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Study on
The Book of John
Part 12

Summary: The Pharisees have revealed themselves to be harmful and false shepherds to the people of Israel. In the tenth chapter of John, Jesus addresses the hypocrisy in their responses to the blind man's healing. He uses His third and fourth "I am" statements in this chapter. First, he reveals that He is the gate; the one through whom we find salvation for our souls. He is the entrance; the portal, to the presence of God. He alone is the gateway to the Father. He brings true spiritual light and life to all who are seeking. In order for us to receive the Father's love, we must come through the gate he provided and realize that any other person who claims the contrary are thieves and robbers. His next "I am" statement is that He is the good shepherd. He is the son who knows us, who gives us eternal life, will sacrifice his life for the sheep, and show us what obedience to the Father looks like.

Introduction: The love of the Father is expressed through Jesus in this chapter as he performs his last miracle on a family that he has become very close to. He models for us that the Father is not disconnected from our sorrows and challenges. On the contrary, his desire is to make His presence known in the lives of all families. He wants us to know that HE is deeply involved with all the moments of our lives- the good times when we laugh and rejoice, and the bad times when we suffer and cry.

Opening Prayer: Abba Father, thank you that you are there for my family and me in every season of our lives. Your son showed on earth how he was moved to perform miracles in the life of a special family and this lesson is teaching me that I

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can lift my eyes with an unshakable confidence that You will always be greater than my most difficult circumstance.

Memorization Scripture:

John 10:9-10 “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 11:1-54.

1. **Write about a situation in our own life where you’ve had the thought “if only...” or “why didn’t you show up?”**

2. **How do you process the tension between trusting God and questioning why painful things happen?**

3. **(Vs. 1)** It is now the springtime and the Feast of Passover is drawing near. This will be the last Passover of Jesus’ life.

- a. As Jesus’ hour nears, there is time for one last miracle.

- b. Lazarus’ name in Hebrew is Eleazar, which means, “God helps.”

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- c. Lazarus' sickness is not just devastating for the family emotionally, but also economically.
 - d. There is no other miracle told in such detail and depth as this one in Chapter 11.
 - e. It shows that the Father, through Jesus is intimately concerned about all the details of our families, whatever their makeup.
- 4. (Vs. 3) There are three categories of people who relate to Jesus.
 - a. Fans- People who laud and applaud Jesus and treat him like a celebrity.
 - i. The crowd who want to make him King (6:15)
 - ii. Loved his miracles and treat him like a folk hero (ch. 6)
 - b. Foes- Enemies of Jesus, usually the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem (including the Pharisees and Sadducees). They have plotted to kill Jesus because of his threat to their position and influence.
 - c. Friends- People who love Jesus for who he is and not what they can get from him.
 - d. Lazarus, Mary and Martha are in this third category. The sisters don't even mention his name. They call him, "the one you love."
 - e. This is the kind of friendship that Jesus wants all of us to have.

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5. What kind of friendship are you cultivating with Jesus, or would like to develop with him?

6. (Vs. 4) Jesus knows that this sickness is going to be the occasion for the Father's glory to be revealed to many people.

a. Jesus knew this because whatever he heard the Father saying, he said. Whatever the Father did, Jesus did too.

b. We are to ask for the Father's will in every situation of sickness so that God gets the glory every time.

7. (Vs. 5-6) One of the hardest things to cope with as a Christian is the delays of God.

a. Yes- Sometimes God answers immediately.

b. No- Other times the opposite seems to happen where there is seemingly no answer to prayer.

c. Later- Sometimes the Father does answer our request but it takes much longer than we expected or wanted.

d. The third answer was the case in Lazarus' sickness. Jesus decides to delay in going to his home in Bethany.

e. If God has made a promise concerning you, do not lose heart. Keep trusting, keep on believing God even when you might not see it yet.

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- 8. Write about a time in your life that you heard a yes, a no, or a later. What was your response to each answer? What is God teaching you?**

- 9. (Vs. 11)** Jesus refers to Lazarus' death as merely sleeping. There will be one day we will all fall asleep in death and Jesus' return will be loud enough to wake us up. We will then meet our Abba, Father face to face and enjoy the rapture of his embrace.

- 10. (Vs. 17)** Jews believed that the soul of a dead person hovered over their body for three days and then left forever on day four.

- a. Jesus postpones his arrival to the fourth day on purpose.
- b. Timing is everything.
- c. The moment when the word "impossible" was on everyone's lips, God does what was beyond human understanding and capability.
- d. With Him, all things are possible!

- 11. (Vs. 20)** There are such different personalities in Mary and Martha.

- a. Mary is contemplative, and Martha is an activist.
- b. Martha reacts to the news of Jesus' arrival by doing. Mary reacts by being.
- c. We need people with Mary's heart and Martha's hands

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d. To live as true children to our perfect Abba, we must learn first to be and then secondly, to do.

e. The Father is looking for working lovers more than loving workers.

12. When you are in the middle of a painful situation, do you tend to act like Martha (taking immediate action, seeking answers) or like Mary (withdrawing, waiting, or sitting in your grief)?

13. (Vs. 21-22) The family lived close to Jerusalem so Martha would have known about all the miracles of Jesus.

a. This is the ultimate challenge- death.

b. Her faith is incredible. It's not just about what might have been, but what still could be.

c. She recognizes that Jesus had a special, indeed unique relationship with God.

d. Even now, the impossible is possible.

14. (Vs. 23) Jesus makes a statement that causes a question to rise in Martha. Would she prefer to settle for theological truths or for a supernatural encounter?

a. Jesus reassures her with the truth of resurrection.

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- b.** Will Martha settle for the pastoral comfort or press to have an encounter that radically redefines her understanding of truth?
 - c.** What if we all rose up with this kind of active and unusual faith and said, “It’s not enough to know that sometime in the future all will be well; I believe it can be well right now!”?
 - d.** The Father is looking for children who don’t just settle for theological truths but who are agents of heaven-on-earth encounters.
- 15. (Vs. 25-26)** Jesus speaks his fifth “I am” statement to Martha.
 - a.** I am the resurrection and the life.
 - b.** If you believe in Him, you will live- spiritually live forever.
 - c.** Even when you die- physically, you won’t be dead spiritually.
 - d.** Those who live- physically, if they believe in him, will never die- spiritually, eternal death.
- 16. (Vs. 27)** How difficult is it to make this statement to Jesus when they are on their way to a tomb.
 - a.** To acknowledge Jesus as the Christ when everything is sunny and happy is easy.
 - b.** Martha acknowledges that she believes that he is THE Christ.
 - i.** There were many false Messiahs in Israel in the first Century. She recognizes Him as being the real deal.

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- c. She also adds that he is THE son of God.
 - d. Martha says that he is “who was come into the world.” She recognizes that Jesus is the divine envoy from the realms of heaven. Through Jesus, God has visited the planet.
 - e. When times are tough, we too need to hold firmly to our confession of Jesus, the one who has been sent to bring change.
- 17. (Vs. 32)** Martha engages in a theological debate with Jesus, but Mary falls at his feet.
- a. In many stories in the Gospels, she is usually found at his feet. (Luke 10:39)
 - b. The next time she will be seen, will be in Chapter 11 where she is anointing his feet with fragrant expensive oil that she has been saving for his burial.
 - c. Her life is spent at his feet.
- 18. Why do you think Mary falls at Jesus’ feet and what can we learn from Mary’s posture?**
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- 19. (Vs. 33)** The phrase, “deeply moved in spirit” was used when describing a horse snorting with rage.
- a. it signifies a deep and passionate response of anger.
 - b. Jesus is angry at the Devil who causes suffering and robs people of health, life and loved ones.

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- c. There are times when the Holy Spirit stirs up a righteous rage in us against the darkness that leads to a passion to end suffering and injustice.

20. (Vs. 35) This is the shortest verse in the Bible.

- a. It is a very strong word in the Greek that literally means, “to sob”.
- b. It is a different verb from the one used to describe the crying of the mourners.
- c. It shows that Abba, Father is not remote from our suffering. He suffers when we suffer. He weeps when we weep.
- d. This is a very different picture of God than what is portrayed in other religions.
 - i. Most find it impossible to answer the question, “what is God doing when we suffer?”
 - ii. Some portray Him as apathetic- far removed from our suffering and incapable of pain.
 - iii. In Jesus, we see that God is compassionate, and knows what it’s like to lose a loved one in death. He even knows what it’s like to experience death itself.

21. (Vs. 37) The mourners ask a question that many of us have asked at some point in our journey.

- a. We have heard many stories of other people who have been healed, so why has my loved one died?
- b. When it comes to the mystery of suffering, there are no easy answers, only good responses.

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22. What are some good responses?

23. (Vs. 41) In the midst of everything looking utterly hopeless, Jesus responds to this dark and dire situation.

- a. He looks up, not down.
 - i. He had said earlier, that the Father is greater than all. He models for us to make the right choice.
- b. He prays knowing that the Father had already heard him.
 - i. Prayed as if the thing he was requesting had already been granted.
 - ii. A true child of the Father thanks Him for the help that is already on the way, not begging for help to be sent.

24. (Vs. 43) These words are the fulfillment of what Jesus said in chapter 5:21,25. “Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”

- a. Jesus exercises the Father’s power over death itself and we watch as Lazarus hears the voice of the Son of God and lives.

25. (Vs. 44) Lazarus responds to Jesus’ command. He is alive but still bound.

- a. The first command is to Lazarus- Come forth.
- b. The second command is to the bystanders- Untie him and let him go.

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- c. We are called out of a place of death- Resurrection life causes our spirits to be quickened. We are alive to God.
- d. But we are still bound by the trappings of our former life and need a community of people dedicated to removing our grave clothes so we can run without stumbling.

26. How can we, as a community of believers, help "unwrap" others and let them go free after they come to faith?

27. (Vs. 49-50) The chief priests and the Pharisees call a meeting to discuss the possible loss of their power if Jesus is left in place.

- a. Caiaphas, the high priest, unknowingly prophesies about the necessity of Jesus' sacrificial death.
 - i. He was a Sadducee who was fiercely protective of his power under Roman rule and only concerned with guarding against civil disorder.
 - ii. The father chooses to speak through this unpleasant and rude man.
 - iii. Although he is speaking politically, John understands it spiritually.
- b. Sometimes God uses strange mouthpieces and we must learn to be like John- discerning enough to hear his voice.

28. (Vs. 53) Let's explore the irony of this story of Lazarus.

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- a. The act of giving life results in an act of taking life.
 - b. Sometimes praying for miracles will act as a catalyst for opposition. An increase in power can sometimes lead to an increase of persecution.
 - c. We all need to be prepared to pay the price for more of the glory of God.
- 29. (Vs. 54)** Jesus disengages from his controversies with the hostile religious leaders in Jerusalem and moves to a secluded village.
- a. He retreats in order to advance.
 - b. There are times to make public stands, and times to withdraw to recuperate.
 - c. The timing of the Father is everything and will teach us great lessons when we listen and move to the rhythm of the Father.