

September 1 / John 15:18-27



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 15:18-27.



Understanding the Story:

The world WILL hate you. Some of us are shocked when the world hates us. Matter of fact, we could be trying to fit in with the world so that the world will like us. We are to be peaceable and loving towards those that are in the world, but we are not to live for their praise. They will disagree with the Bible. They will disagree with the gospel. They may even hate you for believing in it.

In this passage people hated Jesus and what He had to say. It makes them uncomfortable and fearful. They don't want to submit to any power or authority other than themselves. Think of how many times you have said, or heard it said, "You can't tell me what to do." In our flesh we want to do whatever we want, and we hate being told what to do.

However, our new life in the Spirit makes us want to surrender to God because we know He loves us. (Galatians 5:17) Jesus is warning them there is a cost to following Him. He lets them know that people will hate them and persecute them. BUT, He is not leaving them without help or hope. He is sending the Holy Spirit to teach them and show them everything they need to live out what God is asking them to do. Don't forget they also have each other. Jesus just commanded them to love one another.



Applying the Truth:

- Do you feel that sometimes you are hated by others because you believe in Jesus? How can we find strength to stand firm even when we are persecuted for our faith?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 2 / John 15:18-27



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 15:18-27 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 4 / John 16:16-33



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 16:16-33.



Understanding the Story:

In this passage, Jesus seems to be so excited to go back to His Father. And, He can't wait to show His disciples His Father, too. Have you ever loved anything so much that you couldn't wait to share it with your loved ones? Ever get a new video game and you can't wait to play it with a friend? Or, have you ever watched a really cool movie or show and told a friend all about it and said, "You just have to see it for yourself!"

Jesus was saying, "Look, I've got to go, but don't worry about me. I am going to my favorite place ever! My Father's House! I know you will be sad when I leave but soon your sadness will turn to joy because you will join me there and all will be well."

He also tells them, you will be sad in this world, but take heart, I have overcome the world! This world can feel overwhelmingly depressing sometimes. The news can be depressing. But Jesus says, He has overcome the world. He has the final say in every situation. He sees the beginning from the end. He is making the broken things of this world beautiful...in His time.



Applying the Truth:

- Do you look forward to that day when you will see God face to face?

- What are some things in this world that cause you trouble? How will you find peace and comfort in those situations?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 5 / John 17:1-19



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 17:1-19.



Understanding the Story:

What a beautiful prayer Jesus prays for His disciples in these verses. Before God the Father He pleads their case that they know Him and believed what He told them and obeyed His words. This is our only hope on the Day of Judgment: that Jesus would stand before the Father and say we are His because we believed Him.

Then He prays for their protection against the evil one. We do have a true enemy who is seeking to steal, kill, and destroy us. We must use Scripture and prayer to fight Him. Jesus also prays that His disciples would be one. There can be walls of race, politics, anger, unforgiveness, social class, and many other things. This is what Satan wants. We have to find ways to bridge disunity.

Jesus also prays that we may have “the full measure of my joy within them.” Jesus is about to die on the cross and yet He has exceeding joy because He has hope of seeing His Father soon. In His Father is every good gift. Jesus wants us to experience this FULL joy! Joy that can look at horrible things ahead and still have hope.



Applying the Truth:

- What is eternal life according to this passage?

- God wants us to be one. Is there anyone that you need to reconcile with (make things right between you and them)? Will you do that today, and how?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 6 / John 17:20-26



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 17:20-26. Then fill in the blanks below.

“I do not ask for these _____, but also for those who _____ believe in me _____ their _____, that they may all be _____, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the _____ may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20-21)



Understanding the Story:

Jesus prays for us!! Whoop whoop! He says He is praying for all the future believers who will come to know Christ because the disciples have a job to do: they must tell the world of Christ and His love. I think they did their job because we have heard their message and have received His love. Now it's our turn to send the message along to others so they can experience the love of Christ as well. The disciples were faithful to share Jesus' message so that eventually it would make it to our ears. How bout' you?



Applying the Truth:

- Who first shared the good news with you?

- How will you pass along the message to others? Who can you begin praying for to hear the message of Jesus?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 7 / John 18:1-14



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 18:1-14.



Understanding the Story:

Betrayal in the garden. In this passage you still see Jesus protecting His disciples. There was a swarm of soldiers and chief officials who could have arrested the rest of the disciples, but Jesus clarified several times that they were there for Him.

Peter was bold to chop off the high priest's servant's ear. He could have been killed for it. Maybe he was trying to prove to Jesus he really was willing to die for Him, especially since Jesus told him he was going to deny him three times. Maybe he thought this was his opportunity to show Jesus he would never deny him even when faced by death. But Peter didn't understand Jesus was going willingly with the soldiers.

This was the reason He had come to Earth. He had to drink the cup of God's wrath for all sin or He wouldn't be able to bring His beloved children to the Father. Peter was actually standing in the way of God's plan. This often happens when we react quickly to something without first asking God what we should do. In other accounts of this story, you see Jesus touching the high priest's servant's ear and healing it. (Luke 22:51). You would think that these soldiers who witnessed this miracle would have repented. But they did not. They led Jesus off to the father-in-law of the high priest for questioning.



Applying the Truth:

- Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath (judgment) for our sins, on our behalf. What sins do you need to repent of today, and how can you live a life of worship?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 8 / John 18:15-27



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 18:15-27.



Understanding the Story:

As Jesus is brought into questioning, we see Peter warming himself by a fire. Peter and another disciple are trying to follow Jesus and one of the disciples gets in right away while Peter is outside waiting. There, a woman says to Peter, “Aren’t you one of His disciples?” His response, “I am not.”

Meanwhile Jesus is encountering the beginning of his trials and persecution. One of the officials slaps Jesus in the face. Have you ever been slapped in the face? There is such a shock that goes with the slap. Like, “Did they just slap me?” But to slap the face of God! I can’t imagine the humility it took Jesus, who held the power of the universe in His hands, not to just knock that guy out. He showed humility and restraint because He knew where He was going—to the cross.

Meanwhile, Peter is still around the fire and he denies Jesus two more times and as he is in the middle of his denial, he hears the rooster crow and sees Jesus looking at him. Then he remembered Jesus’ words and he went outside and wept bitterly. Wow, Peter failed. Just moments before he was willing to die for Jesus and now, he denies Him 3 times. How broken he must have felt. He must have felt like the biggest failure in the world. But in a little bit of time, Jesus will restore him.

Oh, the Love of Christ! Our precious Jesus is in the beginning of His persecution and He hears His own disciple denying Him. Greater rejection will come as well, but this had to be painful for Him. Each new thing you read in the coming chapters remember that He did it for YOU. That slap in the face, suffering rejection, the beatings, the cross, and what I think was His most painful moment—when His Father turned His face away from Him.



Applying the Truth:

- Have you ever acted like Peter and pretended that you are not a Christian because you were ashamed? How can you stand up for your faith today?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 9 / John 18:15-27



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 18:15-27 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 11 / John 18:28-40



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 18:28-40.



Understanding the Story:

During this time period, the Romans controlled the Jewish people. They allowed them to live in their land, but they had to pay taxes to Caesar and abide by Roman law. The Jewish people resented this. So, in general they tried to avoid the Romans and their ways. However, here we see the Jewish people bringing Jesus before Pilate (the top Roman official) and demanding that he kill Jesus for them.

Pilate interviews Jesus and finds no reason to kill this innocent man. In an attempt to set him free, he tells them that they get one prisoner to be set free, as was custom at Passover time. Barabbas had been a murderer and caused a rebellion (Luke 23:18-19). Yet, the people scream they want Barabbas released and Jesus crucified.

Innocent Jesus who had healed the sick, given the blind sight, caused lame men to walk, even raised the dead! How could this happen to such an innocent, loving man? How could their hearts be so cold?



Applying the Truth:

- Why do you think they wanted to kill Jesus so badly?

- Why do you think Jesus did not say anything in defense?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 12 / John 19:1-3



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 19:1-3.



Understanding the Story:

A bit of background on the flogging Jesus would receive in these verses. The whips used to flog Jesus had nine ropes extending from the end. On the end of each rope was broken glass and bone. As the whips would hit Jesus' back the glass and bone would dig into his flesh pulling the flesh of his back. These whips were called the "cat o' nine tails."

Most people couldn't survive the flogging they received. The Roman way of flogging was to give out 39 lashes with the cat o' nine tails if the criminal had not received a death penalty, because by 40 lashes the criminal was supposed to be dead. If the flogger wasn't able to kill the criminal in only 40 lashes, the flogger himself would be put to death. This was to ensure the flogger didn't hold anything back.

Then the soldiers twisted together a crown made of thorns. These were not little thorns like we see on the roses we buy from the store. These were thick and piercing thorns that would have dug deep into Jesus' head and made Him bleed. He was in as much physical pain as a person could ever be in, and yet He was about to endure more. What would cause Him to do all this when He easily could have saved Himself? You! And me! Reflect on what Jesus did for you and thank Him.



Applying the Truth:

- Think deeply about the pain that Jesus endured. Thank Him and worship Him for all that He has done to save us.
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Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 13 / John 19:4-16



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 19:4-16.



Understanding the Story:

Pilate is interviewing Jesus and still cannot find any valid reason for killing this innocent man. Pilate is fearful and even more so when Jesus tells Pilate, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.” Pilate is really wanting to release Jesus and does not want this man’s blood on his hands.

However, the cunning Jewish people start threatening his power by telling him that Caesar will not be happy with him if he doesn’t kill Jesus. They remind him Jesus is claiming to be a king, and this would upset Caesar since Caesar believes he is the only king. Pilate could lose his position or something worse. Pilate is in a tough place.

So finally, Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified. I see Jesus having compassion for Pilate when he says to him, “The one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” Even in the midst of his suffering, pain, and rejection, He still has compassion on His heart.



Applying the Truth:

- What do you think Pilate is feeling when he hands Jesus over to be crucified?

- Jesus still showed compassion to Pilate as He was being delivered over to be crucified. How do you react when others mistreat you?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 14 / John 19:1-16



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 19:1-16 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or
2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 15 / John 19:17-27



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 19:17-27.



Understanding the Story:

Near the cross of Jesus, we see his mom, his aunt, Mary (the wife of Clopas), Mary Magdalene and John the beloved disciple. Again, we see Jesus in the midst of His suffering, making sure His mother was taken care of. When we are suffering we think we are the focus and people around us need to help and serve us until we are better. Even when we are sad, we want to be left alone or lifted up and encouraged by loved ones.

However, we do not see Jesus acting this way. With everyone He encounters during His crucifixion, from Pilate, to the soldiers, to His mom, we see Him having compassion for them. This seems so backwards! Everything that Jesus did was counter to what we expect. That's why in Romans 12:2 it says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- His good, pleasing, and perfect will."

Jesus knows what He expects His followers to do is completely opposite of what culture and our flesh would do. That's why we need to remain in Him and His Word so that we can act in a way that pleases God. Not ourselves or our culture.



Applying the Truth:

- Here we see Jesus having compassion on people that were hurting Him. This is the opposite of what culture tells us to do. How can we still think about others and have compassion on them when we are in pain?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 16 / John 19:17-27



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 19:17-27 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 18 / Luke 23:32-43



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read Luke 23:32-43.



Understanding the Story:

Jesus is being crucified with two criminals. Jesus is being mocked, and one of the criminals hanging on a cross even chimes in and says, “Save yourself and us.” Soldiers and the Jewish leaders were mocking Him because He wasn’t “saving Himself”. Little did they know He was saving the world. All of God’s wrath was being poured out on Him. God didn’t hold one ounce of punishment back just because Jesus was His one and only Son. The FULL wrath for EVERY sin was laid on Jesus and He paid it.

It appears the other criminal being crucified believes Jesus is who He says He is and he defends Jesus. He says, “Don’t you fear God...We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” The criminal has the courage to ask Jesus to remember him when Jesus goes into His kingdom. We don’t know what he did but we do know the penalty was death. He has the courage to ask Jesus for mercy and to remember Him!

Some people refuse to come to Jesus because they think they have sinned too much to be forgiven, but this man is asking Jesus for mercy and Jesus says: “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” THIS VERSE PROVES IT IS GRACE ALONE THAT CAN SAVE US.

Catch this! Jesus didn’t say: “Well, first you need to live a better life and do some good deeds.” There was no way the man would be able to do that. He also didn’t tell the criminal he had to get baptized first and go to church. No! Even though those are good things, it is Jesus’ grace alone for the man that allowed him to join Jesus in paradise. Praise God!!!



Applying the Truth:

- What are some things people might do to try to earn salvation? Will these things get them into heaven? Thank God today for His grace!
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Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 19 / Luke 23:32-43



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read Luke 23:32-43 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 20 / John 19:28-42



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 19:28-42.



Understanding the Story:

When Jesus was in His final moments, people were still mocking Him. He breathes His last breath and dies. We now remember the day He died on “Good Friday.” It was not “good” for Jesus, but it was great for us because Jesus paid the price for our sins to give us life.

There are lots of conspiracy theories out there that Jesus did not really die. However, these are false. They made sure He was dead by piercing His side and watching the blood and water flow. This medically proved He was indeed dead. Had He not really been dead, those charged with killing Him would have been killed.

Now, Jesus had a secret disciple and we see Nicodemus appear again. They want Jesus’ body. They have brought it to be buried in a garden nearby. They wrapped him in strips of linens and buried him in a tomb. This tomb was more like a cave that they placed a rock in front of. According to Matthew 27: 62-66, the Romans were fearful that Jesus would rise from the dead (because He said He would), so they took extra measures to guard the tomb and make sure that Jesus’ disciples would not steal His body to claim He rose from the dead. Silly guards, Jesus can do ANYTHING!



Applying the Truth:

- How do you think Jesus’ disciples felt when He died and they buried Him?

- How do you feel after reading of Jesus’ death?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 21 / John 20:1-18



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 20:1-18.



Understanding the Story:

Thursday Jesus was killed. This was during the Passover festival. Do you remember the significance of Passover? The very first Passover, God's people had to kill an innocent lamb and place the blood over their door. This was the only way to protect their family from God's wrath on Egypt (where they were living at the time).

NOW, the Passover Lamb, Jesus, is shedding His innocent blood to keep those who believe in Him safe from God's just wrath. Some ask, why did Jesus have to die? Why blood? This ties into who God is. He is holy and perfect. He is a just God. God will not let sin go unpunished. Genesis 3:21 says that God made "garments from skin to clothe Adam and Eve." How would you make clothes from skin? You have to kill the animal. Someone must die for your sin: either you or Jesus. Those of us who believe in Jesus have already had our sins paid for. If you do not trust Jesus, you yourself will pay the penalty of sin and be eternally separated from God.

Friday and Saturday Jesus is dead. Then early Sunday...Praise God! Mary Magdalene is the first to arrive at Jesus' tomb. However, when she gets there she sees the stone has been removed. She is probably very upset thinking the Roman guards stole Jesus' body. She runs to tell Peter and John and they come running only to find Jesus' linen folded neatly in the tomb. Then Mary encounters Jesus Himself!



Applying the Truth:

- Have you ever felt hopeless like Jesus' disciples when Jesus died? But Jesus rose from the dead! In what area of your life do you need to look to Jesus and His power?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 22 / John 20:1-18



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 20:1-18 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 23 / John 20:19-29



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 20:19-29.



Understanding the Story:

Jesus knew His disciples were fearful. These poor guys were probably traumatized by watching their best friend and teacher die such a cruel death on the cross. Now, He has risen from the dead and they have seen Him walking and talking. I bet they were fearful of how the Jewish leaders were going to react and they might be wondering, "which one of us will they try to kill next?" Jesus joins them and twice tells them: "Peace be with you".

Have you ever doubted Jesus? You are not alone. We see many great people in the Bible, like John the Baptist, asking, "Is this really you, Jesus?". Here we have Thomas telling the disciples that unless he sees and touches Jesus, he refuses to believe. Jesus returns to the house and visits Thomas, and Jesus reassures Thomas that it really is Him!

He says, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." That's us! We are blessed when we believe without seeing. A lot of following Jesus is trusting what He says is true even when you don't see how it can be.

Corinthians 5:7 says, "We walk by faith not by sight." This just means that the Spirit of God should be the filter for our will (what we do), not our physical bodies (what we can see, touch, smell, hear, taste). If God tells us to do something but we let our physical bodies tell us "it can't happen," then we are not walking in faith.



Applying the Truth:

- What are some doubts you have had about God? What are some truths from the Bible that you need to hold on to?



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 25 / John 20:30-31



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 20:30-31.



Understanding the Story:

The WHOLE purpose in John writing this gospel was so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name!

Did he accomplish His goal? Do YOU believe that Jesus was exactly who He said He was? Reflect on this study of John and write down some things you believe about Jesus.



Applying the Truth:

- Write down some things you believe about Jesus.



Journal & Pray: Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.

September 26 / John 21:1-14



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 21:1-14.



Understanding the Story:

What were these disciples doing? Jesus had taken them out of their life of fishing and told them they would be fishers of men (Luke 5:10-11). Jesus, whom they followed, had been raised from the dead! They should be out telling the world, but they went back to fishing for FISH. Ha! They caught nothing. These are professional fishermen and they caught nothing.

Sometimes we do things we feel comfortable doing, things we can do in our own strength, rather than relying on God. Sometimes we go back to what we know so that we don't have to trust God. However, when Jesus showed up, and they listened to Him, their net was full. It was full of 153 fish which was said to be the amount of different species of fish in the Sea of Galilee. This is significant because Jesus did not call His disciples to search after one type of fish, but the whole world.

What would it have been like for Peter to talk to Jesus? Could it have been awkward since Peter denied Jesus three times? Peter and Jesus were now around a fire fellowshiping. Do you remember where Peter was when He denied Christ three times? He was around a fire. Jesus is about to allow Peter a chance to redeem himself.



Applying the Truth:

- What are some things in your life that you do out of routine? What do you think God wants you to do today that requires relying on His power and stepping out in faith?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 27 / John 21:1-14



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 21:1-14 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 28 / John 21:15-17



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 21:15-17.



Understanding the Story:

Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter may have been hurt, but maybe this was Jesus allowing Peter to repent. Three times Peter denied Jesus, and three times He gets to say, “You know I love you.”

What did Jesus want Peter to do if he really loved Him? Feed and take care of His sheep. Who are Jesus’ sheep? He told us in John 10:14-16. Those that belong to Him and will belong to Him are His sheep, and He wants Peter and us to take care of them.



Applying the Truth:

- What would be your answer if Jesus were to ask you, “Do you love me”?

- How can you care for and feed Jesus’ sheep today?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

September 29 / John 21:15-17



Imagination Corner

Directions: Re-read John 21:15-17 and choose one of these: 1) Draw it out or 2) Rewrite the story in your own words.

September 30 / John 21:18-25



Reading the Word:

Open your Bible and read John 21:18-25.



Understanding the Story:

Jesus tells Peter about the kind of death he will have to glorify God, and Peter starts comparing himself to John. This is a very dangerous thing to do in life. It is dangerous but very easy to do. With social media we get little glimpses into people's lives (or at least the life they want us to believe they have). We start picking and choosing parts of people's lives and combining them into one complete life. We look at someone's clothes and think, "I wish I had the money to buy those." Then we look at someone's good looks and think, "Why did God make me like this?" We take all these things and combine them into a life that in reality, no one has.

When we compare our lives with others we are not content with the life God gave us. How God chooses to use you will be different than how He chooses to use others. You will not be able to focus on your race if you keep looking over at other people. This is why they blindfold horses that are in a race. If they aren't blindfolded, the horse will look over at the other horses running and could slow down, stumble, or fall. Jesus is telling Peter to feed His sheep and run His own race. Jesus is calling us to do the same.



Applying the Truth:

- Have you ever compared yourself to others and felt unhappy? How can you focus on your own race today instead of looking over at other people?



Journal & Pray: *Write down any other ideas, thoughts, or questions about what you just read. Write a prayer to God.*

Devotional material taken and modified from “Kamp Kids Book of John Study” (Brandy Kirby, Stonecreek Church)