

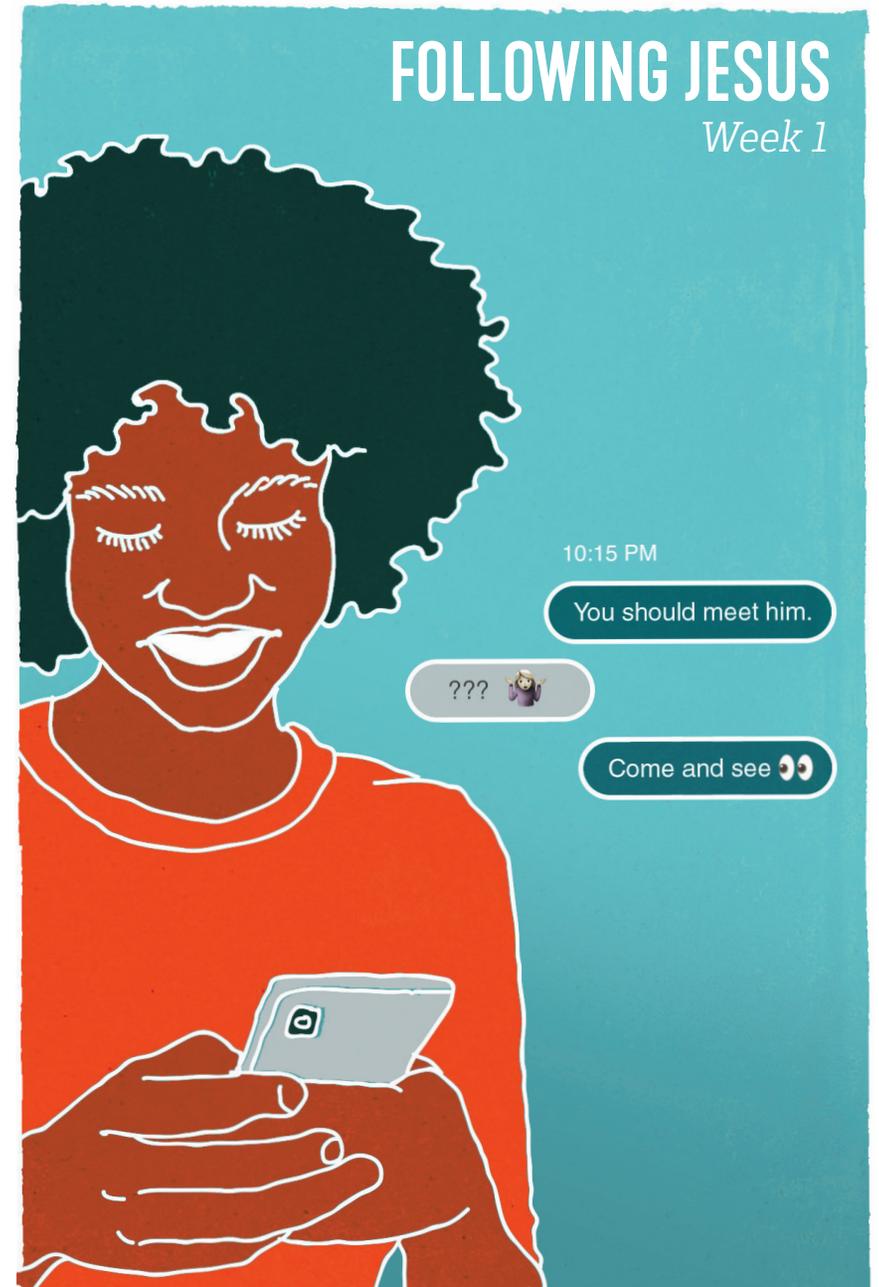
Apply

Right now (Come and see):

Jesus invited his first followers to “come and see” what he was doing. He showed Nathaniel just what he needed to see, but also promised that if he followed him, he would see even greater things! Jesus is inviting us to follow him, to come and see what he’s doing in our lives and on our campus. Each week in this Bible study, we’ll take time to encounter Jesus together right here, to “come and see” what he wants to do in our lives. Let’s take a few minutes to pray and ask God to be present.

This week (Go and do):

From the very start, Jesus’ movement spread through relationships. People who encountered him couldn’t wait to invite their friends to meet him. Let’s follow Jesus’ example and live out this John 1 story today! Who do you want to invite to “come and see” Jesus? List out their names and make a plan to invite them to the next study in the Following Jesus series!



John 1:35-51 (NIV)

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." ⁴⁸ "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel." ⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." ⁵¹ He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

Intro

As we kick off this series on how to follow Jesus, we're naturally starting at the beginning, when Jesus met his first followers. This is the story of how the very first community of "Jesus followers" came to be.

Discuss

1. When the two disciples approach Jesus, he invites them to spend the day getting to know him. If you spent the day with Jesus, what would you ask him? Why?
2. Upon meeting Jesus, Andrew and Philip have an immediate impulse to go out and invite other people to meet him too. Why do you think people are so eager to introduce their friends to Jesus?
3. Andrew and Nathaniel have very different reactions to hearing about Jesus. Would you say you're more curious like Andrew or skeptical like Nathaniel? Why?
4. Why do you think Jesus' words to Nathaniel impact him so significantly?
5. What do you like about Jesus in this story?

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

Jesus sees scarcity and responds with fresh filling! He loves pouring his Spirit into the places of emptiness and weakness in our lives. Does anyone feel like you've run out of your own resources? Does anyone feel an emptiness or weakness in your life that you want Jesus to come and fill? Can we take a couple minutes to pray for you, that God would fill you with his presence and give you his very best?

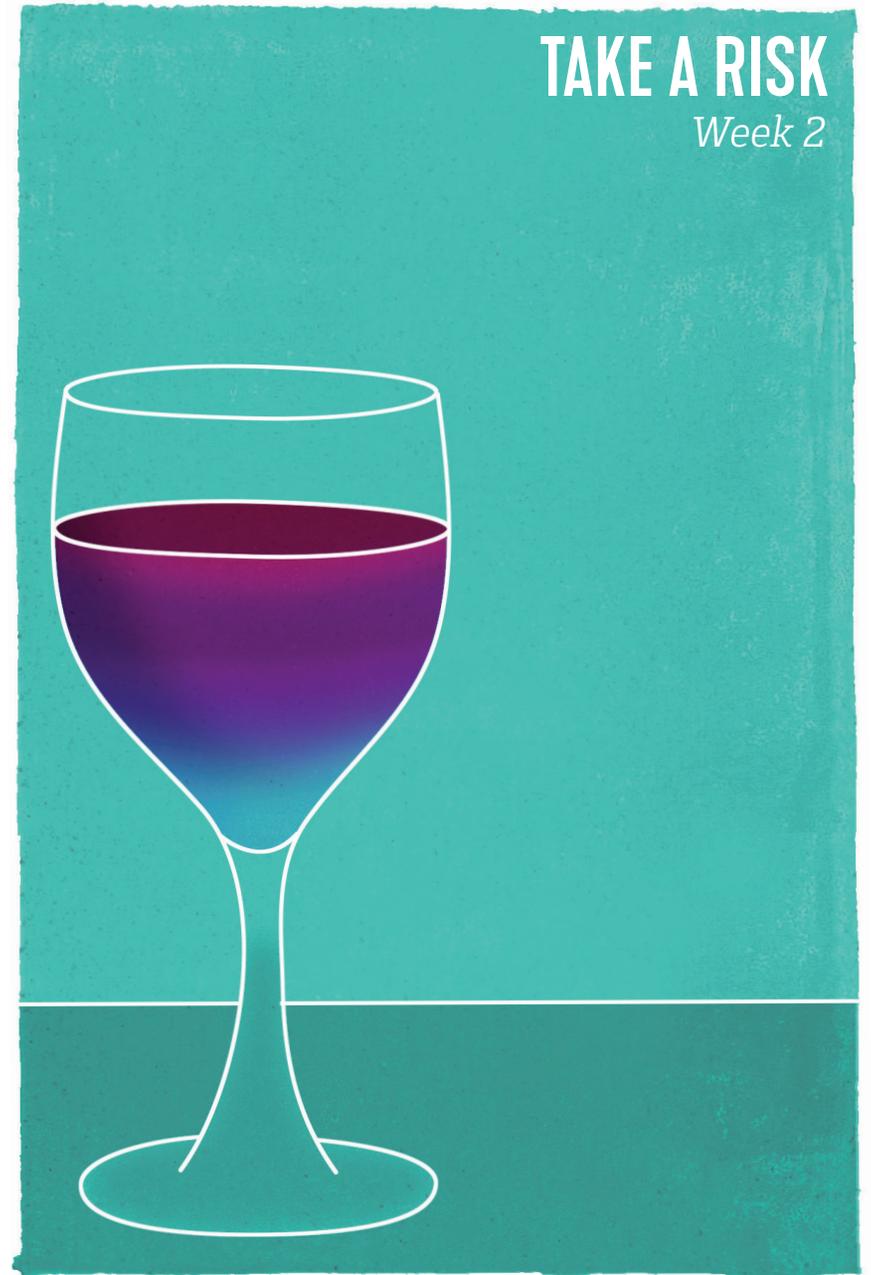
This week (Go and do):

When the servants obey Jesus and take a risk, they see the glory of Jesus revealed! How can you take a risk in following Jesus this week? One way to take a risk in following Jesus would be to emulate his generosity in this passage. Pick an act of generosity and take a risk to be generous to your friends this week:

- Buy coffee or lunch for a friend or classmate.
- Give out snacks or drinks as a group in a public space on campus.
- Pick your own act of generosity!

TAKE A RISK

Week 2



John 2:1-11 (NIV)

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." ⁴ "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." ¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Intro

This story picks up immediately where we left off last time. Jesus has just gathered a small group of followers (called disciples, which means to be someone's apprentice) and the first thing he did with them was to bring them along to a wedding. Soon they learn that the wedding has run out of wine. In this culture, hospitality was a top value. It would be a great dishonor to run out of food or wine at a party.

Discuss

1. Why do you think Jesus' mother was so motivated to involve him? Why do you think Jesus agreed to help? (Note: when Jesus addressed his mother as "woman" that was a term of respect and affection.)
2. What could have gone wrong when the servants took some of the water from the ceremonial jars and presented it to the master of the banquet? Why do you think the servants were willing to take a risk and do what Jesus said?
3. Who in the story was aware that a miracle had taken place?
4. Turning water into wine might be the last thing you'd expect from someone like Jesus. Interestingly, it caused the disciples to put their trust in him. Why do you think that was?
5. A pool full of top-notch wine is more than enough for this wedding. Why do you think Jesus makes so much? And why such excellent wine? What does this reveal about Jesus and his generosity?

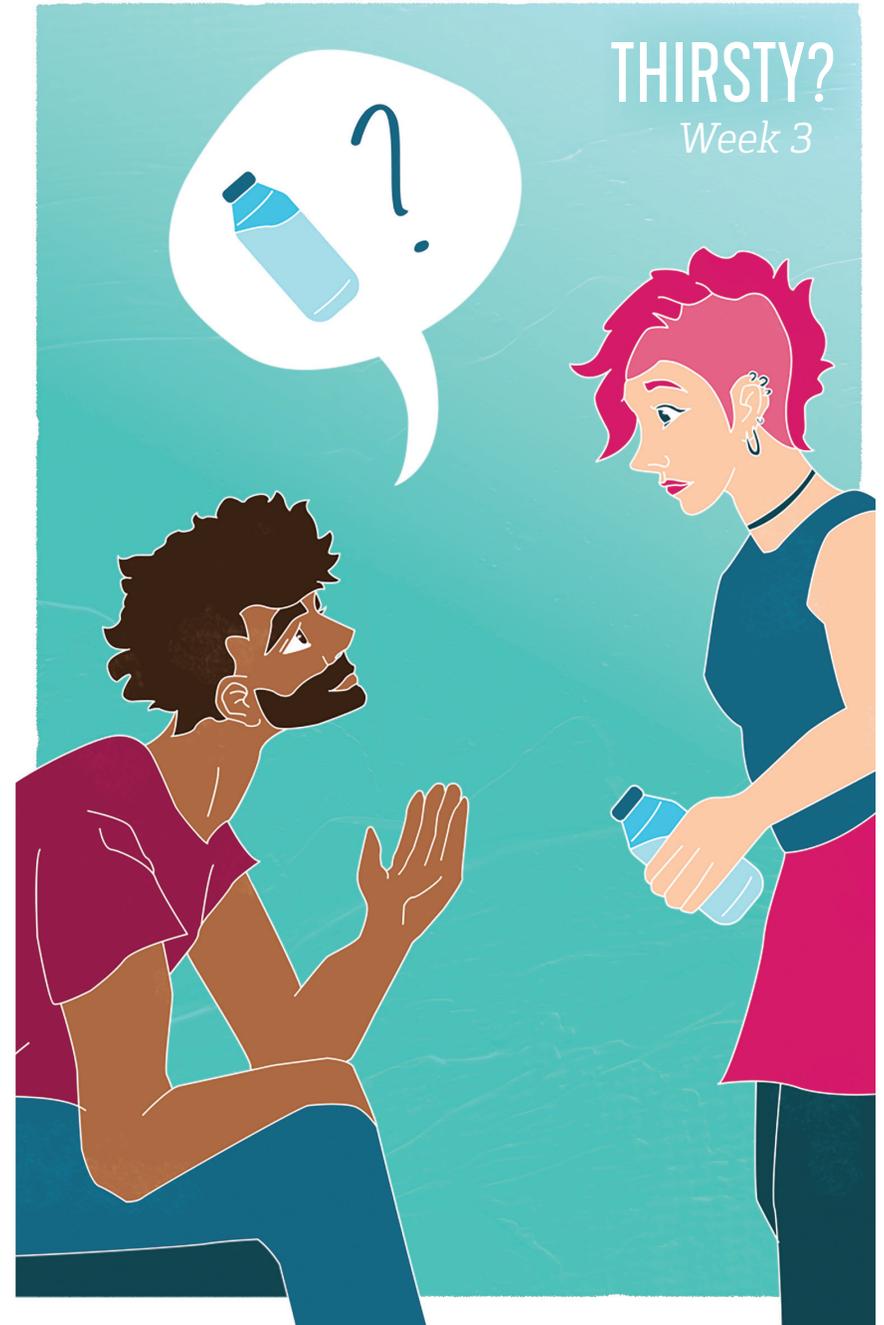
Apply

Right now (Come and see):

When this woman leaves her water jar, it symbolized her leaving the things that she used to turn to for satisfaction. This act of turning away from the things that have failed to satisfy us and turning towards Jesus, our source of living water, is essential for following Jesus. This is what Christians call "repentance". Is there something that you want to turn from (repent from) in your life today? If so, let's take a couple minutes to tell Jesus what we want to turn from, and then let's pray for one another, that as we "repent" God would fill us to overflowing with the living water of his Spirit!

This week (Go and do):

As soon as this woman encountered Jesus and turned from her old life, her immediate next step was to tell her whole community what Jesus had done for her. Part of what it means to follow Jesus is to testify to the people around us about what Jesus has done for us. What is something that Jesus has done for you in the last couple months? Have you experienced forgiveness, healing, or provision? Has God shown you any signs of his love for you? Write this experience down as a simple testimony. Who will you share this testimony with this week?



⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." ¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." ¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." ²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Intro

This story starts off saying that Jesus "had to go through Samaria". This was actually something that most Jewish religious leaders would avoid (Jewish and Samaritan people had a long history of conflict around ethnic and religious differences). John wants us to see that Jesus is up to something!

Discuss

1. What cultural and gender barriers was Jesus crossing when he asked this woman for a drink? Why do you think he did that?
2. Why do you think Jesus' offer of "living water" sounded so attractive to this woman?
3. How do you think someone with her relational history would be viewed by her town?
4. Jesus and this woman had a profound conversation about her life, her history, worship, and ultimately Jesus revealed his identity as the Messiah. What are some of the things this woman might have felt during their conversation? What would have been surprising?
5. Why do you think her first impulse was to go and invite her whole town to meet Jesus?
6. What impact did her actions have on the rest of the town? How do you think their perception of her changed?

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

In this story, Jesus miraculously fed 5000 people with bread in the wilderness. Verse 14 highlights that this was a powerful sign that caused people to believe that Jesus was sent by God. Later in this same chapter, Jesus interprets this sign even more clearly, saying "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

- This sign pointed to the identity of Jesus and helped people believe. Do you need help believing? If so, let's take a few minutes to pray for you, that God would show up in your life this week and show you signs that point to him.
- What "hunger" are you carrying in your life today? Are there things that you long for God to do that weigh heavily on you? Hunger for deeper friendships, hunger for the world to be different, hunger for God in your life? Let's bring those areas of hunger to God and pray for one another, that God would satisfy your hunger with his presence.
- The purpose of signs is to help people believe. Have you seen enough of Jesus that you're ready to believe and follow him? If so, can we take a minute to pray for you and to celebrate that decision?

This week (Go and do):

Even though the disciples didn't initially understand what Jesus was doing, they got to participate in the miracle and all twelve of them left with a basketful of leftover bread and fish as a reminder of Jesus' miraculous power. How might Jesus be inviting you to join him in miraculous provision this week? Who do you know who is in need of God's provision or power? Could you take a risk by offering to pray for them this week? Write down their name and when you'll offer to pray for them.



John 6:1-14 (NIV)

¹ Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near. ⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" ⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. ¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Intro

When we kicked off this Following Jesus series, we started with the story of Jesus going from zero to four followers. For his first disciples, following Jesus meant hanging out with him for an afternoon and seeing where he lived. In today's story we see that crowds of thousands of people are now following Jesus everywhere he goes.

Discuss

1. What do you think the average person in this crowd was looking for as they followed Jesus around?
2. How do you think the disciples were feeling about getting some time away with Jesus on the mountainside?
3. How was Jesus' perspective on the crowds different from his disciple's perspective?
4. What do you think Jesus was hoping for when he asked his question to Philip?
5. How might the disciples have been feeling after they saw the miracle?
6. What was significant about having twelve baskets of leftover food?

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

Everywhere Jesus went, even in places that others despised, Jesus expected to see his Father at work. Jesus said that because his Father loves him, he delights to show him how he is working in the world. We believe that as followers of Jesus, God the Father delights to show us what he's doing in the world, too. On our campus, we don't have to limit our perspective to the physical things we can see with our eyes. Like Jesus, we can see the campus through God's eyes. Let's pray right now and ask God, our loving Father, to show us how he sees our campus, where he's powerfully at work, and how he's inviting us to join in.

This week (Go and do):

This kind of spiritual vision doesn't have to be a one-time activity. With practice, we can embrace Jesus' posture of expectancy as we explore for God at work around us in the everyday places of our lives. **This week, try to live one day with this posture of expectancy:**

- When you wake up, commit your day to Jesus and ask God to help you see how he's moving in the people and places around you.
- As you go to different places (walking across campus, driving around town, sitting down to a meal) pay attention to what you see. Ask your Father what he wants you to notice. Ask God to help you "lift your eyes" to see how he is working in that place.
- As you interact with people (classmates, professors, strangers on the bus) try to keep in perspective that everyone you see is made in the image of God and dearly loved by their creator. C.S. Lewis famously said that "there are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal." Ask God to show you how he's moving in peoples' lives.
- Throughout your day as you explore for God at work around you, don't just be a spectator. Pay attention to how God could be inviting you to join in. Are there people that God is inviting you to talk to or pray for? Is God highlighting needs that you and your community could play a part in meeting? Take a risk and see what God does!
- Next time you meet, make sure to share how it went!

SEEING AS GOD SEES

Week 5



Intro

In the stories we've looked at so far, Jesus' followers have seen him do some amazing things. He spoke to people with prophetic insight, he turned water into wine, and he miraculously fed thousands. This week, we'll see Jesus pull back the curtain a bit and reveal how he was able to perform these incredible signs.

After Jesus healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath day (something religious leaders had a major issue with), Jesus defended his actions with the following words:

John 5:17-20 (ESV)

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." ¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. ¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.** For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

Here, Jesus reveals an incredible insight that was at the center of his approach to ministry. Every single thing that Jesus did - every healing, every miracle, every life-giving conversation - was an act of looking and seeing his Father at work in the world around him and then joining in that work.

Let's look back at the last two stories we've discussed and try to see how this actually played out. Read the following excerpts from John 4 and John 6 and ask the question, "What did Jesus see his Father doing?"

Jesus sees his Father at work in Samaria - John 4:27-35

²⁷ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" ²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³ So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, **lift up your eyes**, and see that the fields are white for harvest."

Discuss

1. When Jesus looked at this town in Samaria, what did he see his Father doing? And when he interacted with the woman at the well, how do you think he saw his Father at work in her life?
2. What do you think Jesus' followers saw when they looked at this town or this woman?

Jesus sees his Father at work in the hungry crowds - John 6:5-7

⁵ **Lifting up his eyes**, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."

Discuss

1. When Jesus looked at this crowd what do you think he saw his Father doing?
2. What do you think Philip and the other disciples saw when they looked at the crowd?
3. How would you explain the difference? Why was Jesus able to see his Father working while his followers could not?

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

In a lavish display of the kindness and power of God, Jesus miraculously healed this man after a lifetime of physical blindness. In verse 16, this miracle is again referred to as a sign. We believe that Jesus still loves to reveal his kindness and power today through signs of healing.

Sometimes, like in this story, healing happens physically. We also see in this story that Jesus opens spiritually blind eyes, healing their inability to see Jesus clearly. Sometimes healing can be an inward transformation or an experience of peace that surpasses all understanding of your circumstances.

Is anyone here feeling sick or in pain? Is anyone in need of inner healing, or some kind of personal breakthrough? If so, would you mind if we took a minute to pray for you, that God would reveal his love and power by healing you right now? Remember, the purpose of healing is to glorify God and reveal his love. Even if you don't experience physical healing, God still loves you!

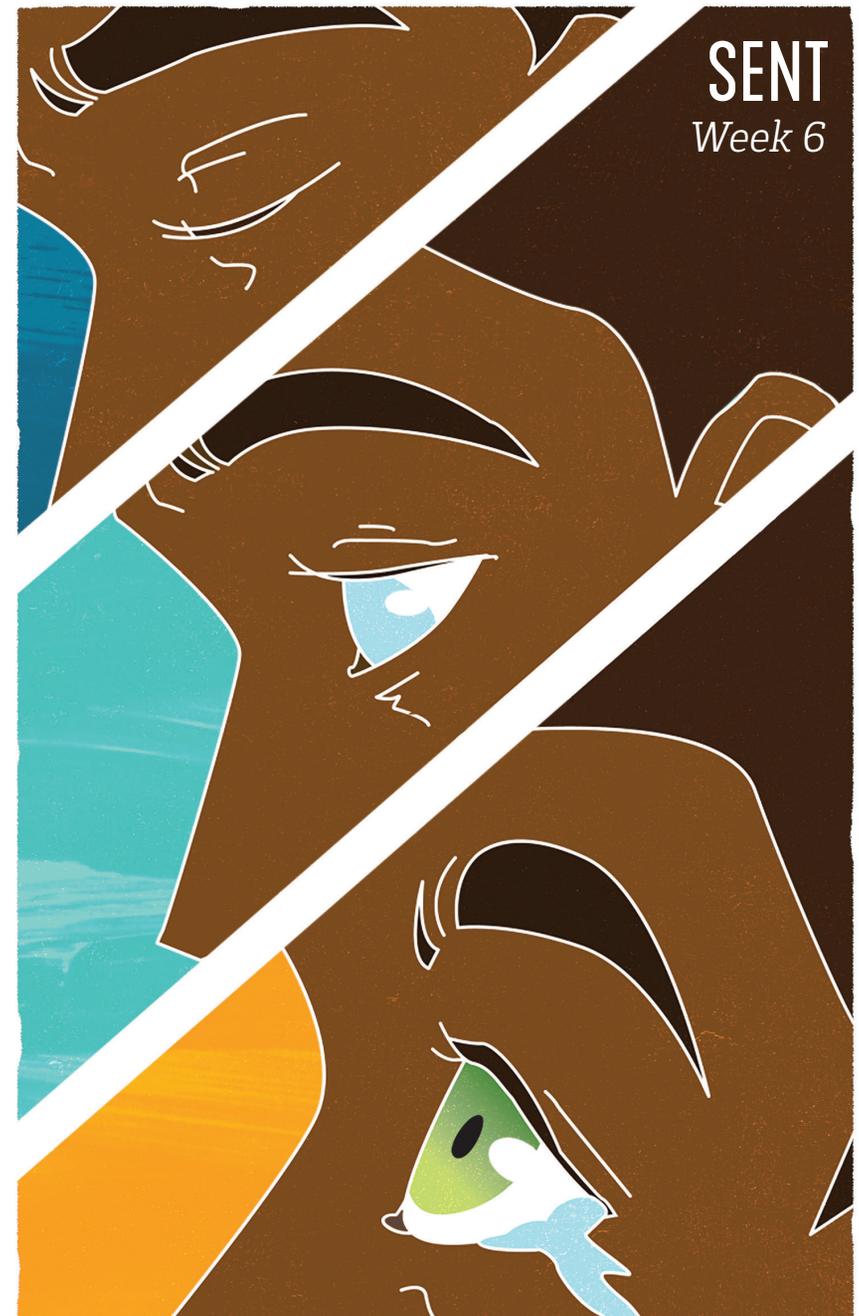
This week (Go and do):

After this man was healed at the pool of Siloam (which means Sent) he was immediately "sent" to tell the crowds and religious leaders about Jesus. Part of what it means to follow Jesus is to be sent out by him and to share his good news with the people around us. How confident do you feel about sharing the gospel (the good news of Jesus)? Follow the QR code below to see one example of how the good news of Jesus can be shared. Would you be up for taking a risk and sharing the gospel with a non-Christian friend this week?



The Big Story

The Big Story is a way to share the Gospel that remains true to the Scriptures, yet connects with people today.



John 9:1-7, 13-17, 24-41 (NIV)

¹ As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. ¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet."

²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" ²⁶ Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" ²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ "Who is he, sir?" the man

asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." ³⁷ Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." ³⁸ Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" ⁴¹ Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

Intro

Today's story begins when Jesus and his followers meet a man who was blind from birth. It was a common belief at this time that all types of suffering (including physical conditions like blindness) were the result of sin, either yours or your parents'. But Jesus challenged that narrative as he healed the man and honored him as a powerful example of following Jesus.

Discuss

1. Let's continue to pay attention to Jesus' spiritual vision. When Jesus saw this man, how do you think he saw his Father at work? How was Jesus' perspective different from the disciples or the Pharisees?
2. Try to put yourself in this man's shoes. What would it have been like to follow Jesus' instructions? What different emotions would you have had along the way?
3. What was significant about sending this man to the pool of Siloam, which means "Sent"?
4. What risks does this man take as he tells the story of what Jesus has done for him?
5. How does this man's perspective of Jesus (his spiritual sight) change over the course of the story? How does the spiritual sight of the Pharisees change?
6. Who was blind in this story and who sees clearly?

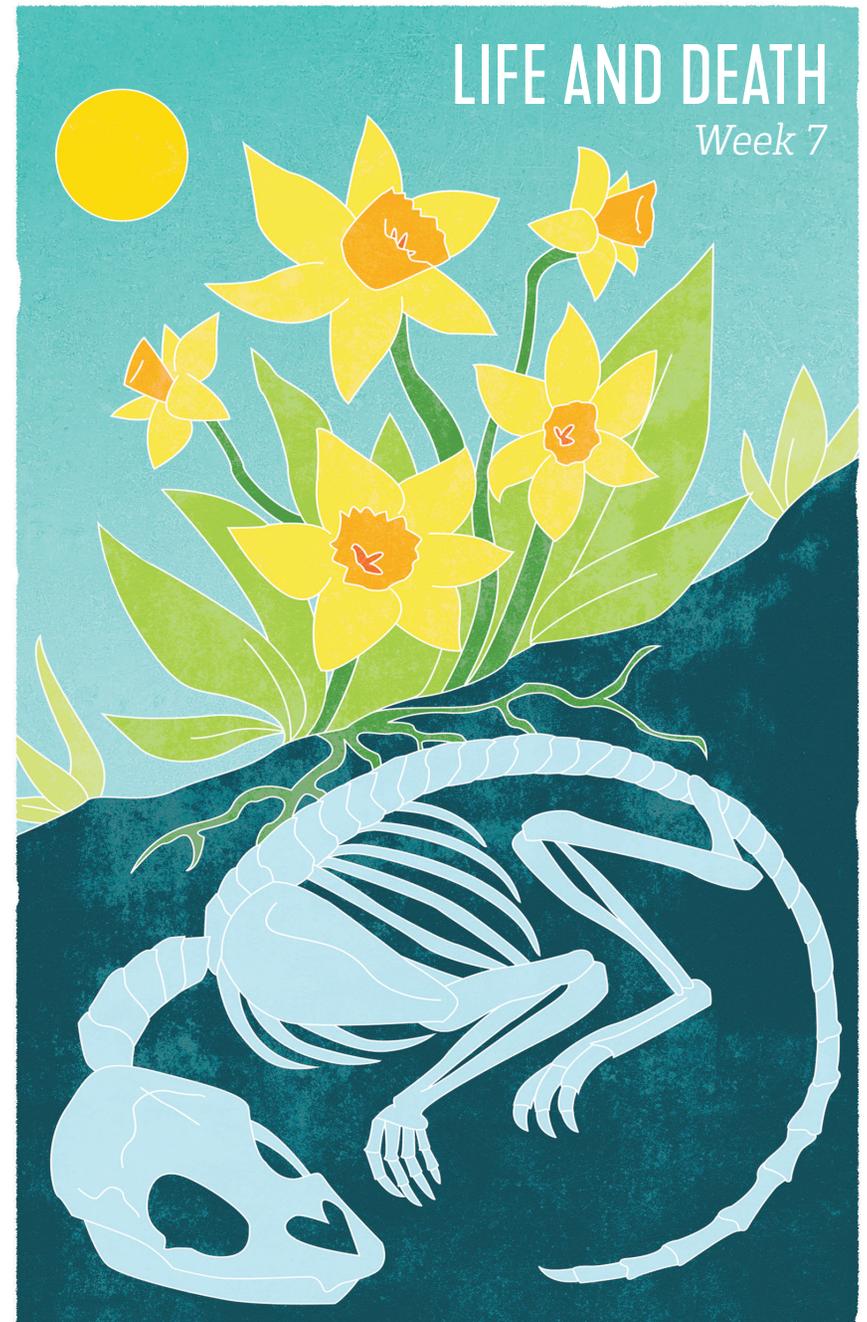
Apply

Right now (Come and see):

In this story, Jesus compares his upcoming death on the cross to being a grain of wheat that must fall to the earth and die in order to accomplish its purpose of multiplying and bearing fruit. Jesus highlights several things that his death on the cross would accomplish: God would be glorified, people would be drawn to Jesus, and “the prince of this world” (a title that Jesus used for the devil and the forces of darkness) would be cast out. Which of these three things feel like especially good news to you? Are you aware of any ways that spiritual darkness or evil has affected your life or your family? If so, could we take a few minutes to pray for you, that God would reveal his power over darkness in your life?

This week (Go and do):

Just as Jesus was willing to choose sacrifice over comfort, his followers are invited to forsake “the comfort of the stalk” and lower ourselves in order to multiply the new life of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.” So, the question for us as followers of Jesus is always, “where is Jesus calling us to follow him”? Let’s take a minute to pray and listen, asking God to show us where he’s calling us to follow him. As we pray and listen, you may have a specific place come to mind (a dorm, a neighborhood, a coffee shop) or you may have a group of people come to mind (your soccer team, your sorority sisters, specific classmates or friends). Remember, Jesus is already present and active in each of those places and in the lives of those people. As his followers, we are invited to join him! If you feel like Jesus is inviting you to follow him to a specific place or people, how will you take time to do that this week?



John 12:20-36 (NIV)

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. ²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" ³⁵ Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. ³⁶ Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light."

When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Intro

In today's story, Jesus has just entered Jerusalem, where he is one week away from being executed on a cross. When Jesus arrived in the city a group of people from Greece were eager to meet with him. For Jesus, this was a sign that his death was soon approaching, so he began to teach about what it means to lay down life in order to bear multiplicative fruit.

Discuss

1. Let's unpack the grain metaphor that Jesus is using. Why is it necessary for a grain of wheat to "fall into the earth" in order to bear the fruit of multiplication? Is any of that possible while a grain of wheat remains on the stalk?
2. How does this metaphor relate to what Jesus is about to go through?
3. What implications does Jesus make for his own followers? How would you feel if you were one of Jesus' followers hearing this?
4. According to Jesus in this passage, what are some of the things that will be accomplished through his dying on the cross?
5. Jesus uses another metaphor about darkness and light. What do you think it means for "darkness to overtake you"? What does it mean to be children of light in the midst of darkness?

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

In this story, Jesus powerfully showed his followers that he came to serve them. When Peter and others were uncomfortable with Jesus serving them (he was their Lord and Teacher after all!) Jesus said they'd have no part in him unless they allowed him to serve them. Here Jesus reveals something counterintuitive about being his follower: following Jesus first and foremost means being served by Jesus. He's the one with all of the power and resources; we're the ones with all of the needs. Let's take a few minutes to bring our needs to Jesus in prayer and invite him to come and minister to us with his presence and power.

This week (Go and do):

Jesus was abundantly clear with his followers: because he served them, they were supposed to serve one another. As a community that's seeking to follow Jesus together, how can we be a community who serves one another like this? Let's take a few minutes to list out some of our needs and resources and share those with one another. What opportunities do you see to serve one another this week?



¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" ¹⁰ Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. ²⁰ Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Intro

In our story today, Jesus and his followers are gathered around a table for their last meal together. Jesus knows that he will be betrayed and turned over to authorities this very night and that this would be his last meal with his followers before his death. With that sense of urgency, Jesus demonstrates his love for them by washing their feet and he teaches them a powerful lesson about serving one another.

Discuss

1. What's the connection between Jesus knowing "that the Father had put all things under his power" and his choice to wash his followers' feet? How is Jesus' use of power different from the way you see power being used in the world around you?
2. Imagine you were one of Jesus' followers who was seated around this table. How would you feel about Jesus washing your feet?
3. Jesus' act of lowering himself to wash his disciples' feet violated major cultural status boundaries. This is not something that a person in authority would do for their followers, so it's understandable that Peter is offended. What do you think Jesus meant when he told Peter, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me"?
4. Why is being served by Jesus so essential to following him?
5. Jesus clearly expected his followers to do as he had done. Jesus even went as far as to say that love for one another is how all people would recognize disciples of Jesus. Why do you think Jesus considers our love for one another to be the defining mark of a follower of Jesus?

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

On his final night with his friends, Jesus shared the very heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Just as a branch receives everything it needs from the vine it's attached to, Jesus invites us to be grafted into his vine, that his very life would flow through us like sap through a branch, enabling us to bear the fruit of his love in the world. We can try to live disconnected from God like a branch that's fallen from a tree, but it's in relationship with Jesus that we receive fullest joy and the greatest love. Earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus shared this same invitation: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). And here Jesus revealed the full extent of his love for us: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Where do you see yourself in this image? Let's take a few minutes for everyone to share. Are you "remaining" in Jesus, receiving his life and love, and bearing fruit in the world? Are there ways that you've been disconnected from the vine, trying to live a fruitful life with your own limited resources?

Jesus' invitation for all of us is to remain in him, to live as a branch that is grafted on to the vine, to allow his love and life to flow through us as we rely on him and follow his leadership. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Is there anyone who wants to make a decision to follow Jesus right now? If so, would you be up for telling that to Jesus in prayer? We'd love to pray and celebrate that decision with you!

This week (Go and do):

What rhythm of "remaining" in Jesus can you put into practice this week? Could you set aside 20-30 minutes each day for the next week to intentionally rest in Jesus' love and spend time "abiding" in his Word? It doesn't have to be a complicated rhythm. Spending time with Jesus can look a lot like our times together in this Bible study. Read a passage in the Bible, spend some time paying attention to what Jesus might want to say to you through it, and then respond by talking to Jesus about what you're seeing and telling him what you want to do in response.



John 15:1-17 (NIV)

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

¹² "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Intro

This week's passage in our Following Jesus series takes place at the same meal that we were introduced to last week. Jesus is about to be betrayed and sentenced to death. He is having a final meal with his followers and is using this time to impart essential teaching about what it means to follow him.

Discuss

1. List out the different elements of Jesus' metaphor (vine, branches, fruit, gardener, etc.) What does each element symbolize? Draw pictures if that's helpful to you!
2. What does a branch receive from the vine it's attached to in order to bear fruit?
3. Jesus repeats the word "remain" 11 times in this short passage. This word is often translated as "abide" or "dwell". What do you think it means to "remain" in Jesus as a branch remains on a vine?
4. In our series so far, we've already seen Jesus use the language of fruit two different times: In John 4:36 Jesus compares "gathering fruit" to leading people to eternal life in him. In John 12:24 Jesus uses the image of "bearing fruit" to describe the multiplying effect of the gospel in the world. In this passage Jesus says that "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." How does "bearing fruit" identify us as followers of Jesus?
5. List out all of the things that Jesus says we receive as we "remain" in him.

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

Jesus promised that he would send the Holy Spirit as an advocate to help us and be with us forever. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would empower us to do the things that Jesus did. And Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would lead us in all truth, reminding us of the teachings of Jesus, and that the Spirit would take the things that belong to God and reveal them to us. Just as the Father revealed to Jesus all that he was doing in the world, the Spirit plays this same role in our lives: God has given all things to Jesus, Jesus sends the Spirit to make them known to us.

Do you want more of the Holy Spirit in your life? We see in John 3:34 that God "gives the Spirit without measure"! In Luke 11:13, Jesus asked, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" All we have to do is ask! Does anyone feel hungry for more of the Spirit's presence in your life? If so, let's take some time to pray for one another to be filled with more of the Holy Spirit.

This week (Go and do):

Learning to recognize how the Holy Spirit is working in your life, speaking to you and leading you, is something that takes practice. One tool to help us develop this skill is a version of a tool called The Examen. It's basically a simple daily rhythm of reflection to cultivate awareness of God's work in your life. Each night when you go to bed, take a few minutes to reflect back on your day asking these questions:

- How did I recognize the Holy Spirit's presence with me today? Were there any moments when I sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to me or inviting me to do something?
- Where did I miss out on an opportunity to partner with the Holy Spirit? Were there any moments when I chose to not respond to what the Holy Spirit was saying? Were there moments when I let the noise of life drown out the Spirit's voice?
- After reflecting, take a moment to thank God for his presence with you today. Release the missed opportunities, yield yourself to God, and invite the Holy Spirit to meet you in fresh ways tomorrow.



John 14:12-17, 25-26 (NIV)

¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

²⁵ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, 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.

John 16:7-15

⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

Intro

In our final study in the Following Jesus series, we'll be looking once more at Jesus' last night with his followers. We've seen how Jesus taught his followers to love one another, and we've seen that Jesus invited his followers to "remain in him" like a branch connected to a vine. When Jesus told his followers that he was leaving to go to the Father, they were heartbroken. It was at that moment that Jesus revealed his ultimate end-game: not just to come to earth and spend a few years with his followers, but to send his very Spirit to actually live in his followers forever.

Discuss

1. Throughout our Following Jesus series, we've consistently taken time to put into practice the things we've seen Jesus do. This theme of doing the things that Jesus did is central to what following Jesus is all about. In John 14:12 Jesus makes this point extremely clear and takes it even further. Put yourself in the place of Jesus' first followers as they were listening to Jesus. How would you feel when Jesus said, "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do **"even greater things than these"**?"
2. What do you think Jesus meant when he said that his followers would do even greater things than him, **because he's going to the Father**? What about Jesus going to the Father makes it possible for followers like us to do the things that he did?
3. Why do you think Jesus said that it's for our good that he's going away? As followers of Jesus, what could possibly be better than Jesus right here next to us!? According to Jesus in John 16:7, The Holy Spirit dwelling in us is even better than Jesus in the flesh right next to us. Do you value the Holy Spirit's presence in your life that much?
4. In what different ways does Jesus refer to the Holy Spirit? What do these different titles teach us about the Holy Spirit's work in our lives?
5. What are some of the different things that Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do? List them out.
6. How would Jesus' words about the Holy Spirit be comforting to Jesus' followers?