

Home Groups are one of the ways that we keep the fires of friendship burning in these times. You are very welcome to join a group. Check out your options on our website www.trinityonline.org or the Trinity Church app (found by searching for "Trinity Church Redlands")

Welcome Back

The Christmas holidays have some rich meaning and sometimes occasion people getting together with friends and family.

- What was your experience in this last season? What did you enjoy? What was difficult or painful?
- What keeps you encouraged in these times?

The Trinity Church family is journeying through "the book of John"

John, the author, is one of Jesus' apostles, one of those closest to Him during his earthly ministry. He wrote a summary of Jesus' life and ministry that we call the gospel according to or book of "John." There are three other accounts: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of these summarizes or synthesizes the words, work, and life of Jesus in a unique way. Our series is entitled, "Beckon."

The gospel according to John has a grand purpose: "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (20:30-31) John reflects this in his early statement: "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (1:5) God wants us to have life, eternal life with Him. This gospel story reveals that though mankind prefers darkness, the light of Jesus Christ overcomes the darkness. Through the cross, Jesus overcomes the darkness of sin.

He came in love, full of truth and grace. He reveals the Father and the Way back to his presence. While the "signs" (miracles) of Jesus reveal His identity, it is the cross that blazes with the glory of Christ.

Growing from our time in “The Gospel According to John”

Here are a few suggestions as you begin this journey:

- 1) **Keep in mind John’s purpose statement**– “that you may believe that (a) Jesus is the Christ” (meaning Messiah, Anointed One), (b) that Jesus is “the Son of God,” and (c) “and that believing you may have life in His name.”
 - 2) **Watch for the specific themes** found in 1:1-18.
 - 3) **Treasure in your heart** what we learn about . . .
 - a. The character of God as seen in Jesus
 - b. The “signs” (miracles) of Jesus and how they point to God’s master plan
 - c. How we see the glory of Jesus in the cross (His passion)
 - d. What is revealed about our relationship with God
 - e. How we can live as His people (as His children, disciples, etc.)
 - f. God’s plan and promises for this life and the life to come
 - 4) **Share what you are learning.** This encourages one another and helps us keep God’s Word in our thoughts and actions.
 - 5) **You might want to reference other resources.** There are many good commentaries on “John.” Two of them are “The Gospel According to John” by D. A. Carson and “The NIV Application Commentary: John” by Gary Burge.
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Begin by reading John 1:1-18.

John references Genesis 1:1 in his introduction to the account of Jesus life. He understands that this Jesus, this gospel, is bringing about a whole new creation. This passage is a prelude of the movements and themes that John will use throughout this book. What grand statements and themes do you identify?

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For this week, we will be walking through John 1:29-34. (You can hear the previous messages at <https://www.trinityonline.org/resources/sermons/>.)

Read John 1:29-34 and consider the following:

In this setting, who is speaking? Whom might have been his audience(s)?

How did John the baptizer describe Jesus? How are these descriptions significant?
(see also Isaiah 42:1)

We know from this and the other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) that John had a call from God to baptize people to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. By now he had a following of people (disciples, learners) who were around him on a regular basis. How is John's public witness significant in his and Jesus' ministry?

Throughout our walk through the book of John, we will try to identify the character of God as seen in Jesus. What do we learn about Jesus' character and works from John's public witness?

How does seeing and understanding these truths about Jesus impact you, knowing that He eternally existed as God, that He was in on the plan to sacrifice Himself for the sinners of this world, that He came to bring us to God, and that He is the Anointed One and Chosen who will one day rule the world?

Questions for consideration and discussion

What are you looking forward to as we walk through the book of "John?"

If you were a castaway on a desert island and had only the first 34 verses of John to read, what might you conclude about the identity and purpose of Jesus?

How has modern society convinced people that they don't need the Jesus revealed in this passage? What has influenced their thinking and attitudes? (Consider the themes of this passage - Jesus is the Lamb of God, the sin of the world, that Jesus alone has the anointing of Holy Spirit He will baptize others in the Spirit.)

Let's Pray

A prayer promise from Jesus: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." John 14:13. Let's pray ...

- for one another in your group
- for Trinity family who are hurting and sick in our family
- for our nation's leaders including political, medical, etc.
- for us to live by faith in and to the glory of Jesus in these challenging times
- for the Micah House team and our food box team

Grace to you,
Steve