

Knowing Jesus

through
the Gospel of John

Reflection Guide

Week of February 23, 2020
Chapters 18–21

In these final chapters of John, Jesus' power and glory are on full display. At last, Jesus will accomplish the mission that had been given to him by the Father, and the fullness of God's glory and identity will be revealed to the entire world.

MONDAY

Read: John 18:1–11

Reflect: Jesus cannot help but display his power. Surrounded by soldiers and guards, he is fully in control of the situation, and at the sound of his voice, everyone falls to the ground. Yet, Jesus remains committed to his mission to reveal the fullness of God's glory and love, bringing salvation to the world through his death on a cross. When, if ever, have you been knocked over (so to speak) by Jesus' power? What difference does it make, if any, that Jesus uses his power to accomplish his mission rather than protect himself?

Respond: As a prayer exercise, place yourself in this scene and note where everyone is standing. Where are you? What does this tell you about yourself?

TUESDAY

Read: John 18:12–40

Reflect: Jesus' trial before the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate begins with Pilate trying to fit Jesus into his own categories. But the truth about Jesus cannot fit into the existing notions of "kingdom" and "truth." Instead, Jesus must be understood and accepted on his own terms. Do you find it difficult to understand Jesus on his own terms instead of fitting him into your own categories? Why or why not? How might your life be different if, instead of trying to fit Jesus into your life, you increasingly built your life around Jesus?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to help you recognize the truth about who Jesus is and the significance of what he has done.

WEDNESDAY

Read: John 19:1–16; 1 Samuel 8:1–9

Reflect: Motivated by political expedience dressed up as seemingly noble patriotism, the crowds demand Jesus' crucifixion. More than just rejecting Jesus—God among them—the crowds wholeheartedly accept Caesar, an earthly king who claimed to be a god. Where does your ultimate allegiance lie? How do you know? What things compete for your allegiance to Jesus, and how do those things come packaged?

Respond: Confess to God all the ways that you given your allegiance to things other than Jesus.

THURSDAY

Read: John 19:17–27

Reflect: Pilate posts a sign on the cross indicating the charge against Jesus. John adds that the sign was written in three languages—Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In effect, the known world could have read the sign. What do you think is the significance of the sign being legible throughout the world? How would you describe the significance of Jesus' crucifixion for your life and for the world?

Respond: Throughout this Gospel, John has pointed to the crucifixion as the pinnacle of Jesus' glory. Reflect on where you see God's glory revealed in Jesus and offer your reflections to God as a form of worship.

FRIDAY

Read: John 19:28–42; Exodus 12:1–28

Reflect: Even in death, Jesus is supremely powerful. Notice that John doesn't say that Jesus died; rather, he writes that Jesus declared, "It is finished!" and "released his spirit" (19:30). John also calls attention to the timing of the crucifixion, placing it at the same time when the Passover lamb would be slaughtered and calling Jesus "the Lamb of God" (1:29, 36). Where is God's glory revealed here? How does John's depiction of Jesus' crucifixion challenge or affirm your understanding of what it means to be glorious? Do you find a God who is glorious in this way difficult or easy to believe in? Why?

Respond: Once again, reflect on where you see God's glory revealed in Jesus and offer your reflections to God as a form of worship.

SATURDAY

Read: John 20

Reflect: It is not until the disciples see the empty tomb and encounter the risen Jesus that they finally believe. Thomas even says that he won't believe until he touches Jesus. Jesus then offers for Thomas to touch his wounds. What is Jesus' reaction to his disciples' doubts? How do you think Jesus reacts to your own struggles to believe?

Respond: Make Thomas's confession of faith, "My Lord and my God!" your own. Imagine yourself in Thomas's place and tell Jesus about your trust in him.

SUNDAY

Read: John 21

Reflect: Jesus restores Peter three times after he had earlier denied Jesus three times. John's Gospel ends with an individual, personal call to follow Jesus, no matter the cost. How is Jesus calling you to follow him? How are you answering that call?

Respond: As an act of worship, resolve to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

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