

Appendix B
7 Reasons To Believe
A Study Of The Seven Signs Of Jesus In The Gospel Of John



Introduction

Welcome to this evangelistic Bible study in the Gospel of John. How many times have you heard someone say, “*I would believe if God would give me a sign,*” or “*If God wants people to believe, why doesn’t He just give us a sign.*” Well, I’ve got good news. Not only has He given us a sign, He has given us SEVEN (yep, 7! Actually, quite a few more, but according to the writer who recorded these seven, he didn’t have the time or space to record them all - Check out John 21:24-25). Many people wrongly believe that God doesn’t (or didn’t) give signs to people to encourage them to believe. For example, the religious people of Jesus day (the Jews) were always asking him for “a sign” to validate His ministry. And the truth is that Jesus gave them many signs, but He always gave signs on His terms, not theirs; in His timing, not theirs. And He always used miraculous signs to teach those around Him something about His power to transform life’s apparent disasters into blessings, to prick their consciences, and to call people to repentance and faith (sometimes it worked; sometimes it didn’t, and right there is both a lesson and a challenge).

The Goal & Purpose of This Study

So, what’s the goal or purpose of this study? Our purpose in studying these signs is basically the same as John’s purpose in recording them, “. . . *these have been written that you may believe . . .*”. In the Gospel of John, the Kingdom of God is a place where the power of God transforms people, causing them to be born again; and transforms their lives from disaster to blessing, from curse to blessing, from blindness to sight and from darkness to light. John will use seven of Jesus’ “miraculous signs” in the lives of ordinary people to illustrate this truth and to challenge both us and them to repent and believe.

Your Role As A Facilitator

So what’s your role in this whole process. Let me make some suggestions:

- ⇒ **Don’t Teach!** First and foremost, it is NOT your role to “teach” each lesson (and I suppose that means you don’t need to be a “teacher” in order to lead it!). You are a leader and a facilitator of dialogue. There will be times when that is specifically called for and appropriate (if you’re a little fuzzy on this point, may I suggest that you go back and re-read Module 7, specifically the two sections entitled “*The Role of Teaching in House Church*” and “*Let’s Talk About That*”). Even when you are specifically called on to “teach” by giving certain “fill-in-the-blank” answers, give people the opportunity to interact with the text and the “answers.”
- ⇒ **Facilitate!** Your primary role is that of a “Facilitator,” someone who encourages others to participate and to interact with the study while gently keeping everyone “focused” and “on task.” There is always a balance to be found for each group between allowing people to express their views and opinions, and preventing the development of “rabbit trails” which take the discussion in unproductive and time-consuming directions far from the point, issue or question at hand. Often, the best response is simply to say, “*That is an interesting question which we should probably consider at another time,*” or “*I would love to explore that with you after our study tonight.*” Here are three questions which you can use to keep the discussion focused on the text: 1) What does the text say? 2) What does this mean in the context of tonight’s study? 3) What difference should this make in my life? If you aren’t answering one of these three questions then you are probably off track.
- ⇒ **Don’t Dominate!** Remember that a “Facilitator” does not dominate. Your role is not to preach but simply to be an integral part of guiding the discussion and encouraging dialogue. Leave your pre-conceived agendas behind, and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal His agenda for the time. In each of the 7 signs you will be going to study you will discover that Jesus never “preached.” He simply found people in the midst of life’s circumstances, touched them in the midst of their “life crisis” with the transforming power of the Kingdom of God, allowed them to respond according to their own choices and then made observations on those responses and choices. Try not to do more than Jesus did, or to say more than He said.
- ⇒ **Practice Patience!** For some people this may require wiring your mouth shut for the first few weeks. Remember that the power and impact of these seven signs is cumulative. How do we know this? By following John’s own use of the word “believe.” In John, the word/verb “believe” (*pisteuo*) occurs 101 times in 87 verses, three times more than in the other three gospels combined. For John, people’s responses to Jesus are all about believing versus not believing. So, what about in the seven sign episodes? In the first four signs, the word “believe” occurs 4 times (in other words, it isn’t heavily emphasized). Then in the 6th sign alone it occurs 4 more times (in other words, the challenge to believe is growing). Finally, in the 7th sign “believe” occurs 9 times. Jesus saved the best and greatest sign (along with the strongest challenge) for last, allowing the six previous signs to have their full effect, and then challenging men to believe and to embrace light over darkness.

- ⇒ **Watch Out!** Keep an eye open for religious people who have all the right religious answers, or who want to dominate the discussion or hijack the study for their own agenda, or just feel that it's important for everyone to hear how much they know. As you will soon discover, Jesus was always running up against religious people who questioned what He was doing. God's transforming power nearly always challenges religious paradigms to their breaking point . . . and beyond!
- ⇒ **Remember!** Our goal is not to make people religious, but to lead them into a transforming relationship with the risen, living Jesus. And it is ultimately the Holy Spirit who does this. **Our** challenge is to not get in His way in the process.

About The Meeting

This is a study that can be conducted anywhere that people gather. I am often pleasantly surprised to discover the number of Bible studies going on in places like Starbucks (expensive coffee, but cheap rent!). So feel free to be creative, and keep in mind the circumstances and needs of those you are seeking to reach. That being said, I would encourage you to consider the following:

- ⇒ **Go Home!** Consider holding the study in your home where people can relax and "let down". Better yet, hold it in the home of a seeking unbeliever who will invite their seeking friends to come!
- ⇒ **Eat!** Consider building it around a pot-luck meal. People tend to relax and open up over food. Do a taco salad and encourage everyone to bring an ingredient. Do a spaghetti feed or Italian night. When weather permits, have a BBQ.
- ⇒ **How Long?** Ask people to set aside the evening (say, 6-to-9 pm) so that you have time to eat, visit and study without feeling rushed. Allow roughly 1 hour for the meal and 2 hours for the study.
- ⇒ **Invite and Pray!** Consider using the "Multiplying Group of Eight" diagram in Module 5 to begin listing the names of people to invite. Spend time praying for them. And getting to know them. Remember: You cannot change what you do not love; You cannot love what you do not know; and you cannot know what you are unwilling to invest time in. Friends will respond better than strangers, and friendships take time.
- ⇒ **Don't be religious!** House Church is about the pursuit of God in the company of friends and family without religious baggage or trappings. It isn't about looking, acting or sounding religious. Don't try to force your non-Christian friends to sing praise and worship songs just because you think it's a spiritual thing to do. This time isn't about you, it's about them and their journey into the Kingdom of God. If people aren't comfortable around you, it doesn't matter what great spiritual insights you may have to share (assuming that you have any!). I must confess that some of the worst decisions we have made regarding outreach have involved inviting "church people" to come and participate. It isn't long before they (and everyone else!) are stumbling over their religious baggage, bringing with them all the "right answers" but all the wrong spirit!
- ⇒ **Don't Force Things!** Don't force issues on people. People must be given the freedom to draw their own conclusions and applications without you coercing them (Isn't it amazing how we all believe in "free will" until the exercise of that free will takes people in directions we don't want them to go. Then we cry out for God's sovereignty, or try to manipulate or control people into doing the "right thing"). We can suggest valid conclusions and applications, but we cannot force others to accept our conclusions anymore than we can live their lives for them. The faith they come to must be genuinely and authentically theirs, and not something they borrowed from you or it will not last. Each person must come to valid conclusions which they are willing to authentically apply to their lives in genuine faith. And, ultimately, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. And stop mumbling about the urgency of people believing the truth. No one understood (or taught) the urgency of accepting spiritual truth more or better than Jesus, and yet He seldom (if ever) forced that truth on people or coerced them into believing. As an apologist friend of mine once observed, there is sufficient evidence for any person who hasn't closed their heart or mind to believe, but there isn't enough proof in all the world to force into the Kingdom of God a person who just doesn't want to go. And nothing illustrates this truth better than the life and ministry of Jesus Himself. As we will soon see, he healed the sick, stilled storms, multiplied food, made the lame walk, opened blind eyes and raised the dead, all in the open view of people who saw and yet chose not to believe. Why did such people choose not to believe in the face of such obvious miracles? Answer that question and you can write your own evangelistic bible study and toss this one in the trash!
- ⇒ **Plant a House Church!** At some point during this study someone will experience a transforming encounter with God. It is at that moment that a new house church will potentially be born and planted among the extended *oikos* of that transformed person. That's how Jesus and the early church did it, and it's probably the way we should be

doing it too! The study itself should take 7 weeks (i.e., 7 lessons, duh!). Week eight should be a house church planting week as the participants in your study become the new participants in your newly planted house church!

About The Gospel of John

Let's finish this introduction with a little background information on the Gospel of John.

- ⇒ John's gospel has been described as a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is both simple and profound.
- ⇒ The early church and most evangelical scholars today agree that the Gospel of John was written by John, the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple who leaned on Jesus during the last supper (John 13:23-25). John went on to be an Apostle, write the books of I, II, and III John, and The Revelation. He was the "elder" of the Church at Ephesus, was exiled to the Isle of Patmos by the Emperor Domitian (where he wrote The Revelation), and finally died at Ephesus during the reign of the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117). The early church father Irenaeus wrote that after the three other gospels were written, "*John, the disciple of the Lord who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself write a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.*"
- ⇒ John wrote his gospel as an eyewitness to the events he records. He wrote it roughly 60 years after Jesus' death & resurrection and approximately 30 years after the last of the other three were written. His gospel account is "different" in that he wants to give the reader a perspective on events that was different and unique from the common perspective given by the other three gospel writers.
- ⇒ The best comprehensive commentary on John is the one by Leon Morris, ***The Gospel According To John***, Revised Edition in ***The New International Commentary on the New Testament***, Gordon Fee, General Editor (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995).

Sign # 1: The Wedding At Cana *Transforming Disaster Into Blessing (John 2:1-11)* (Leader's Guide)

1 And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding. 3 And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus *said to Him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus *said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother *said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." 6 Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. 7 Jesus *said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He *said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter." And they took it to him. 9 And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter *called the bridegroom, 10 and *said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now." 11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

General Background

- ⇒ **The Purpose of John's Gospel** - In John 20:30-31 the author tells us his purpose in writing his account of Jesus' life the way he did: "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." According to John, Jesus did "many other signs," but John chose these seven to achieve a specific purpose, namely, "that you may believe."
- ⇒ **About Cana** - The village of Cana was located roughly 8-9 miles north of Nazareth in Galilee (northern Israel). Jesus visited there twice (John 2:1 and 4:46), and Nathaniel (John 21:2) was from there.
- ⇒ **About Jewish Weddings In Jesus' Day**
 - *Weddings In Jesus's Day* - Weddings in the ancient near east of Jesus' day were an important event which involved a "legal reciprocity." This meant that the bridal party was expected to provide for the guests who attended, while the guests were expected to bring suitable gifts. Potentially, there could be legal penalties for either party who failed to live up to expectations.
 - *The Betrothal* - In a Jewish wedding there was a betrothal period which was much more serious than today's "engagement." This was a solemn pledge of each person to the other which required a divorce to break. Mary and Joseph were in the Betrothal period when she conceived Jesus.
 - *The Wedding* - Weddings took place on a Wednesday if the bride was a virgin and on a Thursday if she was a widow. The Bridegroom and his friends made an evening procession to the bride's house. The Bridegroom and the bridal party would then return to the Bridegroom's house where a celebration and a wedding banquet was held. This feast was often prolonged and could last for several days.
 - *The Stone Water Pots*. The Jews of Jesus' day practiced frequent ritual religious washings, including prior to meals. A controversy over this issue is found in Mark 7:1-13. Water was stored in these waterpots until needed for these ceremonial washings.

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: *And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding (2:1-2)*

- ⇒ **Let's Talk:** What does it say about Jesus that he began His public ministry at a wedding?
 - It suggests that Jesus enjoyed "hanging out" with people; It suggests that He enjoyed sharing in and celebrating the significant events of people's daily lives; It suggests that Jesus didn't consider Himself "too good" or "too holy" to hang out with people at a party! (This wasn't a "church event"!)

Scripture: *And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus *said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus *said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." His mother *said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." (2:3-5)*

- ⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation. What's happened? Why is this important?
 - The supply of wine for the banquet had run out; the Greek word here is the common Greek word

- for “wine.” This was socially embarrassing and could bring the celebration and banquet to a halt; This was a “disaster-in-the-making”; potentially, a devastating legal liability because the guests could claim that the bridal party/family had breached their obligation to provide for the guests.

➡ **Let’s Talk:** What you think was going on between Jesus and His Mother over this situation?

- The wedding party & family appear to have been family friends; Mary wants Jesus to intervene and to do something about the problem;
- Jesus wasn’t being rude to His mother; rather He was establishing the boundaries of His ministry and letting His mother know that she could not dictate the terms or timing of His ministry.
- Mary understood Jesus well enough to know that He would act. How do we know this? Because John tells us that *“His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’”*

Scripture: *“Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter.” And they took it to him.” (2:6-8)*

➡ **Let’s Talk:** Describe what Jesus did. How much water would this have involved? Try to estimate how many people were aware of what Jesus was doing.

- Jesus commanded the water pots to be filled to the brim creating between 150 and 180 gallons of wine.
- At least 15 people knew what was going on: Jesus, the 12 disciples and at least 2 servants.

Scripture: *“And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now.” (2:9-10)*

➡ **Let’s Talk:** Describe what has happened. Why do you think John tells us, *“but the servants who had drawn the water knew”*? How has Jesus “transformed” the situation?

- John is preparing us for the “ripple effects” of the miracle by reminding us that there were people other than the disciples who saw and knew what happened.
- 1) He has transformed 150-to-180 gallons of water into celebration wine, enough to sustain the wedding feast and celebration for several days if necessary; 2) He has enabled the wedding family to avoid embarrassment and a potential legal disaster; 3) He has fulfilled the responsibility of a good wedding guest by giving an appropriate gift.

Scripture: *“This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” (2:11)*

➡ **Let’s Talk:** What does the phrase *“beginning of His signs”* suggest? List some ways Jesus’ glory was manifested through this event? What do these teach us about Jesus?

- It suggests that there would be ***more signs to come!***
- It showed His concern for ***people*** and the ***practical issues of their lives;***
- It showed His ***supernatural power*** over the natural order and His ***power to transform*** disasters into blessings;
- It pointed to ***a greater power*** than could be seen on the human level;
- It was a ***miraculous confirmation*** of something they already suspected, namely, that there was something unique and special about Jesus!

Application

🔄 How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing? It says that *“His disciples believed in Him.”* Why do you think they believed? What have you learned from this story that might cause you to “believe” that Jesus could transform the disasters in your life into blessing?

Sign # 2: Healing A Nobleman's Son Transforming Sickness Into Healing (John 4:46-54) (Leader's Guide)

46 He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." 49 The royal official *said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus *said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off. 51 And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. 52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household. 54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. (4:46-47)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation in your own words. What is happening? How do you think "the ripple effects" of Jesus first visit to Cana are effecting this second visit to Cana?

- Jesus has returned to Cana in northern Galilee where he performed his first sign.
- The "ripple effect" has been that this "royal official" has now heard about Jesus ability to work miracles and has come looking for Him to heal his son.
- The "royal official" was probably an official in the court of King Herod, who ruled Galilee for the Romans.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Where are Jesus and the royal official in relation to the man's son? What does the official think must take place in order for his son to be healed? How desperate is the situation?

- Jesus and the official are in Cana, while the man's son is in Capernaum, about 20 miles away.
- The official thinks that Jesus must physically come to Capernaum and heal his son.
- The child is at the point of death.

Scripture: Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." (4:48)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Summarize Jesus statement in your own words. What do you think this means, especially in light of John 20:30-31?

Notes Regarding Miracles, Signs and Wonders:

⇒ **Definitions:**

- A "miracle" (Greek: *dunamis*) is a work of God's **POWER** & emphasizes the **NATURE** of the event.
- A "wonder" (Greek: *terata*) is a **MIRACLE** & emphasizes the awe-inspiring **APPEARANCE**.
- A "sign" (Greek: *semeion*) points to **something greater**, emphasizes the **PURPOSE** of the event, namely, to **communicate spiritual truth**.

Scriptures Regarding Meaning of Signs and Wonders:

Matthew 12:38-41 - "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'"

- Observation:** The religious leaders asked Jesus for a sign in order to **"test" Him**. Jesus never gave into such demands or tests. He always chose the **timing** and **circumstances** of His signs.

Matthew 11:21 - "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

- Observation:** The purpose of a miraculous sign is to bring about **faith and repentance**.

Matthew 22:29 - "But Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.'

- Observation:** Jesus insists that people understand BOTH the **Scriptures** and the **power of God** (i.e., miraculous signs).

John 12:37-43 - "But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them. These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God."

- Observation:** In spite of the fact that Jesus performed "so many signs" people still didn't believe because 1) they were **spiritually blind**, and 2) "they loved the **approval of men** rather than the approval of God."



Summary Explanation Regarding Miracles, Signs & Wonders:

Miracles are Signs which cause men to Wonder and which point to God at Work and are intended to result in Repentance and Faith.

Scripture: The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off. (4:49-50)

- Let's Talk:** Describe the urgency that the royal official must have been feeling. How did Jesus deal with the situation? If you had been the official, did Jesus do what you would have expected? What do we learn about Jesus by the way he handled the situation? How did the official respond? What do you think was going through his mind during the journey home?

- His "little boy" was dying and he knew there was no time to waste because Capernaum was half-a-day's journey away.
- Jesus sent him away with a promise that his son would live. This probably wasn't what the father expected. He probably expected Jesus to come to where his son was at.
- We learn that Jesus cares. We also learn that Jesus has power over disease, and that He can heal with simply His spoken word, and that He isn't limited by time or distance.
- He responded by believing Jesus' word and starting for home.

Scripture: And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household. This is again a second sign that Jesus performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee. (4:51-54)

- Let's Talk:** What is the difference between the man's "belief" in verse 50 and his "belief" in verse 53? What were the "ripple effects" of this miraculous "sign and wonder"?

- The "sign" had transformed his **initial faith** into a **"greater faith"**.
- The greatest "ripple effect" was that **the man's whole household now believed in Jesus**.



Application

- How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing? What new thing have you learned about Jesus from this story that might cause you to believe that Jesus could transform the disasters in your life into blessing?

Sign # 3: Healing the Lame Man At The Pool of Bethesda **Transforming Crippling Religious Traditions Into Healing (John 5:1-18)** **(Leader's Guide)**

1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.3 In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters;4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.] 5 And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."8 Jesus *said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk."9 And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: "After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]" (5:1-4)

➡ **About The Gate & The Pool** - The "sheep gate" is usually where sheep were sold for sacrifice in the Temple. It is mentioned two other times in Scripture (Nehemiah 3:32 & 12:39). It was located on the north east side of Jerusalem near the Temple (a short walk). In 1888 an archaeologist named Schick excavated a site not far from the Crusader Church of St. Anne and found twin pools, one fifty-five feet long and a second sixty-five feet long. The second one was arched in by five arches with five corresponding porches. The Crusaders believed this to be the site of John 5 and so they built a Church over it.

➡ **About The Angel** - Some ancient manuscripts do not include the part about the angel stirring the water (note the portion in the brackets). Assuming the verses to be original, John appears to be relating local legend, lore or "superstition" without passing judgment pro or con. He is simply telling the reader the circumstances and explaining what people believed and why the lame man was there. It is simply the "background" to the incident he is about to relate to us.

Scripture: And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."8 Jesus *said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk."9 And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. (5:5-9)

➡ **Let's Talk:** How long had this man been sick & lame? What question Jesus ask the man? Did the man answer Jesus' Question? Based upon his answer, describe how was this man was "stuck in a box" of religious tradition.

- He had been lame 38 years, or basically all of his life.
- Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be healed.
- No, he never answered Jesus' Question. He described to Jesus why he couldn't get healed based on local religious traditions and his own limitations.
- The man was "stuck in a box" of religious tradition, unable to imagine God healing him any other way. He was crippled both by his body, and by his religious traditions and expectations.

➡ **Let's Talk:** How did Jesus "transform" the situation? On what day did this all take place?

- Jesus simply healed him irrespective of any religious tradition, limitation or even his lack of faith.
- All of this took place on the Sabbath.

Notes Regarding The Sabbath

The Hebrew word “sabbath” means “cessation, rest” and was to be a day of rest. The first mention of “sabbath” occurs in Exodus 16:23ff where the Israelites were forbidden from gathering or preparing manna on the sabbath. This was before the giving of the Law. The Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.”(Exodus 20:8-11) No work was to be done on the sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17) on penalty of death (Numbers 15:32-36). But by Jesus’ day the 612 commandments of the Law had grown into 5,000 religious regulations which must be obeyed, including not healing on the sabbath and not carrying a pallet. Jesus always tried to point out the true meaning of the sabbath as a day set aside for man’s benefit, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). **(Leader Note: Avoid getting bogged down by someone wanting to debate “sabbath keeping” today. That isn’t John’s point. “That’s a good Question that we should explore later.”)**

Scripture: Therefore the Jews were saying to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.” But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Take up your pallet and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your pallet, and walk?’” But he who was healed did not know who it was; for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you.” The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. (5:10-15)

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** What did “the Jews” (i.e., John’s name for the Jewish religious leaders) tell the man about Jesus? What is missing from their statement? What does this conversation tell us about how the religious leaders were “stuck in a box” of religious tradition.

- They told him that Jesus was **violating their religious regulations and traditions** regarding the Sabbath.
- What is missing is any recognition that **a significant miraculous sign** has occurred and that God was at work calling them to **repentance and faith**.
- It tells us that 1) they were so “stuck in box” of their religious regulations and traditions that they couldn’t recognize God at work through a significant miracle of healing, and 2) that their regulations and traditions had become more important than either God’s activity or people’s needs.

 **Remember:** What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

 Miracles are Signs which cause men to Wonder and which point to God at Work
and are intended to result in Repentance and Faith . Did that happen here?

Scripture: And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. (5:16-18)

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** What were the two reasons why the religious leaders were seeking to persecute and kill Jesus?

- He was **healing on the Sabbath**, thereby breaking their **religious regulations & traditions**, and
- He was **calling God His “Father,”** thereby making himself **equal with God**.

Application

☞ How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing in this situation? What religious traditions have crippled you spiritually? Are you ready for Jesus to break through and heal you? What new thing have you learned about Jesus from this story that might cause you to believe that Jesus could transform the disasters in your life into blessing?

Sign # 4: The Feeding of The Multitude **Transforming Lack Into Abundance (John 6:1-15)** **(Leader's Guide)**

1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).2 And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5 Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"6 And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, *said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.12 And when they were filled, He *said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost."13 And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. 14 When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: 1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).2 And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. (John 6:1-4)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Based on this description, describe the size and mood of the crowd that was following Jesus. Why were they following him?

- Twice (vs. 2 & 5) it is described as "a great multitude"
- They were curiously amazed about Jesus. They were following Him because of the miraculous signs He was performing. The use of the imperfect tense suggests that they were "continually following" Him because they were "continually seeing" the signs which He was "continually doing."

Scripture: 5 Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"6 And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, *said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" (John 6:5-9)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation in your own words. What Question did Jesus ask Philip? What would have been the obvious answer? Why did he ask the Question? When God confronts us with a problem or Question, is He looking to us for a solution? What is He doing?

- A great multitude of people were following Jesus; they had been with Him all day; it was late, they were probably getting hungry, and there was no place close by where they could get food.
- He asked where they were going to buy bread for so many people? Philip was from Bethsaida, the nearby town. Of all the disciples he would have known the area well.
- The obvious answer would have been, "We can't - there isn't enough money or bread!"
- Jesus asked the Question to "test" him. The Greek word "test" (*peiradzo*) originally meant "to put someone on trial," hence, to try, to examine, to test or to prove. Philip didn't see a solution, only a problem. Jesus wanted Philip to examine the situation so that he would know their LACK and how beyond their ability the need was.
- God has all the information He needs! He wants us to understand how beyond our ability our situation really is. He is testing our responses, looking for a response of faith.
- This was "exam day." Jesus was looking to see if the disciples had learned any lessons from the three previous signs! They should have learned that God cares about the practical problems of our lives, and **He has the power to transform our disasters into blessings, regardless of any LACK on our part.**

Scripture: 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. 12 And when they were filled, He *said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost." 13 And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. (John 6: 10-13)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How many people are involved?

- The number given includes only the number of men. When women and children are included, the number is probably well in excess of 10,000.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How much did every one receive?

- Verse 11 says "as much as they wanted." Not only was there no LACK, but there was enough for everyone to have "seconds."

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How much extra was collected? Why do you think this was important?

- Twelve full baskets of bread and fish. Notice: Not 10, not 11, but 12. There was a basket for each disciple as a tangible, edible reminder (they were probably eating fish and bread for the next couple of days!) that Jesus is able to transform our need and lack into abundance.

Scripture: 14 When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone." (John 6:14-15)

Note Regarding "The Prophet"

Who is "The Prophet who is to come into the world"? In Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses had told the people of Israel that "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." The identity of this unnamed Prophet is not revealed anywhere in the Old Testament. By Jesus' day, the Jews had developed a clear-cut expectation of a coming figure who would fulfill Moses's words. Religious leaders from Jerusalem asked John the Baptist if he were the Prophet, and he said "no." (John 1:21) On more than one occasion during Jesus' ministry, people concluded that Jesus was the Prophet (see John 6:14 & 7:40). Peter declared that Jesus was this Prophet in his temple sermon in Acts 3:22-23. But Peter understood that Jesus was more than the promised Prophet; He was also the promised Messiah, "the Christ appointed for you." (Acts 3:20).

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What had the crowd following Jesus seen? What did they conclude from what they saw? What was wrong about their conclusion?

- They had seen the miraculous "sign" of Jesus multiplying food and feeding the multitude.
- They concluded that Jesus was the promised Prophet.
- They wrongly concluded that, if Moses (the first "prophet") could deliver them from bondage from the Egyptians, heal their diseases and feed them with manna from Heaven, then this Prophet could deliver them from the bondage of Rome, heal their diseases, and feed them with fish and bread. They wrongly concluded that it was time to make Him King.

Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

 Miracles are Signs which cause men to Wonder and which point to God at Work
and are intended to result in Repentance and Faith . Did that happen here?

Application

☞ How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing in this situation? What need or lack do you have today? Are you ready for Jesus to transform your need or lack into His abundance?

Sign # 5: Walking On The Water

Transforming The Storms of Our Lives From Fear Into Faith (John 6:16-21)

(Leader's Guide)

16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. And it had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 And the sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When therefore they had rowed about three or four miles, they *beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. 20 But He *said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Alternative Passage: Mark 6:45-52

45 And immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the multitude away. 46 And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray. 47 And when it was evening, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and He was alone on the land. 48 And seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night, He *came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. 49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were frightened. But immediately He spoke with them and *said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid." 51 And He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were greatly astonished, 52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

Let's Look At What Happened

The Event From John's Perspective (John 6:16-21)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation as John saw it, remembering that John records these things for a reason:

- It was dark. Darkness can be spiritual, physical or circumstantial.
- Jesus had not come yet. Where was Jesus when they needed Him? Where is Jesus in the midst of your darkness?
- It was getting stormy (John's emphasis is upon the sea and the wind). Are things getting stormy for you, and are you wondering where Jesus went?

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How did Jesus come to them?

- Jesus came to them 1) in the midst of a crisis, and 2) at a time and in a way they didn't expect. The 4th watch of the night was the last watch of the night (from 3-6AM). God has a unique sense of timing. He is never late, but He misses many opportunities to be early!

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Why would they be frightened of Jesus? How did Jesus deal with their fears? (Vs. 20)

- Jesus isn't "playing by the rules." He is doing things they don't expect in ways they don't expect, and that's scary. Many believers are afraid of God's unique dealings in their lives

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What did the disciples do, and what was the result? (Vs. 21).

- They eventually overcame their fears and welcomed Jesus into the boat.

The Event From Mark's Perspective (Mark 6:45-52)

Unlike John, who was an eyewitness and actually lived the events he records, Mark wrote his account by interviewing the people involved, thereby getting slightly different perspectives on the event.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the same situation as Mark saw it. What is different in this account?

- Jesus left them to go pray (vs. 46);
- It was evening (vs. 47);
- They were physically separated from Jesus. They were in the middle of the sea and Jesus was on land (vs. 47);

- Jesus sees them “straining at the oars, for the wind was against them”; He’s aware of their situation, but they don’t know that (vs. 48);
- They thought Jesus “*intended to pass them by.*” In other words, they concluded that Jesus saw them struggling but didn’t really care enough to help (vs. 48);
- They still had religious superstitious baggage, they thought Jesus was a “ghost” (vs.49)
- They were “greatly astonished” or “amazed” at what happened (vs. 51).



Let’s Talk: What insight do you think the disciples had failed to gain from the incident with the loaves & feeding the multitude?

- The disciples had not “***gained any insight.***” Literally, the Greek means they hadn’t “***put it together***” mentally with the result that they still didn’t “***comprehend***” the meaning of the previous sign (“the incident of the loaves”). In terms of modern learning theory they had failed to “***synthesize old lessons***” and apply them to this new situation.
- They still “didn’t get it” that Jesus has the power ***to transform any situation***, regardless of the circumstance. If He has the power ***to create bread out of nothing*** then He has the power ***to reach us wherever we are*** and ***to calm the storms and fears*** of our lives.



Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

 Miracles are **Signs** which cause men to **Wonder** and which point to **God at Work**
and are intended to result in **Repentance** and **Faith** . Did that happen here?



Application

↪ Describe how Jesus transformed the disciples’ disaster into a blessing in this situation? What storm is blowing and causing fear in your life today? Do you believe that God sees & cares & has the power to transform your storm & fear into faith & blessing? Are you willing to invite Jesus into your boat?

Sign # 6 - Healing The Man Born Blind *Transforming Blindness Into Sight (John 9:1-41)* (Leader's Guide)

Background Regarding Messianic Miracles

Religious Judaism of Jesus day (particularly the Pharisees) taught that there was a class of miracles which only the Messiah could perform. Other miracles could be theoretically performed by anyone who was acting under the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was agreed that this special class of "Messianic miracles" could only be performed by the Messiah when he came. This class of "Messianic miracles" or "signs" included:

- Messianic Miracle # 1: The healing of a leper** - in the entire history of ancient Israel, no Jew had ever been healed and cleansed of leprosy according to the guidelines found in Leviticus 13.
- Messianic Miracle # 2: The casting out of a mute/dumb demon** - the Pharisees taught that in order to cast out a demon you must first establish verbal communication with the demon, learn its name, and then cast it out using its name. But what do you do if the demon has afflicted the person with dumbness (no speech). You cannot establish verbal communication, learn its name or cast it out. It was agreed that only the Messiah would be able to cast out such a demon. (Matthew 12:22)
- Messianic Miracle # 3: The healing of someone born blind** - Now you'll understand why the events of John Chapter 9 were such a "big deal" for everyone involved!

Let's Look At What Happened

The Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1-12)

Scripture: "1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. 5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (9:1-5)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the disciples' understanding of the man's blindness. Read Job 4:7-8. How does Eliphaz's understanding of Job compare with the disciples' understanding of the man born blind? How did Jesus understand the man's blindness?

- The disciples assumed that the man's blindness was the result of sin; either the sin of the man's parents, or the man's own sin. It was widely taught and believed that all suffering, and especially a disaster like blindness, was the result of sin. In Job 4:7-8 Eliphaz tells Job that the righteous don't suffer, so his suffering must be the result of his sin.
- Jesus understood that the man's blindness was not the result of sin, but it would ultimately be something that would result in God being glorified.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** In verses 4 & 5 Jesus uses the man born blind as an object lesson for two important lessons. What are they?

- Lesson Regarding Spiritual Urgency:** There are two urgencies involved here.
 - ⇒ The urgency for **the believer to do the work of God** while there is time and opportunity.
 - ⇒ The urgency for **the unbeliever to believe & embrace the light** while it is available.

Both urgencies share the same issue, namely, **time is against you**. There is an urgency in the things of God which must not be ignored.

- Lesson Regarding Spiritual Blindness:** Some people have perfect physical sight, 20-10 vision, but spiritually they are blind as a bat. Jesus wants to challenge us to think about whether or not we are spiritually blind. The point of this lesson is simple: **Jesus is the light**. Without Jesus we are spiritually blind and walking in spiritual darkness. For the spiritually blind, it is always night-time.

Scripture: “6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). 7 And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.” (9:6-7)

⇒ **Question & Observation:** What’s this “spittle” business all about?

- ❑ **Spittle & Healing On the Sabbath.** We will learn in verse 14 that Jesus performed this healing on the Sabbath. Rabbinical teaching held that it was forbidden to heal on the Sabbath except in order to save a life. But some Rabbis went beyond this and taught HOW you were not supposed to heal on the Sabbath. In the Mishnah (which is the collection of rabbinical teachings), in Tractate Shabbat it says: “To heal a blind man on the sabbath it is prohibited to inject wine into his eyes. It is also prohibited to make mud from spittle and smear it on his eyes.” Mishnah, Tractate Shabbat 108:20.
- ❑ **Waging War Against Religious Traditions & Spiritual Blindness.** Not only did Jesus break the rabbinical traditions and teachings regarding healing on the Sabbath, he chose a method (mud & spittle) which was *specifically prohibited* for use on the Sabbath. Jesus was waging open warfare against the spiritual blindness of religious legalism and religious traditions which were non-biblical and were keeping people from a true knowledge, experience & worship of God.

Scripture: “8 The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?” 9 Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” 10 Therefore they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?” 11 He answered, “The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam, and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.” 12 And they said to him, “Where is He?” He *said, “I do not know.” (9:8-12)

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** How did the man’s neighbors react to his healing. What two groups do they seem to “fall into”? Why do you think some people questioned the identity of the man? How does this illustrate John’s message regarding spiritual blindness?

- ❑ The neighbors react by dividing into two groups:
 - ⇒ **those who believe** it really is the man and that he has been healed, and
 - ⇒ **those who deny** it really is the man because they can’t believe that he could be healed.
- ❑ It is easier **to Question his identity** than **to accept the possibility of a miraculous healing**.
- ❑ Some people choose **to remain in spiritual blindness**, when confronted with the miraculous light of truth.

✍ **Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?**

 Miracles are **Signs** which cause men to **Wonder** and which point to **God at Work**
and are intended to result in **Repentance** and **Faith** . Did that happen here?

✍ **For Further Reflection**

You don’t need to do this right now, but take time to reflect on how the four (4) groups of people responded to this miraculous sign. Think about how each responded, why they responded the way they did, and which response you most identify with.

- ❑ The Man Born Blind:
- ❑ The Man’s Friends and Neighbors:
- ❑ The Man’s Parents:
- ❑ The Religious Leaders:
- ❑ YOU:

The Interrogation of The Man Born Blind & His Parents (9:13-23)

Scripture: “13 They brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, “He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And there was a division among them. 17 They *said therefore to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” And he said, “He is a prophet.” 18 The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and Questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?” 20 His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” (9:13-23)

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** How do the Pharisees react to this man’s healing? What two groups do they seem to “fall into”? How does this illustrate John’s message regarding spiritual blindness?

□ **The Pharisees responded by dividing into two basic groups:**

1) **Those who are spiritually blind and deny** - they deny that Jesus can be from God because He has violated the religious traditions of the Elders by healing on the Sabbath and in a forbidden way.

2) **Those whose spiritual eyes are open and believe** - they believe that Jesus must be from God because He has performed a Messianic sign.

□ Some people choose **to remain in spiritual blindness**, in spite of **the miraculous light of truth**.

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** How does the formally blind man describe Jesus (vs. 17)? How is this different from his previous understanding of Jesus (vs 11). What is happening to his understanding of who Jesus is?

□ **The Response of Growing Faith.** In verse 11 he refers to Jesus as “*the man who is called Jesus,*” but in verse 17 he refers to Jesus as “*a Prophet*”. Although the man had his physical sight restored, he was still spiritually blind. Now, his spiritual eyes are beginning to open and he is beginning to see that there is something special about Jesus, so he calls Jesus “a prophet.”

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** Describe the response of the Jewish religious authorities to this miraculous healing? What does their response say about “spiritual blindness” in general?

□ **The Response of Unbelief** . They did not believe 1) that he had been born blind, or 2) that he had been healed. If they could prove that the man had not been born blind then they would be “off the hook” to explain how Jesus could perform a Messianic miraculous sign. Spiritual blindness will go to great length to stay blind and to avoid the light.

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** Describe the pressure that the man, his parents and other potential followers of Jesus were under to conform to the religious blindness and traditions of their day? How do we face similar pressure today when it comes to believing or not believing?

□ They were threatened with expulsion from the synagogue (the center of Jewish cultural and religious life) if they gave any indication of acknowledging Jesus as the Christ.

□ **History of Christians Versus The Synagogue.** Pressure against Christians in the Synagogues grew with time. In approximately 90AD the Jewish Sanhedrin re-worded one of the blessings recited daily in the synagogues so as to make it impossible for ‘Nazarenes’ (Jewish Christians) to take part in synagogue worship. This blessing, which traditionally included a curse on the enemies of God was revised so that the curse said, ‘*let Nazarenes and heretics perish as in a moment; let them be blotted out of the book of life and not be enrolled with the righteous.*’ The revision was approved by the Sanhedrin and adopted in the synagogues, so that “Nazarenes,” by keeping silent when the words were recited by the congregation, would give themselves away.

The Second Interrogation of The Man Born Blind (9:24-34)

Scripture: *So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." He therefore answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." They said therefore to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" And they reviled him, and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. "We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out. (9:24-34)*

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Based on this passage, what had the Jewish leadership concluded regarding Jesus?

That Jesus is a sinner and a fraud and that he could not have performed this miracle.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What had the man born blind concluded about Jesus? It has been said that, "A man with an argument is no match for a man with an experience." How is this true in this exchange between the formerly blind man and the Jewish religious authorities?

That Jesus is from God.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Based upon the statement *You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"* what had happened to the man born blind? How does he now see himself?

He had become a disciple of Jesus.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Consider this statement by the man born blind: *The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."* How is he using the Pharisees' own teaching regarding messianic signs and miracles to defend Jesus against the religious leaders?

He reminds the Pharisees how they had taught that only God's Messiah could open the eyes of a man born blind. He was refuting their conclusions with their own teaching.

The Man Born Blind Believes In Jesus (9:35-41)

Scripture: *Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains. (9:35-41)*

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Based upon his statement, *And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.* describe how the man's understanding of Jesus has changed from the beginning of this story? Compare yourself to the man born blind. Where are you in your understanding of who Jesus really is.

In verse 11 he simply refers to Jesus as "the man who is called Jesus." By verse 17 he says of Jesus, "He is a prophet." Next, in verse 27 he describes himself as Jesus' *disciple*. Then, in verses 30-33 the man explains why Jesus is performing messianic miracles (i.e., he is from God). Finally, in verse 38 he believes in Jesus and worships him.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** In your own words, explain Jesus' statement: *And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind."*

A Personal Journey Into Spiritual Light or Spiritual Darkness

John Chapter 9

Introduction

Throughout this story of the man born blind John wants to do three things:

📌 John wants to challenge us with a theme of Spiritual Blindness versus Spiritual Sight.

📌 John wants to illustrate a point, namely, that Jesus is the Light of The World

📌 John wants to give us a real life example of what it means for Jesus to be the light of the world.

⇒ **Question:** What do physical blindness and spiritual blindness have in common?

⇒ **Answer:** They both suffer from an absence of light

“Who Is This Man Called Jesus” A Journey Into . . .

Spiritual Sight

The Man Born Blind

Step 1: He's A Man (9: 11)

Step 2: He's A Prophet (9:17)

Step 3: I should follow Him (9:27)

Step 4: He's from God (9:33)

Step 5: I believe & worship (9:38)

Jesus Is The Light Of His World

Spiritual Blindness

The Religious Leaders

Step 1: He's A Sabbath breaker (9: 16)

Step 2: He's A Sinner (9:24)

Step 3: We follow someone else (9:28)

Step 4: He's not from God (9:29)

Step 5: We reject Him and you (9:34)

Jesus Is The Judgment of Their World

📌 **Remember:** What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

Miracles are Signs which cause men to Wonder and which point to God at Work

and are intended to result in Repentance and Faith. Did that happen here?

📌 Application

➤ Many people like to say that they would believe in Jesus if God would simply give them a sign. How does what you have seen so far prove or refute such assertions? Compare yourself to the man born blind. Where you are in your understanding of who Jesus really is.

Sign # 6 - Healing The Man Born Blind *Transforming Blindness Into Sight (John 9:1-41)*

Scripture Text

The Healing Of The Man Born Blind

*1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. 5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing. 8 The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" 9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." 10 Therefore they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam, and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." 12 And they said to him, "Where is He?" He *said, "I do not know."*

The Interrogation of The Man Born Blind & His Parents (9:13-23)

*13 They *brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They *said therefore to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and Questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

The Second Interrogation of The Man Born Blind (9:24-34)


24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." 25 He therefore answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." 26 They said therefore to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" 28 And they reviled him, and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 "We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. 32 "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out.

The Man Born Blind Believes In Jesus (9:35-41)


35 Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." 38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. 39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." 40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.


Sign # 7: The Raising of Lazarus
Transforming Death Into Life (John 11:1-57)
(Leader's Guide)

Introduction

 The raising of Lazarus represents the climax of Jesus' ministry. It has been preceded by SIX great miraculous signs, each of which has taught us God's transforming power over the circumstances of our lives, and all of which have fulfilled the same purpose:

 Miracles are **Signs** which cause men to **Wonder** and which point to **God at Work**
and are intended to result in **Repentance** and **Faith** .

 Through all 6 signs the underlying message has been that **God Cares** about our circumstances, and that He has the **power to transform** our circumstances if we will simply **repent** and **believe** .

 In the sixth sign ("Healing The Man Born Blind") Jesus added a new dimension to the purpose of signs:


Signs divide men into those who are **Spiritually Blind** and those whose **Spiritual Eyes are open** . To see the miraculous signs which Jesus performs and NOT believe is to be **Spiritually Blind** .

Act 1: Preparing The Disciples/Setting The Stage (11:1-16)


Background

"Lazarus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Eleazar" which means "God has helped." He is the brother of Mary & Martha. Mary and Martha are famous from Luke 10:38, and it was Mary who anointed Jesus with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair (Luke 7:36-38). Bethany is a village about 2 miles southeast of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho at the Mount of Olives. Jesus stayed there whenever He came to Judea/Jerusalem.

Scripture: *1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.2 And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.3 The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."4 But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it."5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.6 When therefore He heard that he was sick, He stayed then two days longer in the place where He was.*

 **Let's Talk:** What was Jesus' unique perspective on Lazarus illness? From whose perspective was Jesus seeing things? What is your perspective on your own struggle?

Jesus sees Lazarus' illness from the perspective of its potential to glorify God.

 **Let's Talk:** Explain verse 5 in the light of verse 6? Why was it important to include verse 5 at this point in the narrative? When you or someone you love is in the midst of difficult circumstances, do you struggle with God's love and His timing? What encouragement can we find in these two verses?

John does not want there to be any Question regarding God's love toward the people caught up in this circumstance. Jesus' delay in going to Lazarus is not a reflection of any lack of love. God loves us and He knows exactly what He is doing, even when He delays His coming in the midst of our pain and suffering.

The Greek word for "love" used by Mary & Martha in verse 3 regarding Jesus' love for Lazarus is the word *phileo* which represents **strong friendship or brotherly love**. But the word used in verse 5 for Jesus' love toward Lazarus is *agape* which represents **God's love**.

Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters was far greater than they understood.

Observation

Jesus' response to the news of Lazarus' illness is to wait an additional two days. It probably didn't matter. When Jesus arrived Lazarus had been dead four days, and the journey to Bethany only took one day. When you "do the math" we see that Lazarus' death probably occurred soon after the messengers left Bethany for Jesus. Lazarus was already dead when Jesus received the news of his illness.

Application

How do you see your own circumstances? Do you see them as **hopeless** or as setting the stage for **God to be glorified** ? God's love for us is **Far greater** than we will ever comprehend. God is never **controlled or coerced** by circumstances. He is never **late or in a hurry** .

Scripture: "7 Then after this He *said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."8 The disciples *said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.10 "But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

➡ **Let's Talk:** What were Jesus' disciples concerned about? Was it a legitimate concern? What was Jesus response? What concerned Him? What concerns and motivates you more: The dangers of believing or the urgency to believe?

- The disciples were concerned about their & his safety. In John 10:31 at the festival of Dedication the religious leaders had tried to stone Jesus. Jesus refused to give in to the dangers of confronting the spiritual blindness of the religious establishment. Jesus was concerned about the urgency of the hour.

Application

There is an **urgency** to walking in God's spiritual light. Each of us must choose between **spiritual light** and **spiritual darkness** , and we must be willing to accept the **consequences** of this choice. It is **the price we pay** for knowing the truth.

Scripture: "11 This He said, and after that He *said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep."12 The disciples therefore said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.14 Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,15 and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

➡ **Let's Talk:** Look at verses 14 & 15. What might have been different if Jesus had been there (with Lazarus)? Why do you think that Jesus' not being there would now cause the disciples to believe?

- If Jesus had been there He might have healed Lazarus from his illness. While this would have been a significant miracle, it would not have been as great as what would now take place. The disciples had seen Jesus heal the sick before, but now they would witness a far greater miracle - the power of Jesus over death through the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

Application

Sometimes God's apparent **"lack of response"** to the circumstances of our lives may be **setting the stage** for **something greater** which God wants to accomplish in our lives. What "greater thing" is God doing in your life?

Act 2: Scene I: Jesus & Martha (11:17-29)

Scripture: 17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. 20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary still sat in the house. 21 Martha therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus *said to her, "Your brother shall rise again." 24 Martha *said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world." 28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here, and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she *arose quickly, and was coming to Him.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe Martha's understanding of the circumstance in verse 21. Was her understanding true? What do verses 21-22 tell us about Martha's faith?

- Martha is fixated on her belief that Jesus could have healed her brother if only He had come sooner. This wasn't factually true. Lazarus died shortly after the messengers left to go and find Jesus. Verses 21-22 suggest that, while Martha's faith in Jesus was genuine, it was limited by her pain and her understanding of the circumstances.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Read the exchange between Jesus and Martha in verses 23-27. What does Martha understand Jesus statement in verse 23 to mean? How does Jesus correct her understanding? How has Martha's understanding of and faith in Jesus changed by verse 27?

- Martha thinks Jesus is referring to the resurrection of the dead on the day of judgment. Jesus challenges Martha to see the resurrection of the dead in terms of a person, not an event. Jesus IS the resurrection. To have a relationship with Jesus is to be resurrected and to never die. Martha responds with a declaration of faith that understands Jesus as more than a healer. She now understands that He is the promised Christ, the Son of God, with power over life and death.

Application

In Luke 10:38 Martha was a "doer." Now she is in a crisis where there is nothing she can do except believe.

Martha's faith must now grow, from a faith that believes in Jesus' power to heal sickness, to a much deeper and greater faith that believes in Jesus' power over death. God wants to deliver us from living in the world of "If only . . ." and bring us into the world of "I believe".

Act 2: Scene II: Jesus & Mary (11:30-37)

Scripture: 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. 31 The Jews then who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled, 34 and said, "Where have you laid him?" They *said to Him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man also from dying?"

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Compare Mary's response to Jesus in verse 32 to that of Martha's in verse 21. Then compare Jesus' response to each? What is the difference and why?

- Their first responses are nearly identical, "Lord, if You had been here . . ." Jesus interacts with Martha but not with Mary. Jesus treats us as unique individuals and responds accordingly.

Application

God loves you and shares your pain. It is time to stop blaming God for the human condition (or for Your condition), and start believing God for His divine solution.

Act 3: The Raising of Lazarus (11:38-44)

Scripture: 38 Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, *came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.39 Jesus *said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, *said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days."40 Jesus *said to her, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"41 And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me.42 "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me."43 And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."44 He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus *said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation in your own words. How long had Lazarus been dead?

Lazarus has now been dead and buried four (4) days.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What would have been the natural expectation after four days? What does Martha's response (Vs. 39) tell us about her understanding of what is unfolding? Can you relate to Martha's state of mind? According to Jesus statement in verse 42, what is the purpose of the sign that is about to occur?

The process of decomposition would have begun and there would be a stench.

Martha doesn't fully comprehend (or believe) what Jesus is about to do.

The purpose of this sign is to cause people to believe that Jesus is from God.

Act 4: The Religious Leaders Respond (11:45-53)

Scripture: 45 Many therefore of the Jews, who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him.46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done. 47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."49 But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."51 Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,52 and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.53 So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the three (3) responses to this miracle as described in this passage. Which one of these three responses can you best identify with? Why?

The Response of Belief (vs. 45) - the sign resulted in repentance and faith.

The Response of neutrality (Vs. 46) - these are people who saw but didn't commit themselves one way or another, but they did spread the news.

The Response of Unbelief (Vs. 47-50) - they saw the signs and people's responses and regarded it as a threat to their existing order of things.

Epilogue: Jesus Withdraws From Public (11:54-57)

Scripture: 54 Jesus therefore no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.55 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves.56 Therefore they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another, as they stood in the temple, "What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?"57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What does this say about how God responds to our responses?

Application

Without being overly obvious, describe how Jesus transformed disaster into a blessing in this situation. How did he transform people and their understanding of spiritual truth in the process? What has this story taught you about God's transforming power?

Review & Personal Application

What Have We Learned From The Seven Signs of John?

Review

What Did We Learn about John's Purpose in Recording the Miraculous Signs of Jesus?

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31)

What Have We Learned about the Purpose of Miracles, Signs & Wonders?

 Miracles are **Signs** which cause men to **Wonder** and which point to **God at Work**
and are intended to result in **Repentance** and **Faith** . Why didn't this happen in every situation?

What Have We Learned From Each Sign About God's Power To Transform The Circumstances of Our Lives?

 **Sign # 1: The Wedding At Cana (John 2:1-11)**


 **Sign # 2: Healing The Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54)**

 **Sign # 3: Healing The Lame Man At The Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-18)**

 **Sign # 4: Feeding The Multitude (John 6:1-15)**

 **Sign # 5: Walking On The Water (John 6:16-21)**

 **Sign # 6: Healing The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)**

 **Sign # 7: The Raising of Lazarus (John Chapter 11)**

Application: What Do You Believe?

John uses the word "believe" 101 times in his gospel. He uses it **4 times** in the first 4 Signs, another **4 times** in Sign # 6 and then **9 times** in Sign # 7. The message is clear:

After 7 miraculous signs demonstrating His power to transform the circumstances of our lives, **Jesus calls men to believe**.

➡ **Let's Talk:** What you think was going on between Jesus and His Mother over this situation?

Scripture: "Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter." And they took it to him." (2:6-8)

➡ **Let's Talk:** Describe what Jesus did. How much water would this have involved? Try to estimate how many people were aware of what Jesus was doing.

- Jesus commanded the water pots to be filled to the brim creating between ____ and ____ gallons of wine.
- At least ____ people knew what was going on:

Scripture: "And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now." (2:9-10)

➡ **Let's Talk:** Describe what has happened. Why do you think John tells us, "but the servants who had drawn the water knew"? How has Jesus "transformed" the situation?

Scripture: "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." (2:11)

➡ **Let's Talk:** What does the phrase "beginning of His signs" suggest? List some ways Jesus' glory was manifested through this event? What do these teach us about Jesus?

- It suggests that there would be _____!
- It showed His concern for _____ and the _____;
- It showed His _____ over the natural order and His _____ disasters into blessings;
- It pointed to _____ than could be seen on the human level;
- It was a _____ of something they already suspected, namely, that there was something unique and special about Jesus!

Application

🔄 How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing? It says that "His disciples believed in Him." Why do you think they believed? What have you learned from this story that might cause you to "believe" that Jesus could transform the disasters in your life into blessing?

Sign # 2: Healing A Nobleman's Son Transforming Sickness Into Healing (John 4:46-54) (Participant's Outline)

46 He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." 49 The royal official *said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus *said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off. 51 And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. 52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household. 54 This is again a second sign that Jesus performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. (4:46-47)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation in your own words. What is happening? How do you think "the ripple effects" of Jesus first visit to Cana are effecting this second visit to Cana?

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Where are Jesus and the royal official in relation to the man's son? What does the official think must take place in order for his son to be healed? How desperate is the situation?

Scripture: Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." (4:48)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Summarize Jesus statement in your own words. What do you think this means, especially in light of John 20:30-31?

Notes Regarding Miracles, Signs and Wonders:

⇒ **Definitions:**

- A "miracle" (Greek: *dunamis*) is a work of God's _____ & emphasizes the _____ of the event.
- A "wonder" (Greek: *terata*) is a _____ & emphasizes the awe-inspiring _____.
- A "sign" (Greek: *semeion*) points to _____; emphasizes the _____ of the event, namely, to _____.

⇒ **Scriptures Regarding Meaning of Signs and Wonders:**

Matthew 12:38-41 - "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'"

- Observation:** The religious leaders asked Jesus for a sign in order to "_____". Jesus never gave into such demands or tests. He always chose the _____ and _____ of His signs.

Matthew 11:21 - "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

- Observation:** The purpose of a miraculous sign is to bring about _____.

Matthew 22:29 - "But Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.'

- Observation:** Jesus insists that people understand BOTH the _____ and the _____ (i.e., miraculous signs).

John 12:37-43 - "But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them. These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God."

- Observation:** In spite of the fact that Jesus performed "so many signs" people still didn't believe because 1) they were _____, and 2) "they loved the _____ rather than the approval of God."



Summary Explanation Regarding Miracles, Signs & Wonders:

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____ and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Did that happen here?

Scripture: The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off. (4:49-50)

- Let's Talk:** Describe the urgency that the royal official must have been feeling. How did Jesus deal with the situation? If you had been the official, did Jesus do what you would have expected? What do we learn about Jesus by the way he handled the situation? How did the official respond? What do you think was going through his mind during the journey home?

Scripture: And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household. This is again a second sign that Jesus performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee. (4:51-54)

- Let's Talk:** What is the difference between the man's "belief" in verse 50 and his "belief" in verse 53? What were the "ripple effects" of this miraculous "sign and wonder"?

- The "sign" had transformed his _____ into a "_____".
- The greatest "ripple effect" was that _____.



Application

- How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing? What new thing have you learned about Jesus from this story that might cause you to believe that Jesus could transform the disasters in your life into blessing?

Sign # 3: Healing the Lame Man At The Pool of Bethesda **Transforming Crippling Religious Traditions Into Healing (John 5:1-18)** **(Participant's Outline)**

1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.3 In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters;4 for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.] 5 And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."8 Jesus *said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk."9 And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: "After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]" (5:1-4)

⇒ **About The Gate & The Pool** - The "sheep gate" is usually where sheep were sold for sacrifice in the Temple. It is mentioned two other times in Scripture (Nehemiah 3:32 & 12:39). It was located on the north east side of Jerusalem near the Temple (a short walk). In 1888 an archaeologist named Schick excavated a site not far from the Crusader Church of St. Anne and found twin pools, one fifty-five feet long and a second sixty-five feet long. The second one was arched in by five arches with five corresponding porches. The Crusaders believed this to be the site of John 5 and so they built a Church over it.

⇒ **About The Angel** - Some ancient manuscripts do not include the part about the angel stirring the water (note the portion in the brackets). Assuming the verses to be original, John appears to be relating local legend, lore or "superstition" without passing judgment pro or con. He is simply telling the reader the circumstances and explaining what people believed and why the lame man was there. It is simply the "background" to the incident he is about to relate to us.

Scripture: And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He *said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."8 Jesus *said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk."9 And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. (5:5-9)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How long had this man been sick & lame? What Question did Jesus ask the man? Did the man answer Jesus' Question? Based upon his answer, describe how was this man was "stuck in a box" of religious tradition.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How did Jesus "transform" the situation? On what day did this all take place?

Notes Regarding The Sabbath

The Hebrew word “sabbath” means “cessation, rest” and was to be a day of rest. The first mention of “sabbath” occurs in Exodus 16:23ff where the Israelites were forbidden from gathering or preparing manna on the sabbath. This was before the giving of the Law. The Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.”(Exodus 20:8-11) No work was to be done on the sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17) on penalty of death (Numbers 15:32-36). But by Jesus’ day the 612 commandments of the Law had grown into 5,000 religious regulations which must be obeyed, including not healing on the sabbath and not carrying a pallet. Jesus always tried to point out the true meaning of the sabbath as a day set aside for man’s benefit, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Scripture: *Therefore the Jews were saying to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.” But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Take up your pallet and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your pallet, and walk?’” But he who was healed did not know who it was; for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you.” The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. (5:10-15)*

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** What did “the Jews” (i.e., John’s name for the Jewish religious leaders) tell the man about Jesus? What is missing from their statement? What does this conversation tell us about how the religious leaders were “stuck in a box” of religious tradition.

- They told him that Jesus was _____ regarding the Sabbath.
- What is missing is any recognition that _____ has occurred and that God was at work calling them to _____.
- It tells us that 1) they were so “stuck in box” of their religious regulations and traditions that they couldn’t recognize God at work through a significant miracle of healing, and 2) that their regulations and traditions had become more important than either God’s activity or people’s needs.

Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____
and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Did that happen here?

Scripture: *And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. (5:16-18)*

⇒ **Let’s Talk:** What were the two reasons why the religious leaders were seeking to persecute and kill Jesus?

- He was _____, thereby breaking their _____, and
- He was _____ “_____” thereby making himself _____.

Application

☞ How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing in this situation? What religious traditions have crippled you spiritually? Are you ready for Jesus to break through and heal you? What new thing have you learned about Jesus from this story that might cause you to believe that Jesus could transform the disasters in your life into blessing?

Sign # 4: The Feeding of The Multitude **Transforming Lack Into Abundance (John 6:1-15)** **(Participant's Outline)**

1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).2 And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. 5 Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"6 And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, *said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.12 And when they were filled, He *said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost."13 And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. 14 When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."

Let's Look At What Happened

Scripture: 1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).2 And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. (John 6:1-4)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Based on this description, describe the size and mood of the crowd that was following Jesus. Why were they following him?

Scripture: 5 Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"6 And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, *said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" (John 6:5-9)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation in your own words. What Question did Jesus ask Philip? What would have been the obvious answer? Why did he ask the Question? When God confronts us with a problem or Question, is He looking to us for a solution? What is He doing?

Scripture: 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. 12 And when they were filled, He *said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost." 13 And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. (John 6: 10-13)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How many people are involved?

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How much did every one receive?

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How much extra was collected? Why do you think this was important?

Scripture: 14 When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone." (John 6:14-15)

Note Regarding "The Prophet"

Who is "The Prophet who is to come into the world"? In Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses had told the people of Israel that "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." The identity of this unnamed Prophet is not revealed anywhere in the Old Testament. By Jesus' day, the Jews had developed a clear-cut expectation of a coming figure who would fulfill Moses's words. Religious leaders from Jerusalem asked John the Baptist if he were the Prophet, and he said "no." (John 1:21) On more than one occasion during Jesus' ministry, people concluded that Jesus was the Prophet (see John 6:14 & 7:40). Peter declared that Jesus was this Prophet in his temple sermon in Acts 3:22-23. But Peter understood that Jesus was more than the promised Prophet; He was also the promised Messiah, "the Christ appointed for you." (Acts 3:20).

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What had the crowd following Jesus seen? What did they conclude from what they saw? What was wrong about their conclusion?

Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____
and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Did that happen here?

Application

☞ How did Jesus transform disaster into blessing in this situation? What need or lack do you have today? Are you ready for Jesus to transform your need or lack into His abundance?

Sign # 5: Walking On The Water
Transforming The Storms of Our Lives From Fear Into Faith (John 6:16-21)
(Participant's Outline)

16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. And it had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 And the sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When therefore they had rowed about three or four miles, they *beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. 20 But He *said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Alternative Passage: Mark 6:45-52

45 And immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the multitude away. 46 And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray. 47 And when it was evening, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and He was alone on the land. 48 And seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night, He *came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. 49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were frightened. But immediately He spoke with them and *said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid." 51 And He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were greatly astonished, 52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

 **Let's Look At What Happened**

 **The Event From John's Perspective (John 6:16-21)**

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation as John saw it, remembering that John records these things for a reason:

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How did Jesus come to them?

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Why would they be frightened of Jesus? How did Jesus deal with their fears? (Vs. 20)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What did the disciples do, and what was the result? (Vs. 21).

 **The Event From Mark's Perspective (Mark 6:45-52)**

Unlike John, who was an eyewitness and actually lived the events he records, Mark wrote his account by interviewing the people involved, thereby getting slightly different perspectives on the event.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the same situation as Mark saw it. What is different in this account?



Let's Talk: What insight do you think the disciples had failed to gain from the incident with the loaves & feeding the multitude?

- The disciples had not “_____” Literally, the Greek means they hadn't “_____” mentally with the result that they still didn't “_____” the meaning of the previous sign (“the incident of the loaves”). In terms of modern learning theory they had failed to “_____” and apply them to this new situation.
- They still “didn't get it” that Jesus has the power _____, regardless of the circumstance. If He has the power _____ then He has the power _____ and _____ of our lives.



Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____

and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Did that happen here?



Application

☞ Describe how Jesus transformed the disciples' disaster into a blessing in this situation? What storm is blowing and causing fear in your life today? Do you believe that God sees & cares & has the power to transform your storm & fear into faith & blessing? Are you willing to invite Jesus into your boat?

Sign # 6 - Healing The Man Born Blind
Transforming Blindness Into Sight (John 9:1-41)
(Participant's Outline)

 **Background Regarding Messianic Miracles**


Religious Judaism of Jesus day (particularly the Pharisees) taught that there was a class of miracles which only the Messiah could perform. Other miracles could be theoretically performed by anyone who was acting under the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was agreed that this special class of "Messianic miracles" could only be performed by the Messiah when he came. This class of "Messianic miracles" or "signs" included:


- Messianic Miracle # 1:** _____ - in the entire history of ancient Israel, no Jew had ever been healed and cleansed of leprosy according to the guidelines found in Leviticus 13.
- Messianic Miracle # 2:** _____ - the Pharisees taught that in order to cast out a demon you must first establish verbal communication with the demon, learn its name, and then cast it out using its name. But what do you do if the demon has afflicted the person with dumbness (no speech). You cannot establish verbal communication, learn its name or cast it out. It was agreed that only the Messiah would be able to cast out such a demon. (Matthew 12:22)
- Messianic Miracle # 3:** _____ - Now you'll understand why the events of John Chapter 9 were such a "big deal" for everyone involved!



 **Let's Look At What Happened**

The Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1-12)

Scripture: "1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. 5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (9:1-5)

-  **Let's Talk:** Describe the disciples' understanding of the man's blindness. Read Job 4:7-8. How does Eliphaz's understanding of Job compare with the disciples' understanding of the man born blind? How did Jesus understand the man's blindness?

-  **Let's Talk:** In verses 4 & 5 Jesus uses the man born blind as an object lesson for two important lessons. What are they?

- Lesson Regarding** _____: There are two urgencies involved here.
 -  The urgency for _____ while there is time and opportunity.
 -  The urgency for _____ while it is available.

Both urgencies share the same issue, namely, _____. There is an urgency in the things of God which must not be ignored.

- Lesson Regarding** _____: Some people have perfect physical sight, 20-10 vision, but spiritually they are blind as a bat. Jesus wants to challenge us to think about whether or not we are spiritually blind. The point of this lesson is simple: _____. Without Jesus we are spiritually blind and walking in spiritual darkness. For the spiritually blind, it is always night-time.

Scripture: "6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). 7 And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing." (9:6-7)

⇒ **Question & Observation:** What's this "spittle" business all about?

- Spittle & Healing On the Sabbath.** We will learn in verse 14 that Jesus performed this healing on the Sabbath. Rabbinical teaching held that it was forbidden to heal on the Sabbath except in order to save a life. But some Rabbis went beyond this and taught HOW you were not supposed to heal on the Sabbath. In the Mishnah (which is the collection of rabbinical teachings), in Tractate Shabbat it says: "To heal a blind man on the sabbath it is prohibited to inject wine into his eyes. It is also prohibited to make mud from spittle and smear it on his eyes." Mishnah, Tractate Shabbat 108:20.
- Waging War Against Religious Traditions & Spiritual Blindness.** Not only did Jesus break the rabbinical traditions and teachings regarding healing on the Sabbath, he chose a method (mud & spittle) which was *specifically prohibited* for use on the Sabbath. Jesus was waging open warfare against the spiritual blindness of religious legalism and religious traditions which were non-biblical and were keeping people from a true knowledge, experience & worship of God.

Scripture: "8 The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" 9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." 10 Therefore they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam, and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." 12 And they said to him, "Where is He?" He *said, "I do not know." (9:8-12)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How did the man's neighbors react to his healing. What two groups do they seem to "fall into"? Why do you think some people questioned the identity of the man? How does this illustrate John's message regarding spiritual blindness?

- The neighbors react by dividing into two groups:
 - ⇒ _____ it really is the man and that he has been healed, and
 - ⇒ _____ it really is the man because they can't believe he could be healed.
- It is easier _____ than _____.
- Some people choose _____, when confronted with the miraculous light of truth.

1. Remember: What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____ and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Did that happen here?

For Further Reflection

You don't need to do this right now, but take time to reflect on how the four (4) groups of people responded to this miraculous sign. Think about how each responded, why they responded the way they did, and which response you most identify with.

- The Man Born Blind:
- The Man's Friends and Neighbors:
- The Man's Parents:
- The Religious Leaders:
- YOU:

The Interrogation of The Man Born Blind & His Parents (9:13-23)

Scripture: "13 They brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They *said therefore to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and Questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." (9:13-23)

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How do the Pharisees react to this man's healing? What two groups do they seem to "fall into"? How does this illustrate John's message regarding spiritual blindness?

□ **The Pharisees responded by _____:**

1) _____ - they deny that Jesus can be from God because He has violated the religious traditions of the Elders by healing on the Sabbath and in a forbidden way.

2) _____ - they believe that Jesus must be from God because He has performed a Messianic sign.

□ Some people choose _____, in spite of _____.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** How does the formally blind man describe Jesus (vs. 17)? How is this different from his previous understanding of Jesus (vs 11). What is happening to his understanding of who Jesus is?

□ **The Response of _____.**

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the response of the Jewish religious authorities to this miraculous healing? What does their response say about "spiritual blindness" in general?

□ **The Response of _____.**

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe the pressure that the man, his parents and other potential followers of Jesus were under to conform to the religious blindness and traditions of their day? How do we face similar pressure today when it comes to believing or not believing?

□ **History of Christians Versus The Synagogue.** Pressure against Christians in the Synagogues grew with time. In approximately 90AD the Jewish Sanhedrin re-worded one of the blessings recited daily in the synagogues so as to make it impossible for 'Nazarenes' (Jewish Christians) to take part in synagogue worship. This blessing, which traditionally included a curse on the enemies of God was revised so that the curse said, 'let Nazarenes and heretics perish as in a moment; let them be blotted out of the book of life and not be enrolled with the righteous.' The revision was approved by the Sanhedrin and adopted in the synagogues, so that "Nazarenes," by keeping silent when the words were recited by the congregation, would give themselves away.

The Second Interrogation of The Man Born Blind (9:24-34)

Scripture: *So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." He therefore answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." They said therefore to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" And they reviled him, and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. "We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out. (9:24-34)*

- ➡ **Let's Talk:** Based on this passage, what had the Jewish leadership concluded regarding Jesus?

- ➡ **Let's Talk:** What had the man born blind concluded about Jesus? It has been said that, "*A man with an argument is no match for a man with an experience.*" How is this true in this exchange between the formerly blind man and the Jewish religious authorities?

- ➡ **Let's Talk:** Based upon the statement *You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"* what had happened to the man born blind? How does he now see himself?

- ➡ **Let's Talk:** Consider this statement by the man born blind: *The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."* How is he using the Pharisees' own teaching regarding messianic signs and miracles to defend Jesus against the religious leaders?

The Man Born Blind Believes In Jesus (9:35-41)

Scripture: *Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains. (9:35-41)*

- ➡ **Let's Talk:** Based upon his statement, *And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.* describe how the man's understanding of Jesus has changed from the beginning of this story? Compare yourself to the man born blind. Where are you in your understanding of who Jesus really is.


- ➡ **Let's Talk:** In your own words, explain Jesus' statement: *And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind."*


A Personal Journey Into Spiritual Light or Spiritual Darkness


John Chapter 9

Introduction

Throughout this story of the man born blind John wants to do three things:

 John wants to _____ with a theme of _____.

 John wants to _____, namely, that _____.

 John wants to give us _____ of what it means for Jesus to be _____.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** What do physical blindness and spiritual blindness have in common?

⇒ **Answer:** They both suffer from _____.

"Who Is This Man Called Jesus" A Journey Into . . .

Spiritual Sight

The Man Born Blind

Step 1: _____ (9: 11)

Step 2: _____ (9:17)

Step 3: _____ (9:27)

Step 4: _____ (9:33)

Step 5: _____ (9:38)

Jesus Is _____

Spiritual Blindness

The Religious Leaders

Step 1: _____ (9: 16)

Step 2: _____ (9:24)

Step 3: _____ (9:28)

Step 4: _____ (9:29)

Step 5: _____ (9:34)


Jesus Is _____

 **Remember:** What have we learned about the purpose of miracles, signs & wonders?

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____

and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Did that happen here?

 **Application**

 Many people like to say that they would believe in Jesus if God would simply give them a sign. How does what you have seen so far prove or refute such assertions? Compare yourself to the man born blind. Where you are in your understanding of who Jesus really is.

Sign # 6 - Healing The Man Born Blind *Transforming Blindness Into Sight (John 9:1-41)*

Scripture Text

The Healing Of The Man Born Blind

*1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing. 8 The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" 9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one."10 Therefore they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam, and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight."12 And they said to him, "Where is He?" He *said, "I do not know."*

The Interrogation of The Man Born Blind & His Parents (9:13-23)

*13 They *brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 They *said therefore to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and Questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

The Second Interrogation of The Man Born Blind (9:24-34)

24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." 25 He therefore answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." 26 They said therefore to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" 28 And they reviled him, and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 "We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him. 32 "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out.


The Man Born Blind Believes In Jesus (9:35-41)

35 Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." 38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. 39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." 40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.


Sign # 7: The Raising of Lazarus


Transforming Death Into Life (John 11:1-57)
(Participant's Outline)

Introduction

 The raising of Lazarus represents the climax of Jesus' ministry. It has been preceded by SIX great miraculous signs, each of which has taught us God's transforming power over the circumstances of our lives, and all of which have fulfilled the same purpose:

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____
and are intended to result in _____ and _____.

 Through all 6 signs the underlying message has been that _____ about our circumstances, and that He has the _____ our circumstances if we will simply _____ and _____.

 In the sixth sign ("Healing The Man Born Blind") Jesus added a new dimension to the purpose of signs:

Signs divide men into those who are _____ and those whose _____.


To see the miraculous signs which Jesus performs and NOT believe is to be _____.


Act 1: Preparing The Disciples/Setting The Stage (11:1-16)

Background

"Lazarus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Eleazar" which means "God has helped." He is the brother of Mary & Martha. Mary and Martha are famous from Luke 10:38, and it was Mary who anointed Jesus with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair (Luke 7:36-38). Bethany is a village about 2 miles southeast of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho at the Mount of Olives. Jesus stayed there whenever He came to Judea/Jerusalem.

Scripture: *1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." 4 But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When therefore He heard that he was sick, He stayed then two days longer in the place where He was.*

 **Let's Talk:** What was Jesus' unique perspective on Lazarus illness? From whose perspective was Jesus seeing things? What is your perspective on your own struggle?

 **Let's Talk:** Explain verse 5 in the light of verse 6? Why was it important to include verse 5 at this point in the narrative? When you or someone you love is in the midst of difficult circumstances, do you struggle with God's love and His timing? What encouragement can we find in these two verses?

The Greek word for "love" used by Mary & Martha in verse 3 regarding Jesus' love for Lazarus is the word phileo

which represents **strong friendship or brotherly love**. But the word used in verse 5 for Jesus' love toward Lazarus is

agape which represents God's love.


Observation

Jesus' response to the news of Lazarus' illness is to wait an additional two days. It probably didn't matter. When Jesus arrived Lazarus had been dead four days, and the journey to Bethany only took one day. When you "do the math" we see that Lazarus' death probably occurred soon after the messengers left Bethany for Jesus. Lazarus was already dead when Jesus received the news of his illness.

Application

How do you see your own circumstances? Do you see them as _____ or as setting the stage for _____? God's love for us is _____ than we will ever comprehend. God is never _____ by circumstances. He is never _____.


Scripture: "7 Then after this He *said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."8 The disciples *said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.10 "But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

 **Let's Talk:** What were Jesus' disciples concerned about? Was it a legitimate concern? What was Jesus' response? What concerned Him? What concerns and motivates you more: The dangers of believing or the urgency to believe?

Application

There is an _____ to walking in God's spiritual light. Each of us must choose between _____ and _____, and we must be willing to accept the _____ of this choice. It is _____ for knowing the truth.

Scripture: "11 This He said, and after that He *said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep."12 The disciples therefore said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.14 Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,15 and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

 **Let's Talk:** Look at verses 14 & 15. What might have been different if Jesus had been there (with Lazarus)? Why do you think that Jesus' not being there would now cause the disciples to believe?

Application

Sometimes God's apparent "_____ " to the circumstances of our lives may be _____ for _____ which God wants to accomplish in our lives. What "greater thing" is God doing in your life?

Act 2: Scene I: Jesus & Martha (11:17-29)

Scripture: 17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. 20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary still sat in the house. 21 Martha therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus *said to her, "Your brother shall rise again." 24 Martha *said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world." 28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here, and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she *arose quickly, and was coming to Him.

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Describe Martha's understanding of the circumstance in verse 21. Was her understanding true? What do verses 21-22 tell us about Martha's faith?

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Read the exchange between Jesus and Martha in verses 23-27. What does Martha understand Jesus statement in verse 23 to mean? How does Jesus correct her understanding? How has Martha's understanding of and faith in Jesus changed by verse 27?

Application

In Luke 10:38 Martha was a "doer." Now she is in a crisis where there is nothing she can do _____.

Martha's faith must now grow, from a faith that believes in _____, to a much deeper and greater faith that believes in _____. God wants to deliver us from living in the world of " _____ " and bring us into the world of " _____ " .

Act 2: Scene II: Jesus & Mary (11:30-37)

Scripture: 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. 31 The Jews then who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled, 34 and said, "Where have you laid him?" They *said to Him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man also from dying?"

⇒ **Let's Talk:** Compare Mary's response to Jesus in verse 32 to that of Martha's in verse 21. Then compare Jesus' response to each? What is the difference and why?

Application

God _____. It is time to stop blaming God for _____
(or for _____), and start believing God for _____.

Act 3: The Raising of Lazarus (11:38-44)

Scripture: 38 Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, *came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.39 Jesus *said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, *said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days."40 Jesus *said to her, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"41 And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me.42 "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me."43 And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."44 He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus *said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

➡ **Let's Talk:** Describe the situation in your own words. How long had Lazarus been dead?

➡ **Let's Talk:** What would have been the natural expectation after four days? What does Martha's response (Vs. 39) tell us about her understanding of what is unfolding? Can you relate to Martha's state of mind? According to Jesus statement in verse 42, what is the purpose of the sign that is about to occur?

Act 4: The Religious Leaders Respond (11:45-53)

Scripture: 45 Many therefore of the Jews, who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him.46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done. 47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."49 But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."51 Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,52 and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.53 So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

➡ **Let's Talk:** Describe the three (3) responses to this miracle as described in this passage. Which one of these three responses can you best identify with? Why?

The Response of _____ (vs. 45) - the sign resulted in repentance and faith.

The Response of _____ (vs. 46) - these are people who saw but didn't commit themselves one way or another, but they did spread the news.

The Response of _____ (vs. 47-50) - they saw the signs and people's responses and regarded it as a threat to their existing order of things.

Epilogue: Jesus Withdraws From Public (11:54-57)

Scripture: 54 Jesus therefore no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.55 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves.56 Therefore they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another, as they stood in the temple, "What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?"57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.

➡ **Let's Talk:** What does this say about how God responds to our responses?

Application

Without being overly obvious, describe how Jesus transformed disaster into a blessing in this situation. How did he transform people and their understanding of spiritual truth in the process? What has this story taught you about God's transforming power?

Review & Personal Application

What Have We Learned From The Seven Signs of John?

Review

What Did We Learn about John's Purpose in Recording the Miraculous Signs of Jesus?

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31)

What Have We Learned about the Purpose of Miracles, Signs & Wonders?

_____ are _____ which cause men to _____ and which point to _____
and are intended to result in _____ and _____. Why didn't this happen in every situation?

What Have We Learned From Each Sign About God's Power To Transform The Circumstances of Our Lives?

 **Sign # 1: The Wedding At Cana (John 2:1-11)**

 **Sign # 2: Healing The Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54)**

 **Sign # 3: Healing The Lame Man At The Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-18)**

 **Sign # 4: Feeding The Multitude (John 6:1-15)**

 **Sign # 5: Walking On The Water (John 6:16-21)**

 **Sign # 6: Healing The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)**

 **Sign # 7: The Raising of Lazarus (John Chapter 11)**

Application: What Do You Believe?

John uses the word "believe" 101 times in his gospel. He uses it _____ in the first 4 Signs, another _____ in Sign # 6 and then _____ in Sign # 7. The message is clear: After 7 miraculous signs demonstrating His power to transform the circumstances of our lives, _____.

