out to a new, different, better life. What does baptism represent in our faith today?

Close with prayer on page 220

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 24: We Have Seen His Glory

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

Creator God, Father of Mercy, Abba, God of Love:

We need signs in our lives ---- signs that point the right direction; signs that keep us from harm; signs that give us useful information. Jesus brought many signs into our world and we have only to pay attention to know which ones will guide us on the right paths toward becoming deeply committed Christians. Bring your presence into this study that we might write these signs on our hearts. We lift up those within our families and extended families who are ill and in need of your healing sign; those who struggle with daily pressures and need your sign for making good choices, those who need to see your sign of encouragement and love. Bless us, guide us, and keep us safe. In the Name of Jesus, all the people said: AMEN!

**DVD option: *Life and Ministry of the Messiah* with Ray Vander Laan
#8 Living Water**

- **What meaning does the term “living water” convey to you?**
- **We will see this term in the story of the Woman at the Well.**

They Have No Wine

Do we always understand “signs?” A small snow flurry turns into a full-blown blizzard. An annoying cough is diagnosed as pneumonia. A young boy who is withdrawn and struggles in school is found to have a drug habit. A left turn in a major intersection where no left turns are allowed causes a major collision. **Signs [MIRACLES] were missed.** When have you misunderstood a sign?

Some people deliberately shut their minds to truth they do not wish to see or accept. What do you say?

SIGN: n. symbol, information, used to convey an idea or information

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

A First Sign: Water into Wine. Read John 2:1-9

- In Jewish law, weddings took place on Wednesday with the ceremony conducted in the evening. A newly married couple hosted an open house for the week after as friends and family enjoyed festivity and joy.
- **Jesus' use of the word "woman" (*quani*) was actually a title of respect – we have no English way to translate; *lady* would be the closest.**
- **How does Jesus' turning water into a "choice" wine foreshadow what is to come? In what ways is the world without "wine" before the Messiah came?**

Another Sign: Action in the Temple. Read John 2:12-16

- Passover, which fell in mid-April, was a time for Jews to return to Jerusalem. It is likely that as many as 2,250,000 Jews were assembled in the holy city.
- **Since many denominations of coin needed to be changed, the Temple courts had money changers.**
- The problem was, **these changers were gouging the people who needed shekels to buy animals for sacrifice.** Jesus was enraged that those who could least afford were being taken advantage of.
- Explain Jesus' anger in the Temple
- **Explain Jesus' response to the question of his authority to clear the Temple**
- **Read Mark 11:17. What does Jesus mean by "all nations" ?**

GC 24-1. Requests for a Sign

- **Compare the requests of Jesus for a sign.**
- In what ways do we require a sign in order to believe?
- **What types of "signs" strengthen your faith?**

We Have Seen His Glory

Two Stories: Nic at Night; A Thirsty Woman. Read John 3:1-21 and 4:1-26

We have stories of two seekers, two who question and ask for enlightenment. One has seen miraculous signs; the other has not.

Who was Nicodemus?

- **Leading Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin**
- **A seeker of understanding**
- **Struggled with the "sign" of being born again.....how did he understand this sign?**
- **Gathered courage to speak up when the Jewish leaders were planning to kill Jesus (John 7:50-51) What did he say?**
- **Boldly came with Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42) to assist with the burial of Jesus' body**

Why did the Jews hate the Samaritans?

- **Racially the Samaritans are hard to identify**

- During the policy of deportation after Assyria destroyed Judea, there is the implication that a remnant of true Israelites remained in Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria.
- Newcomers from the north were to presumed to have intermarried with the Israelite remnant and ultimately the population took on the general name of “Samaritan”
- When Jews began to return from captivity, ill feelings developed between these two groups.
- The Samaritans sought to share in the rebuilding of the Temple but were firmly rebuffed by the Jews.
- The Samaritans build a temple on Mount Gerizim where they established worship of the One God with a religion that was parts of the old Jewish worship and parts of the religions of the assimilated people.

Compare Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman:

- Who were these people? Describe.
- **Assess their understanding of Jewish faith**
- Evaluate how they received Jesus’ teaching.
- Read John 3:16. Look for *inclusive* language. Who is the recipient of God’s love?
- **Read John 4:11.** There were two kinds of water which people had for household uses: cistern water and “living water.” Cistern water collected in holding areas (cisterns) for storage and later use. It could become stagnant and contaminated over time. **“Living water” was free flowing, a stream, fresh and clear. Why does Jesus use “living water” to describe what he has to give as compared to cistern water?**

GC 24-2. Two Long Distance Signs [Miracles]

- 1) **A Roman official came to Jesus – a centurion. This was a man of importance for he commanded a battalion of 100 men. He asked help for a sick servant.**
 - Compare the similar points in these stories
 - **Give reasons for why each man thought Jesus could help**
 - What were the results?
 - **Why do you think healing was an important part of Jesus’ ministry?**

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

We have “signs” which point to Jesus as Savior. In what ways do these signs give you hope?

Bible

Baptism

Creation

Communion

Worship

Close with prayer on page 231

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 25: In Him Was Life

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

Father of all, Creator of the Universe: We come with humble hearts today as we consider the wonderful season we have just experienced of Christ Risen! We give thanks and praise for your gift of grace; your gift of eternal life! Forgive us Lord as we silently confess how we have fallen short and missed the mark in our daily lives: (pause). We lift us those within our circle who are in need of healing, of hope, of confirmation that you are always with us even in the Valley of the Shadow. Grant peace and comfort to those who are struggling and who are experiencing sorrow. Be a presence within our group as we move into the lesson today. In Jesus name: AMEN

They Have No Wine

For some of us life has been good. Others may find that life has gone flat, has lost its sense of purpose and meaning. All of us know that sheer existence --- even a comfortable one --- is not real life. The Greek word *bios* means physical existence. We know we *exist*, but what does a “good life” look like? Make a list of descriptors.

DVD: The Gospel of John: Chapters 5:16-7:13

- Listen carefully to Jesus’ discourse in the Temple --- he is speaking in metaphors.
- What is the reaction of the religious leaders as they listen to him?
- What would have been your reaction?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

In John, we will be **discussing metaphorical language used in his writing. A metaphor is an implied comparison:**

- **Broken heart** - Your heart is not literally broken into pieces; you just feel hurt and sad.
- **The light of my life** - The person described by this metaphor isn't really providing physical light. He or she is just someone who brings happiness or joy.
- **Bubbly personality** - A bubbly personality doesn't mean a person is bubbling over with anything, just that the person is cheerful.
- **Feel blue** - No one actually ever feels like the color blue, although many people say they are "feeling blue" to mean they are feeling sad.
- **Fade off to sleep** - You don't actually fade, you simply go to sleep.

- When metaphors are effective, they make us think about the subject in new and effective ways. A good metaphor says what cannot be said effectively in another way.

Read Romans 6:20-22. The definition of “slave” is “one who is dominated by some influence or person or owned as property.”

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are not ashamed of? But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefits you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life.

- Explain Paul’s metaphor of being “slaves to sin and slaves to God”

Read John 3:31-35, John 5:19-20.

John the Baptist speaks:

John 3:31-35: The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard but no one accepts his testimony.....For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God for God gives the Spirit without limit.

Jesus speaks:

John 5:19-20: I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.....

There are metaphors in these two passages:

- Who is the one John says comes from above and is above all?
- What is Jesus implying when he says the Son can do nothing by himself, only what he sees the Father doing?

The Study Manual page 236 points out:

- The Son is not autonomous; he can do only what he sees the Father does
- The Son is more than an observer who copies the Father
- Just as the Father resurrected the dead, so the Son give life to whomever he wishes
- The Father turned over to the Son the role of Judge (we know God through the Son)
- To listen to Jesus is to listen to the very voice of God

Re-read John 1:1

- **Word = Logos = divine wisdom or personification of God**
- **Jesus is Logos enfleshed**

Read John 6:1-15. Food by the Lake

In the dilemma about how to feed the crowd, Jesus turned to Philip, a man from that area. It would cost six months wages to buy bread! Andrew brought a young boy with barley loaves – the coarsest of bread, the bread of the very poor. The fishes were probably sardines, which

were plentiful in the Sea of Galilee. They were usually pickled and used as a spread on the bread.

- **To the poor, bread meant life. If one had bread, life could be sustained even at the basest level**
- **“They were filled.” The Greek meaning means fed to repletion, stuffed, gorged.**
- **Discuss the metaphor of this scene: Jesus “feeds” the “hungry people.” What is the “bread” by which he feeds them?**
- **Read verses 12-13. “Gather the pieces....let nothing be wasted.” How does this passage continue the metaphor?**

John 7:13-52 Verdicts on Jesus

A number of verdicts are pronounced on Jesus. Give reasons for each verdict:

- He was a seducer— leading people away from the true religion (vs. 13)
- He was a deluded madman (demon possessed) (vs. 20)
- He was a man of courage (vs. 26)
- He was a prophet (vs. 40)
- He was the Christ (vs. 41)
- He was a dynamic personality (vs. 46)
- Read verse 50. Remember Nicodemus from John 3? Speculate how his talk with Jesus at night had influenced him to speak up to his peers.

Jesus threatened the religious leaders; their pact with Rome: Keep peace and you keep your status.

In Him Was Life

In John we find the great “I AM” statements of Jesus. Each statement is a rich metaphor; a comparison of two very different things which gives deeper and richer meaning. Read the Study Manual page 241. In Exodus 3:14, God told Moses “I AM WHO I AM.” Now, Jesus expands on that I AM. Work through this list, discussing the meaning of each metaphor:

- John 6:35 I am the bread of life
- John 6:48 I am the bread of life
- John 8:12 I am the light of the world
- John 9:5 I am the light of the world
- John 10:7 I am the gate for the sheep
- John 10:11 I am good shepherd
- John 11:25 I am the resurrection and the life
- John 14:6 I am the way, the truth and the life
- John 15:1 I am the true vine; my Father is the gardner
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches

What is the “keeper” from this lesson on Jesus’ teaching in metaphors??

Do You Want to Be His Disciple, Too?

What do Jesus’ claims about himself reveal about his relationship to God? What response do his claims require of you?

Close with prayer on page 241

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 26: Yet the World Did Not Know Him

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus,

As we approach this day, God please help us with your Wisdom; help us accomplish and discern the right choices. In the midst of criticism, cynicism and negative influences, we strive to remember that you God are the one who holds us and shelters us beneath your wings. Speak to us from the words of your Scripture that we might see the pathway through all the rocks. We pray for healing, comfort, guidance, courage and love for those we have lifted up today. Please let them the love and comfort of your presence. In Jesus name, we pray, AMEN

DVD option: *Gospel of John: Chapters 7:45-9*

They Have No Wine

- When I know I'm right, you're wrong
- I am right, aren't I?
- And you're wrong....Can we both be wrong?
- Who is right? Who is wrong?

QUESTION: In what ways does this sum up the DVD presentation of Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees?

"I am the Light of the World"

The festival with which John connects the statements of lights is the Festival of Tabernacles. On the evening of the first day there was a ceremony called The Illumination of the Temple which took place in the Court of the Women. The court was surrounded by deep galleries. In the center were four great candelabra. When the dark came these candelabra were lit and, it was said, they sent such a blaze of light throughout Jerusalem that every courtyard was lit up with brilliance. Then, all night long, until cock-crow the next morning, the greatest and wisest and holiest men in Israel danced and sang psalms of joy and praise. Jesus is saying: "You have seen the blaze of the Temple illumination piercing the darkness of the night. *I am the Light of the World*, and for the man who follows me there will be light for all the pathway of his life. The light in the Temple flickers and dies; I am the Light which lasts forever."

--*The Gospel of John Volume 2* by William Barclay

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

Read how light was specially associated with Jewish thought and language with God:

- Psalm 27:1 light and salvation
- Isaiah 60:19 Lord and everlasting light
- Job 29:3 God lighted my
- Micha 7:8 Lord will be my light
- Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path

It is important for John to use images of light and darkness in his portrayal of Jesus' identity and mission. Why? **Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World caused the Pharisees and scribes to react with hostility, although they would have known these Scriptures. Why?**

It is said that discipleship results in freedom. In what ways do you understand that belief in knowing who Jesus is and was and learning to listen to His word which sets one free?

JOHN 8:1 Woman caught in adultery

- Who is missing in this story?
- **READ** Leviticus 20:10.....*If a man commits adultery with another man's wife--- with the wife of his neighbor---both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.*
- What did Jesus write in the dirt?
- God is a God of second chances !!!

QUESTION: the Pharisees said, "We need more to understand!" What confirms your belief in Jesus as the Son of God?

JOHN 8:31-32 Freedom from slavery

- "The truth will set you free"
- Again we have a metaphor - "everyone who sins is a slave to sin" What did Jesus mean?
- "Why don't you understand what I say?"
- Remember the iconic line from "A Few Good Men" with Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson? "You can't handle the truth!"

GC 26-1

- The Jews alled Jesus a..... Samaritan [half breeds; corrupted the Jewish worship]; Beelzebul [the Devil]; a blasphemer [a slanderer, spreading untruths about God]; the Prince of Demons [demons are evil spirits who oppose God and work against people]
- In ways are these labels not true of Jesus?
- The people stated: Abraham died; the prophets died. How can man never have to taste death?

QUESTION: What do you believe about a life after death? Why do you believe?

26-G **A Blind Man Healed**

This story emphasizes that the man was born blind. Jewish theologians had several strange philosophies about these types of afflictions:

- A notion of prenatal sin: one could sin while still in the womb
- Jews believed in the pre-existence of the soul – an affliction might come from sin that he had committed before he was born
- It was the consequence of the parents' sin

In the Deuteronomy 5:9, we find God's promise to visit "iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations...."

QUESTION: When man sins, does he set in motion a train of consequences which has no end? In what ways can our sin affect future generations?

John 9:1-12

What prompts Jesus to perform the healing?

- **Use of spittle seems strange, repulsive and unhygienic. Actually it was quite common in the ancient world. Spittle of some distinguished person was believed to possess certain curative qualities. Why would Jesus use the methods and customs of his time rather than his direct powers to heal?**
- **Inevitable trouble:** Jesus did this on the Sabbath; he made clay which was considered work; it was forbidden to heal on the Sabbath (medical attention could be given only if life was in actual danger ...even broken limbs could not be set)
- **Speculate on what Jesus hoped to accomplish with this healing in light of the controversy he created.**

John 10 Shepherd Motif

The Judean Shepherd had a hard life. No flock ever grazed without a shepherd. He was never off duty. It was a dangerous task for wild animals, thieves and robbers prevailed. A shepherd needed constant vigilance, fearless courage, and love for his flock. He would risk his life to save one straying sheep (Matthew 8:12; Luke 15:4)

His equipment was simple: his **scrip** was a bag made of the skin of an animal which carried his food of bread, dried fruit, olives, and cheese. His **sling** was his weapon of defense and was used to call back straying sheep. His **staff** was a short wooden club with a clump of wood at the end often studded with nails, used to defend against beasts and robbers. His **rod**, the shepherd's crook was used to pull back sheep straying. Palestinian sheep were largely used for wool, thus **the sheep and the shepherd were together for years**. The shepherd named his sheep and the sheep knew the shepherd's voice. He used a loud sing-song voice, a weird language to communicate with the sheep.

Consider each of these points, then **discuss the reasons why Jesus uses the shepherd imagery to speak of both his mission and his death.**

Yet The World Did Not Know Him

Turn to page 245 of the Study Manual and read the section “The Jews” in John.

- To whom, exactly, was Jesus speaking when John uses the phrase “the Jews”?
- The Prologue gives us a clue as to how we should understand the portrayal of “*the Jews*.” **The Jews/Judeans were those whose hostility against Jesus centered in theological issues.**
- John 1:10-11 says, “**He was in the world, and....the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.**” Explain John’s statement.

**Christianity does not mean knowing *about* Jesus but *knowing what and who he is*
Christianity means meeting him; not avoiding or denying him
Christianity means knowing with certainty that Jesus is alive.**

On page 246 of the Study Manual, read the section “The World” in John

- “The world” is not the earth on which we live; it is the *mindset in which we live*; the nonphysical reality that shapes our lives. **Can you give some examples of things in our world/lives that shape our understanding, feelings; and responses?**
- It also lives in us, as a set of assumptions about what is real and true, as habits and patterns of living. **We are back to the beginning statement:**
 - **When I know I’m right, you’re wrong**
 - **I am right, aren’t I?**
 - **And you’re wrong....Can we both be wrong?**
 - **Who is right? Who is wrong?**

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

- Christianity does not mean knowing *about* Jesus, but *knowing* what and who He is.
- It means meeting him not arguing about Him
- It means knowing with certainty that Jesus is alive!

Who is this Jesus that the world you know does not recognize or accept?

Close with prayer on page 249

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 27: That They May Believe

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER

Holy God,

We come laying our burdens before you because we know that everything is possible to those who believe. You are the God of peace and wisdom and everything is possible when we trust in you. Guide us along the right path and help us to put our trust in you. Bless those we have lifted up today and let them know they are surrounded by your love and protection. Bless us and help us to stay on the right path. In Jesus name, AMEN

DVD option: *GOSPEL OF JOHN: CHAPTERS 11-12*

They Have No Wine

Read the statement. Was there a time you missed an opportunity? Have you ever wondered, "What if.....?" Has the outcome been more positive than you would have believed? What regrets do you have? **"To believe is to commit oneself."** Agree? Disagree?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

John 11. Death of Lazarus.

Friends. What a precious thing we have in our lives. **Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived in Bethany, about a 2 mile walk west of Jerusalem. Jesus had no home, but in Bethany, he found just that: a home and friends. To go to Jerusalem at this point in time was dangerous for Jesus, but his friends needed him.**

Read verses 5-11. Why did Jesus wait? What did the disciples fear for Jesus?

- **It was always John's aim to show that Jesus did things not because he was pressed to do them – but because he chose to do them in his own good time.**
- **The word *sleep* always had a deeper and more serious meaning. We, too use this euphemism when someone dies --- "rest in peace", "eternal rest"**
- **Thomas displays courage: "Let us go, too, that we may die with him....."**

Read verses 17-24. In Palestine, burial followed quickly after death because of the climate. Many people attended the funeral and mourning lasted for seven days. **When Jesus arrived, there was a crowd at the house. Assess Martha's reaction to Jesus' arrival. What does Martha believe about Jesus?**

- **"If you have been here, my brother would not have died."**

- **Remember Martha --- the one in the kitchen banging pots and pans to feed the hungry crowd of disciples? Martha liked action. She went out to meet Jesus while Mary stayed behind**

Read verses 25-26. Martha's belief was based in the orthodox Jewish belief. How does Jesus introduce a new meaning and vividness to the idea of Resurrection? *Resurrection and eternal life are incomplete without each other.* What do you say?

- **Martha acknowledges that her brother will rise again in the general resurrection on the last day --- The Day of the Lord. At that time the curse upon the world will reverse bringing judgment to all of God's enemies. These judgments are preceded by resurrections of the just.**
- **John 11:25 --- *I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even though he dies; and whoever who lives and believes in me will never die.***
- **To the believer, death will never come**

Read verses 27-37. The emotion in this story is ratcheted up. **The Greeks believed in an isolated, passionless, compassionless God. What a different picture Jesus presents to us of our God! That the Son of God wept was almost beyond belief. What is your response?**

- **Verse 35 – “Jesus wept.” Wept - to sob silently without a sound**

Read verses 11:45-57; 12:9-11. Here we clearly see the concerns of the Jewish rulers about Jesus' influence. What is their decision and how do they go about justifying what they believe will be the answer?

- **In the other gospels are other accounts of people being raised from the dead. However in these instances the raising followed immediately after death. Lazarus had been dead for 4 days!**
- **In what ways does this event foreshadow what will happen to Jesus in Jerusalem?**
- **The Jewish leaders were in an impossible position**
- **They worked closely with the Roman government --- their aim was to ensure their own wealth and ease and comfort**
- **The Romans allowed their subject kingdoms a large amount of freedom BUT at the slightest outbreak of civil disorder, Rome came down heavily**
- **Those responsible for the government were summarily dismissed.**
- **John 11:49-50 -- Caiaphas spoke up: do you not realize it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish?**
- **Discuss the political overtones of this situation**

GC 27-1 Jesus is Anointed

John, Mark and Matthew speak of a woman who anointed Jesus's feet with a costly perfume, but only John reports that she dried them with her hair. For a woman to appear in public with unbound hair was a serious breach of conduct.

Luke reports a woman who was a sinner is the anointer. Scholars cannot agree that this was the same woman in all 4 gospels. Only John names her and Mary of Bethany did not have a reputation of being a sinful woman – a euphemism for a “woman of the night.”

- Speculate on why Mary felt the need to perform this act of mercy for Jesus
- What is Judas reaction? Only John tells us Judas was a thief (verse 6)
- Judas would not have been put in charge of the money bag unless he had some capabilities in that direction.
- The definition of Character: *The set of qualities that make somebody distinctive, that form their reputation either in a positive or negative way.*
- Character: what you do when no one else is looking
- Judas will always be a puzzle!

That They May Believe

GC 27-2. The Triumphal Entry.

Jesus knows exactly what will unfold during the Passover Week!

- Read **Zachariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1-7** Why a colt?
- When a king was bent on war he rode a horse; when he came in peace he rode a colt. What is the message Jesus is sending?
- He was not the Messiah Warrior - He was a Messiah of Peace
- “Hosanna” is the Hebrew for “Save Now!”
- At the Feast of the Tabernacles, worshippers carried bundles of palm, myrtle, and willow branches called *lulabs* when they went to the Temple.
- How did the crowds view Jesus’ entry into the city?
- Read **GC 27-2: Luke 19:36-39; GC 27-3: Luke 24:44.** What message does this passage have for us even today?

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

GC 27-3. Review Jesus’ sense of the timing of his ministry.

Glorify: *to magnify God through praising his name and honoring his commandments*

(Psalm 86:12) *Jesus also glorified his father through his perfect obedience and his sacrificial death* (John 17:1).

Worship: *reverent devotion and allegiance pledged to God; the rituals and ceremonies by which this reverence is expressed.*

--Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Read Study Manual page 261: **“Glorification” In John**.

- Definition of “glorify”: *to magnify God through praise; to have a sustaining, life-giving relationship with God.*
- In what ways do you glorify and worship this Jesus?

Close with prayer on page 260

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 28: Jesus' Legacy

COMING TOGETHER
PRAYER

**Gracious God, Creator of all things,
How precious is the gift you have given us --- the gift of Salvation which was wrought by Jesus on the cross. As we study these lessons, it becomes increasingly true that your love will reign against all the forces in this world that would crush it. Help us that we might be a part of sharing that love just as the disciples took on that enormous commission. We lift up in prayer all those in our circle and extended families who are in need of healing, loving kindness and caring concern; those who need guidance and are searching for answers. Let them feel your love surrounding them and lifting them in the palm of Your Hand. In Jesus name, AMEN**

DVD *GOSPEL OF JOHN: CHAPTERS 13; 16-17*

They Have No Wine

Read the statement. Respond to this idea: *If we honor those who have passed on by carrying forth their legacy, we can make things better than before. If we falter on this point, we may be out of wine sooner than we think.*

- In what ways do we falter in carrying forth the legacy of Jesus?
- Without Jesus' legacy, in what ways will we be "out of wine before we know it"?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

In John 13-17, we see a poignant picture of Jesus' final hours with his disciples. In what little time is left, he gives them a "Last Lesson."

John 13:1-17. Servant-Leader.

In Palestine, the roads were unsurfaced and dirty; inches deep in dust or inches deep in mud. Ordinary people wore sandals which gave little protection. A host always had water and towels at the door to wash soiled feet. The lowliest servant of the household performed this job – usually a slave. Sometimes water and vessels were left at the door for guests to wash their own feet.

- **The disciples were scandalized at Jesus action. Remember Peter's reaction?**
- **No one of any rank, much less a *Rabbi*, would perform such task.**
- **Summarize this scene. What does Jesus mean: "Unless I wash you, you have no part of me?"**

- Explain what Jesus means: **“Now that I...have washed your feet, you should also wash one another’s feet.”**

How would you define the term “Servant-Leader”? [Jesus modeled this term]

- **Servant:** one who serves another; an employee or someone hired to be a personal attendant to another person; a slave is has no other alternative but to do the bidding of the master
- **Leader:** Somebody whom people follow; somebody in charge of others; somebody who guides or directs others
- **These terms are exact opposites. What does this term call us to do?**

John 13:18-30. Betrayal!

- Read Psalm 41:9...*Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me..*
- **In the east, sharing bread was a sign of friendship and an act of loyalty.** Why do you think Judas stooped to this final, cruel act?
- **Was he a non-believer? Was he disillusioned about Jesus’ “kingship?” Had he given himself over to Satan? Did he have a moment of greed for the 30 pieces of silver only to later regret his actions?**

John 13:31-38. All Alone.

As you read these verses, listen for the heaviness and sorrow of Jesus.

- What does he urge in verses 34-35? **A new command I give you: Love one another...by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another**
- When the Pharisees tests Jesus about the greatest commandment, He answered them in Matthew 22:37-40. What was the second greatest commandment?
- **John 13:37:** Peter boldly professes his loyalty. **Verse: 38:** How does Jesus respond to Peter’s statement of loyalty?

John 14 The One Who Sorrows, Comforts.

As Jesus faces his final trial, a time of unimaginable suffering, he begins to comfort his disciples! Read this passage and note the comforts Jesus offers:

- Verse 10; *Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?*
- Verse 16: *I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor [Advocate; Holy Spirit]* How does Jesus describe the Trinity?
- What is the key to prayer in verse 13? *Ask in my name.....* Does this mean we can ask for anything we want??? A new Mercedes? A bigger house? A big pay raise? *What does Jesus mean when he says “anything in my name.....”????*
- Read verses 26-27: *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Please I leave with your; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.*
- **“Counselor.”** No word adequately translates this idea which is the Greek word *paraclete*. The Greek word means “one who comes alongside.” Counselor, Advocate, Holy Spirit: **How do you understand this role?**

John 15:1-8 Bear Fruit!

I am the true vine....You are the branches.....

Again, Jesus uses a parable (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning). **Jesus talked of a vine that grew all over Palestine; on trellises, on terraces, as ground cover. It grows on perfectly clean ground and grows luxuriantly but needs to be pruned dramatically. A young vine does not produce fruit for the first three years and is cut back drastically. Some of the branches bear fruit; some do not. Those are pruned. Since the wood is too soft for any use, the pruned branches are burned.**

- In what ways is Jesus using this example to teach us about living a Christian life? How are we like the vine? The young growth?
- **What is the “fruit we bear”?** Galatians 5:22-23 says, *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control*
- **What does a life without these “fruits” look like???**

Jesus’ Legacy

John 17. Jesus Prays: for himself, for his disciples, for all believers.

- **Verses 1-5.** The cross would be the completion of Jesus’ work. Why do you think Jesus look at this event as a time to be glorified?
- **Verses 6-19.** Discipleship is based on the knowledge that Jesus came from God. Discipleship requires obedience. What does Jesus ask for his disciples?
- **Verses 20-26.** “For those yet to come.....” Even in the face of the Cross, Jesus’ confidence is unshaken and he prayed for those who would believe! In what ways did Jesus pray for you and for me?

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

“Love one another as you love yourself.” In Greek, *agapao* means “to have esteem” or “high regard.” Our English word *love* used in this context is better understood in terms of *agapao* (sometimes seen as “agape”) -- a love which indicates the essential nature of God. Fortunately, Jesus did not ask us to *like* one another or even to *agree* with one another. He asked us to exemplify the “Love” or “High esteem” he had when he washed the disciples’ feet.

- What would *agape* toward others in your life look like?

Something to ponder: Do you have a favorite gospel? Which one? Why? Hold those thoughts!

Close with prayer on page 272

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 29: Mission Completed

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER

Father God, Creator of the Universe,

We pray that we will become aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and direction; to be people who listen to others with sympathetic hearts and look for what we can do to help others. As we look at the lessons of the Cross, we want to joyously accept the gift of grace you have made available for us. We lay our burden on the altar and lift our petitions to you [silently pray for individual requests]. Thank you God for teaching us to really believe in You and trust in You. AMEN

DVD option: *Ted & Lee's Fish Eyes:*

- **Last Supper and Foot Washing,**
- **Arrest and Denial,**
- **Upper Room,**
- **Breakfast on the Shore**

QUESTIONS: What were the changes you saw in Peter?

Andrew seemed to be a person who always looked for good; do you think the real Andrew might have been like this?

They Have No Wine

Read the statement. **We have heard stories of people who gave their lives for others; in times of war, in times of peril, in true sacrifice.** Are we suspicious of these? Do we have that quality deep within our own souls? Do we fear we might be called to make that choice ourselves?

Another question is how humans can inflict such cruelty on another human! The Pharisees knew that the Romans would inflict a cruel death of Crucifixion on Jesus. Did they really *hate and fear him so much* they accepted this cruelty?

What about cruel actions and punishments in our society today?

Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

GC 29-1. Peter Stumbles and Falls.

- **Who came to the Garden: 1) Judas 2) detachment of Roman soldiers 3) Temple police 4) Pharisees and chief priests**
- **Try to imagine yourself in the role of Peter. It was Peter who drew his sword. He was ready to fight to the death in the Garden.**

- Peter and another disciple [John] followed the crown to the courtyard.
- What brought Peter to his denial in the courtyard? What happened there?
- Read John 18:25-27 and Luke 22: 57-62
- Peter, the Rock, was faithful almost to the end. It was there he failed miserably.
- Speculate on your own actions if place in Peter's place.....what would you do?

GC 29-2. Pilate.

Background of Pilate: The Romans only stationed troops in provinces where there was unrest. We do not know of Pilate's background, but he must have been a good administrator or he would never have been given the responsible position of governing Palestine, a province bristling with problems. But, as governor, Pilate was a failure. He seemed to begin with a complete contempt and a complete lack of sympathy for the Jews. Three incidents mark this contempt:

- He refused to remove the bust of the reigning Emperor from the soldiers' standards, which had earlier been done in deference to the Jews by other governors. To the Jew, this bust on the standards was a graven image. When the Jews stood their ground, even under threat of death, Pilate had to back down.
- In order to increase the inadequate water supply in Jerusalem, Pilate raided the Temple treasury and took the money to build a new aqueduct. Even though this aqueduct was beneficial to the Temple, the people resented this confiscation and rioted. Pilate gave orders to attack and club or stab to death many of the rioters.
- Pilate commissioned great shields made with the image of the Emperor. To the Jews, these shields were a sacrilege in the Holy City. The Jews reported the matter to Tiberius the Emperor, and he ordered Pilate to remove them.

After Jesus had been crucified, there was a revolt in Samaria. Pilate crushed it with sadistic ferocity and many executions. Tiberius ordered Pilate back to Rome, but while he was on the way, Tiberius died and Pilate never came to judgment. From that moment Pilate vanishes from history.

----*Barclay's Gospel of John, Volume 2*

- We do have an indication that Pilate was troubled with his conscience. He sent a message to his wife and she begged him "don't have anything to do with this man [Jesus]" Matthew 27:19

We see the dilemma of Pilate --- caught between someone he did not see as guilty yet someone the Jews were adamant about executing (Assign parts to member of class Pilate, Jesus and the rest can be the Jews. Role play this scene:

John 18:31 Pilate: Take him to your own judges

Jews: We have not right to execute anyone

Pilate to Jesus: Are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus: *My kingdom is not of this world.* I came to testify to truth

Pilate: What IS truth?

Pilate to Jews: I find no fault in this man. It is your custom to release one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to release him?

The Jews: Give us *Barabbas!*

John 19:15 The Jews: *We have no king but Caesar!*

QUESTION: What is a problem with the Jews' last statement?

- Pilate caved and authorized Jesus flogged and crucified
- Pilate's last sarcasm: He had a sign posted on the cross *This is the King of the Jews* in three languages

Assess Pilate's action:

- Ignored his conscience
- Ignored good advice of his wife
- Choose political expediency
- Ignored TRUTH when it was standing before him

John 19:25-29. Witnesses at the Cross.

Who was at the Cross:

- Jesus' mother Mary, Mary, Zebedee's wife, mother of James and John [Salome, sister of Mary of Nazareth?], Mary wife of Clophas [mother of James the Less, a disciple, Clophas may have been a brother to Joseph?], Mary Magdalene, John the Disciple
- Why would John include this passage with detail? How does this passage relate to the overall meaning of the story?
- Read and compare

Psalm 69:21

They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst

and **John 19:28-29**

Later, knowing that all was now completed and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty. A jar of wine vinegar was there so they soaked a sponge in it and put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

Mission Completed

7 Words from the Cross

Luke 23:24	Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do
Luke 23:43	Truly I say to you, you will be with me in paradise
John 29:26-27	Jesus said to his mother: woman, this is your son. Then he said to the disciple [John], This is your mother.
Matthew 27:46	My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
John 19:28:	I thirst
John 19:29-30	It is finished
Luke 23:46	Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

GC 29-4. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

- In **Luke 3:1**, Nicodemus came to Jesus by cover of night. Now he appears to help with the burial of Jesus.

- **Joseph and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin, but secret disciples of Jesus. Either they had absented themselves from the meeting of the Sanhedrin which examined and formulated the charge against Jesus or they had sat silent through it all!**
- Nicodemus brought a king's ransom in spices to prepare the body, the equivalent of a royal burial
- **Joseph of Arimathea gave his new tomb for the burial which meant he would never be able to use it.**
- What was the power of Jesus' death that gave these men courage to openly perform this intimate and loving task?

GC 29-5. The Empty Tomb --- Not the End --- The Beginning!

- How do we reconcile the differences in these stories?

It is interesting to note that the Jewish authorities used various means in their attempts to eliminate Jesus. They used treachery to lay hold on him. They used illegal means to try him. They used slander to charge him before Pilate. They used bribery to silence the truth about his resurrection. *They utterly failed!*

- Why was it impossible to eliminate Jesus and the message he brought?

MISSION COMPLETED

Read John 20:29, John 3:16.

- How do Jesus' words express the essence of his mission to the world? What are we to understand by Jesus' death on the mission field?
- "*Jesus' mission was not terminated; it was completed and remains finished.*" What is the meaning in this statement?
- *Who is this Jesus?*

Do You Want to Become His Disciple, Too?

beneficiary (ben e fi ci ar y) n. *anyone receiving or to receive benefit, as funds from a will, an insurance policy, etc.*

- **In what sense are we a beneficiary of what Jesus did and the difference He makes in the way we live our lives?**

PREPARATION FOR LESSON 30

Select one of the Gospels for this exercise. Find two or three passages that most clearly express what this Gospel wants the readers to understand about Jesus. Your *Gospel Comparisons* will be of help with this assignment. Think in these terms:

- Which story resonates in your heart? Why?
- Which story had the most impact on your understanding of Jesus' ministry? Why?
- Which story gave you comfort, hope, a sense of peace? Why?
- Was there a story or stories that strengthen your faith? Why?

Be prepared to discuss your reasons for choosing the passages pertaining to your assigned Gospel next week:

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

DISCIPLE 5
Jesus in the Gospels
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 30: Looking Back at Jesus' Future

COMING TOGETHER

PRAYER

Heavenly Father;

As we gather today, we remember the stories we have read during this journey --- stories of the wondrous miracles and selfless love you have demonstrated. We are humbled and so thankful that you have extended the wonderful gift of grace to us. We ask for daily guidance to keep us on your path; to keep us from stumbling and falling. We ask for love and comfort and healing for those within our extended group who are in need of your loving care. We pray that our words, thoughts and actions will continually glorify you as we seek to forever serve you, Lord. And all the people said: AMEN!

The Session.

- Begin with a simple meal (bread, cheese, fruit, nuts, beverage) in the spirit of the story of John 21.
- We commemorate the scene on the shore of Galilee when Jesus prepared breakfast for the disciples.

THEY HAVE NO WINE

The world continues to move fast and change daily! Technology threatens to leave us behind if we do not strive to stay with the changes.

- Some of the changes are good....they make life easier.
- However, some may not be so good....they seem to complicate life.
- And they seem to spin us off into a new culture and way of living that seems foreign and more difficult!
- *How can we be ready for whatever comes our way?*

GATHERING BY THE SHORE

Read John 21:1-18 aloud.

Verse 3: "I'm going out to fish."

- The disciples' world was turned upside with the death of Jesus. Then he was resurrected! What was their job now? Why did Peter turn to his old familiar job of fishing?

In ancient times, fishermen preferred to fish at night.

- Nighttime was cooler than daytime
- Actually, the fish are attracted to dark things such as a dark net in the water

- It is said that your eyes will adjust to the lower levels of light; the moon offers light depending on its cycle

Although they had fished all night, they caught nothing

- The “person” on the shore gave them directions on where to cast their nets
- Who was the person? Why did he tell them to cast on the opposite side of the boat?
- In what way in this foreshadowing Jesus’ original call to make them “fishers of men”?

Verse 13: Jesus reinstates Peter and Peter’s Commission

- Why does Jesus ask for Peter’s affirmation of love **3** times?
- What is Jesus’ response after each affirmation: 1) feed my lambs 2) Take care of my sheep 3) feed my sheep
- What is Jesus’ meaning in the use of these metaphors?

Verse 25: John reverts to first person in this verse only: “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

REMEMBER ME.....

1. Ask each member to share their favorite Gospel story
2. In what ways does this story resonate in your heart ?
3. In what ways does this story have the most impact on your understanding of Jesus’ ministry ?
4. In what way does this story give you a sense of hope, comfort and peace? Strengthen your faith?

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME HIS DISCIPLES, TOO?

Turn back to Lesson 1, page 14. Read what you wrote. Now reflect on that statement. What changes would you make? What would you add? In what ways is your understanding of who Jesus is forever changed?

REMEMBERING OUR BAPTISM

Prepare a table in the room with a Cross, candles and other objects that might be on an altar. Have two serving size bowls filled with water. Have enough sea shells scattered on the table for each member of the class.

LEADER: A reading from Luke 3:21-22

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: You are my Son, whom I love: with you I am well pleased.

GROUP READS TOGETHER:

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father Almighty;
Maker of heaven and earth;**

**And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord:
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried;
The third day he rose from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. AMEN**

In pairs, the participants move to the table, dip their finger in the water and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads. They select a shell as a reminder of their commitment.

LEADER CLOSES WITH PRAYER:

**We thank you Father, for the water of Baptism.
In it we are buried with Christ in his death.
By it we share in his resurrection.
Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.
To God the Father, to God the Son and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now
and forever. AMEN**