

REFLECTION WEEK

So much happens in any given week. We hear many words, we make many decisions, and encounter many people. Life can be a blur unless we slow down to reflect and apply. That's the plan for this week – to look deeper and consider what God is saying to us. Let's look back at the first five chapters of "The Gospel of John," consider what God has revealed, and how this might impact our lives.

John 1-5

- We began with a walk through of the prelude to the themes of John (1:1-18). The author, the Apostle John, gave an overview of Jesus' identity and mission.
 - Jesus is the eternal Word, always existing with God the Father
 - He is creator, the giver of life, the light that shines in darkness
 - He came to the world to enlighten people. Some rejected and others received Him to become children of God
 - Some recognized that He is the glorious Son of God who came from the Father
- Two early witnesses to Jesus
 - John the Apostle proclaimed that Jesus is God who brought us fullness of grace and made God known.
 - John the Baptizer confirmed that He was preparing the way for the "Lord," the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." He saw the Spirit remain on Him who will baptize with the Holy Spirit, for this is "God's Chosen One."
- Early followers of Jesus
 - Jesus called disciples to "follow" Him.
 - They were Andrew, Simon Peter, John, Philip and Nathanael. They believed Him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and the king of Israel. Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man."

What stands out to you?
What have you learned?
How might this apply?

- As a variety of people encountered Jesus, we learn something of Jesus' identity and mission. (2:1-5:15)
 - Jesus and the disciples attended a wedding in Cana where He changed water into wine. This was the first "sign," He revealed His glory. (See 20:31 regarding "signs"). His disciples "believed in Him."
 - Jesus went to Jerusalem and cleared the temple because people had turned it into a marketplace. The religious leaders questioned His authority. While there, Jesus performed many signs and people believed in a cursory way.
 - A Pharisee named Nicodemus came to see Jesus, believing that He had come from God. Jesus told him that in order to "see the kingdom of God," one must be "born again," "born of water and of spirit," and "born from above." For this to happen, the "Son of Man must be lifted up."
 - John summarized Jesus' mission in John 3:16-21 and in 3:36: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."
 - Jesus and the disciples went to Samaria where He had a conversation with a woman. He offered her "living water." Samaritans from town came and met Jesus. They believed Him to be "the Savior of the world." (4:1-42)
 - Back in Cana, a royal official asked that he come to Capernaum to heal his son who was near death. People were hoping to see "signs and wonders" rather than have faith. Jesus told the royal official to "Go, your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and later discovered that his son was healed at the time that Jesus spoke. (4:43-54)
 - Jesus returned to Jerusalem and went to an area where disabled people gathered. He asked a man, disabled for 38 years, "Do you want to get well?" After the man shared reasons why he wasn't well, Jesus healed him and told him to "Pick up your mat and walk." Jewish leaders wanted to know who told him to carry his mat, but the man didn't know. Later, Jesus sought him out at the temple area. The man then identified Jesus to the authorities who began to persecute Jesus. (5:1-16)

What stands out to you?
 What have you learned?
 How might this apply?

What have you learned about Jesus?

What have you learned about people?

What application will you implement in your life?

DISCUSS TOGETHER

As you reflect on these chapters, what is significant about Jesus' encounters with people?

What are ways that we share Jesus' love and compassion with the people in our world?

People have said that Jesus never made a claim to be God. What have we learned about His identity?

How are Americans prone to seek "signs and wonders" rather than trust in Jesus?

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for friends and guests coming to Easter services
- Pray for God's family around the world celebrating Jesus' resurrection
- Pray for the International Friendship Connection team and their guests

Note: There will not be Home Group notes on Easter Sunday

Happy Resurrection Sunday! May His love fill your hearts.

Steve