

READING THE SIGNS

SEEING WHO JESUS REALLY
IS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



NASHVILLE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

LENT 2026
SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

10 Strategic Initiatives

- HUB OF PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL
- CULTIVATING VIBRANT CREATIVE COMMUNITY
- ACTIVATING OUR DEACONS
FOR CONNECTION AND SUPPORT
- DEEP DISCIPLESHIP AND BIBLICALLY
FOCUSED GROWTH
- ENHANCING OUR TEAM TO CARRY
THE VISION FOR NASHVILLE
- COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY
- FAITH AND WORK MINISTRY
- CITY ENGAGEMENT
- GLOBAL MISSIONS
- RADICAL GENEROSITY



OUR VISION:

We exist to help connect Jesus to people,
people to community, and community to mission.

Two-Year (2024-2026) Strategic Initiatives for “Revive”

Our two-year strategic ministry plan is built around a vision for spiritual renewal, deep discipleship, and community transformation. A deeply revived city requires a deeply revived church, simply a collection of deeply revived people. It starts with each of us turning and returning our entire selves to God and asking him to make us whole.

In 2026, we are continuing to emphasize:

- **Developing a Culture of Prayer:** *Prayer is the foundation of spiritual awakening.*
- **Building a College and Young Adult Ministry:** *We are passionate about reaching the next generation.*
- **Engaging the City:** *Our vision is to see Nashville transformed by the gospel.*
- **Equipping Our Deacons for Future Development:** *To better serve our church and city.*
- **Staffing for the Future:** *We want to ensure our staff is equipped and aligned with the church's vision and strategy.*



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INTRODUCTION TO LENT

Marking Time with the Story of Jesus

Most of us mark time by school years, work calendars, holidays, and birthdays. Our lives move from one deadline to the next, one season of busyness to another. But from the earliest centuries, Christians have also learned to mark time by the story of Jesus Christ.

Learning to Mark Time by Christ

The church calendar is simply a way of letting the life of Christ shape the rhythm of our lives. Instead of time being defined only by our schedules and cultural moments, it becomes anchored in the story of redemption—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. These seasons invite us not just to remember what God has done, but to be formed by it. Lent is one of those seasons.

A Season Set Apart

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and sets in motion forty days of prayer, repentance, and preparation for Easter. Historically, it has been a time for self-examination, turning from sin, and remembering our mortality. The Scriptures often describe people in mourning or repentance wearing sackcloth and ashes as a visible sign of humility before

God. By the early centuries of the church, ashes came to be associated with the beginning of Lent as a symbol of repentance and dependence on God's mercy.

The Meaning Behind the Practice

For many, these practices are unfamiliar. Some come from traditions that never observed Lent. Others may carry mixed experiences or misunderstandings. It is important to clearly state that Lent is not about earning God's love or securing salvation. We do not practice these rhythms to prove ourselves to God. We practice them because we want our lives to be shaped by the gospel story. These seasons are tools for worship and sanctification, not ladders to climb toward God.

The Heart of Our Approach

For our church family, entering Lent is an invitation, not a requirement. It is a way of slowing down and allowing the story of Christ's death and resurrection to reorder our loves and loyalties. While some churches incorporate the receiving of ashes on Ash Wednesday, we have chosen not to include that practice in our services at this time. That decision is not a rejection of the tradition, but a pastoral judgment about what best serves our people right now. We can still embrace the heart of Lent without adopting every historical expression of it.

Following Jesus into the Wilderness

At its core, Lent mirrors Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. It is a symbolic journey into the desert—a space where distractions are stripped away and deeper realities come into focus. It is a season to empty ourselves of lesser things so that we might be filled again with the greater things of Christ.

Walking the Road to the Cross

The final week of Lent, Holy Week, draws us into the closing scenes of Jesus' earthly ministry: His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday,

His last meal with His disciples on Maundy Thursday, His crucifixion on Good Friday, and the quiet waiting of Holy Saturday. Lent teaches us that resurrection joy comes on the far side of the cross. Easter morning shines brightest when we have walked honestly through the shadow of Calvary.

Renewal, Not Gloom

This is why Lent can be such a meaningful season for families and for personal discipleship. It gives us shared moments and milestones to talk about sin, grace, sacrifice, and hope. It helps turn our desires toward Jesus, loosening our grip on lesser loves so that we can receive His greater love more fully.

An Invitation for the Journey

In all of this, the goal is not gloom but renewal. Not spiritual performance, but spiritual attentiveness. Lent invites us to walk with Jesus—to follow Him into the wilderness, to stand near the cross, and ultimately to arrive at the empty tomb with hearts made ready to rejoice.

Reading the Signs of Jesus

As we enter this season together, our prayer is simple: that by marking our time around the story of Christ, our lives would be shaped more deeply by His grace. And as we do, we will spend these weeks in the Gospel of John, learning to see Jesus more clearly through the signs He gave. The signs of Jesus Christ point us to who He is and to the life He offers.

***“THESE ARE WRITTEN SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE
THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BY BELIEVING
YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME.”***

- JOHN 20:31

IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT SIGNS

Imagine a world without signs. No price tags at the grocery store. No arrows in a hospital hallway. No exit signs on the interstate. You could still move through life, but you would do so with constant uncertainty. You would not always know where you were, where you were headed, or how close you were to arriving. Every trip would feel like guess-work.

We rarely notice it, but our lives are guided by signs. They orient us and reassure us. A sign that reads “Nashville, 10 miles” is not Nashville itself, but it tells you you are on the right road. It points beyond itself to a real destination. The Gospel of John invites us to read the life of Jesus in just this way.

More Than Miracles, They Are Signs

John does not simply record miracles; he calls them signs. That word matters. A miracle can leave you amazed. A sign is meant to direct you. It points beyond the event itself to a deeper reality.

John is not only showing us what Jesus can do. He is showing us who Jesus is. Throughout Scripture, God has used signs to confirm His word and His messengers. In the days of Moses, signs and wonders authenticated that God was truly speaking. In the time of the prophets, even symbolic or ordinary actions could become signs that carried divine meaning. Some were dramatic, some quiet, but all pointed to God’s truth and called people to trust His word. John writes with this biblical pattern in mind.

A Gospel Shaped by Signs

John’s Gospel is striking for both what it includes and what it leaves out. There is no nativity story, no parables like the Good Samaritan, no Sermon on the Mount. Instead, John gives us extended conversations, bold “I am” statements, and a carefully chosen set of signs.

Many have called the first half of John the “Book of Signs” because these works of Jesus are not random. They are arranged. They build on each other. They form a cumulative case for His identity.

John is also transparent about his purpose. He tells us that Jesus did many other signs that he did not record. Then he explains why he selected these:

“These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)

John is not trying to write a full biography. He is offering trustworthy testimony so that readers might believe and find life.

The Signs That Point to the Son

In this series, we will walk through seven major signs: water turned to wine, a temple cleansed, a son healed from a distance, a lame man restored, a multitude fed, a blind man given sight, and a dead man raised from the grave.

Each sign reveals something of Jesus’ authority and compassion.



Together, they form a portrait. The signs build, one upon another, until they crescendo in the raising of Lazarus. When Jesus calls a dead man out of the tomb, John's claim becomes unmistakable. If Jesus has authority over death itself, then He must be who He says He is.

The Sign and the Reality

There is something unique about Jesus' signs. Moses' signs authenticated a message from God. The prophets' signs confirmed they spoke for God. Jesus' signs do this, but they go further. They testify not only that His message is from God, but that He Himself is from God.

More than that, they reveal that He is the Word made flesh. His works are windows into His identity. When Jesus performs a sign, He is not merely saying, "God is powerful," but "Look at me and see the Father at work." The signs do not just validate His teaching; they unveil His glory.

The Danger of Missing the Signs

"These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

John is also honest about the mixed response. Many people saw these signs and still did not believe. The problem was not the clarity of the sign but the posture of the heart. It is possible to admire the story of Jesus, even to be impressed by His works, and still miss what they point to.

That warning remains for us. The signs are not the destination. They are God-given directions. To stop at the sign is to miss the point. To follow where the sign points is to find life.

Reading the Signs Well

So as we begin this journey in John's Gospel, we do so with a simple prayer: that God would give us eyes to see. Not only to see the signs, but to see through them to Christ.

John's goal is not to satisfy curiosity but to awaken faith. Not merely to inform us, but to bring us to trust the Son of God. And in believing, to have life in His name.

**A MIRACLE CAN
LEAVE YOU AMAZED.**

**A SIGN IS MEANT
TO DIRECT YOU.**

TURNING WATER INTO WINE

John 2:1–11

BIG IDEA

Jesus' first sign invites us to consider what happens when He steps into ordinary human need—and whether we trust Him as the true source of joy and fullness.

INTRODUCTION

John begins Jesus' public ministry in a surprising place: a wedding. Not in a synagogue, not on a mountaintop, but in the middle of a celebration. In the ancient world, weddings were multi-day communal events, moments of shared joy and honor for a family and village. To run out of wine was more than a small inconvenience; it risked real embarrassment for the hosts.

Into this urgent moment of need, Jesus steps. John calls this His “first sign,” the beginning of how Jesus reveals His glory. That matters. His first sign is not a display of judgment or a public spectacle. It is a generous act in the middle of ordinary life.

The scene also feels familiar. Our resources run thin. Our joy can fade. We become aware of our limits sooner than we expect. This sign gently draws our attention to what Jesus does when human ability reaches its end.

He does not simply make up the difference. He provides in a way that is abundant and surprising. John hints that more is happening here than a rescued celebration. Something about Jesus' identity—and the kind of life He brings—is beginning to come into view.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 2:1–11 slowly. If possible, read it out loud. Notice how the story unfolds and who actually recognizes what Jesus has done.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- Why would running out of wine be such a serious issue at this wedding?

- What does Mary seem to expect from Jesus?

- What do you notice about Jesus' response?

- What role do the servants play in the story?

- Who understands where the wine came from—and who does not?

- Pay attention to the details. John includes them on purpose.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

John calls this miracle a sign because it points beyond itself. The water jars Jesus uses were connected to ritual purification, part of how people thought about being clean before God. Their presence suggests this moment carries more meaning than hospitality alone.

Throughout Scripture, wine often symbolizes joy and blessing. The prophets spoke of a day when God's salvation would be marked by abundance and celebration. Jesus' action at Cana hints that this promised joy is arriving through Him.

John also notes that this sign revealed Jesus' glory and led His disciples to believe in Him. The sign is not only about what Jesus can do; it is about who He is. His works invite trust in His person.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Where in your life does it feel like the wine has run out?
- Do you bring ordinary needs to Jesus, or only urgent ones?
- What might it look like to trust His timing and direction?
- Have you seen Jesus at work yet hesitated to trust Him fully?

Often the places where we feel most aware of our limits become the places where we are most open to His grace. Life with Jesus is not something we manufacture. It is something we receive. This sign leads to Jesus, who meets real needs with real grace and invites real trust.

FEBRUARY 18

ASH WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICE

6:15 PM - SANCTUARY

Lent is an invitation to slow down and tell the truth about our lives. It is a season where we name both our need and God's mercy. Scripture shows us that suffering can push us in two directions—away from God in bitterness, or toward Him in deeper trust. Lent is the church's way of choosing the second path. It is a season to be drawn again into the love of God, where our wounds and our hopes are both brought honestly into the light.

The word Lent is historically connected to springtime, and that image is fitting. Spring holds together what feels contradictory: the ground breaks open before life appears. Something must die for new life to grow. That pattern sits at the heart of the Christian story. Jesus walks toward the cross not to glorify suffering, but to bring life through it. Lent helps us walk that road with Him—prayerfully, humbly, and awake to our need for grace.

This is why Lent has often been called a season of “bright sadness.” We feel the weight of sin and the ache of a broken world, yet we do so with hope. We are not trying to earn God's love; we are returning to the life already offered to us in Christ. We pause. We pray. We repent. Not as an exercise in guilt, but as a way of clearing space in our hearts to receive grace again.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of that journey. It is the doorway into the season. We gather to hear Scripture that calls us to repentance and renewal. We sing and pray in ways that re-center our hearts on Christ. We come to the Lord's Table, remembering that Jesus entered our suffering so that we might enter His life.



ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE

John 2:12-17

BIG IDEA

Jesus' actions in the Temple invite us to consider what happens when worship becomes crowded with substitutes—and whether we will let Him reorder our approach to God.

INTRODUCTION

After the secret generosity of Cana, Jesus travels to Jerusalem and enters the Temple. The mood shifts quickly. From celebration to confrontation, from private provision to public disruption. Yet both scenes reveal the same heart.

The Temple stood at the center of Jewish life and worship. It was the place where people believed heaven and earth met, where sacrifices were offered and prayers were lifted. It represented God's nearness to His people.

But by the time of Jesus, the outer courts had filled with merchants and money-changers. Pilgrims needed animals for sacrifice and proper currency for offerings, so these activities had a practical purpose. Yet what was meant to support worship had begun to overshadow it. The place of prayer had become a place of transaction.

When Jesus enters this scene, He does something unforgettable. He drives out the sellers and overturns tables. John makes clear this is not a loss of temper but a purposeful act. The disciples remember the words of Scripture: "Zeal for your house will consume me." Jesus is not rejecting worship; He is insisting that it not be reduced to a system that obscures God's heart.

This sign invites us to notice what matters to Jesus—and what can subtly take God's place even in religious spaces.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 2:12–17 slowly. If possible, read it out loud. Notice what stirs Jesus' response and how people might have interpreted His actions.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- What was happening in the Temple when Jesus arrived?

- Why might buying and selling have been present?

- What exactly does Jesus do?

- How might people have reacted in that moment?

- What Scripture do the disciples recall?

- Pay attention to the details. John includes them for a reason.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

To understand this sign, we remember what the Temple represented. It was the place people came to seek forgiveness and nearness to God.

The presence of merchants was not the core problem; the deeper issue was what the system had become. Access to God could begin to feel managed, complicated, and costly.

Jesus' actions function like a prophetic sign. He is announcing that something greater is arriving. Later in John's Gospel, He will point to Himself as the true temple: the new meeting place between God and humanity. Access to the Father will no longer center on a building but on a person.

This sign speaks in two directions. For the religious, it is a gentle warning that devotion can drift into performance and activity can replace a heart turned toward God. For the skeptical, it shows that Jesus is not aligned with hollow religion or spiritual exploitation. Jesus stands against anything that blocks people from truly knowing God.

John wants us to see Jesus' zeal as love. He is clearing space for real relationship.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Are there ways faith can become routine rather than relational?
- What might need reordering in your spiritual life?
- Have you ever felt distanced from God by religious systems?
- How does it change things to know Jesus desires real access between you and the Father?

Sometimes love looks like removal before renewal. Jesus clears what distracts so that what matters most can be seen again.

Life with Jesus is not about managing appearances or mastering rituals. It is about knowing the Father through the Son.

Don't just see this sign—read it. And then follow where it leads. It leads to Jesus, the one who restores true worship and opens the way to the Father.

MARCH 1

BELIEVE HIS WORD IS ENOUGH

John 4:46–54

BIG IDEA

This sign invites us to consider whether we trust Jesus' word even before we see results and whether His promise is enough to anchor our faith.

INTRODUCTION

John brings us back to Cana, the place where Jesus first revealed His glory by turning water into wine. That earlier sign showed His generosity and power. Now, in the same region, we meet a father in crisis. His son is near death, and time feels short.

The man who comes to Jesus is a royal official, someone accustomed to influence and access. Yet in this moment, status cannot help him. Resources cannot solve his problem. He comes because he has reached the limits of what he can control.

Many of us recognize that turning point. We often rely on our own strength until we encounter a situation we cannot fix. This sign draws our attention to what happens when need drives us toward Jesus—and what Jesus invites us to trust in return.

At the center of this story is a simple but searching question: what happens when Jesus asks us to trust His word before we see His work?

READ THE SIGN

Read John 4:46–54 slowly. If possible, read it out loud. Notice how the father's faith unfolds and how central Jesus' word is in the story.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- Why does the official come to Jesus?

- What does he ask Jesus to do?

- How does Jesus initially respond?

- What promise does Jesus give?

- When does the father choose to believe?

- Who ends up believing as a result?

Pay attention to the sequence. John tells the story carefully.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

This story shows us a movement in faith. The father begins with an urgent need. He wants Jesus to come and heal his son, and his request is understandable. Yet Jesus responds in a way that shifts the focus from visible proof to trust.

Instead of traveling with him, Jesus gives a promise: “Go; your son will live.” John highlights the turning point with simple words: the man took Jesus at His word and went on his way. He leaves with no sign, no visible change, only Jesus’ promise.

The healing from a distance reveals something about Jesus’ authority. He is not limited by location or proximity. His word carries life. John wants us to see that faith here is not certainty about outcomes, but trust in the One who speaks.

When the father later learns that the healing occurred at the exact hour Jesus spoke, his belief deepens and spreads to his household. What began as desperation grows into settled trust. The sign points beyond the healing to the reliability of Jesus Himself.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Where in your life do you feel beyond your control right now?
- Do you find yourself waiting for visible proof before trusting God?
- Where might Jesus be inviting you to take Him at His word?
- Do you seek what Jesus can do more than who He is?

Often faith grows not when everything is clear, but when we entrust ourselves to Jesus in the middle of uncertainty. This sign leads to Jesus, whose word is trustworthy and whose promises carry life.

DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WELL?

John 5:1–15

BIG IDEA

This sign invites us to consider whether we truly desire the wholeness Jesus offers and whether we will look to Him rather than the systems we trust to heal us.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus returns to Jerusalem and enters a place marked by suffering. Near the Sheep Gate is a pool surrounded by colonnades where the sick and disabled gather. It is a place of waiting, hoping, and often resignation.

Among them lies a man who has been an invalid for thirty-eight years. Nearly four decades of limitation and disappointment. Long enough for a condition to begin shaping a person's expectations and identity.

What stands out in this story is that the man does not seek Jesus. Jesus goes to him. While many in the Gospels push through crowds to reach Christ, here Christ moves toward someone who cannot reach Him. John quietly reminds us that grace often begins with Jesus' initiative, not ours.

Then Jesus asks a surprising question: "Do you want to be made well?" It is not harsh; it is personal. After years of waiting, a person can grow used to their condition. Jesus' question invites honesty about desire, hope, and openness to change.

This sign draws our attention to the kind of restoration Jesus brings and to the places where we may have learned to live with less.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 5:1–15 slowly. If possible, read it out loud. Notice how Jesus initiates the encounter and how the man responds.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- How long has the man been an invalid?

- Who begins the conversation—Jesus or the man?

- How does the man answer Jesus' question?

- Where does his hope seem to rest?

- What does Jesus command him to do?

- How do the religious leaders respond?

- Why does Jesus later seek the man again?

Pay attention to the details. John includes them carefully.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

Many people at Bethesda placed their hope in the pool's waters. Whether grounded in tradition or belief, the focus had shifted toward

a method. The man's response shows where his expectations were fixed. Even when Jesus stands before him, he speaks of the system he relies on.

This reveals a familiar human pattern. We often look for healing in places that feel visible or manageable, such as: habits, routines, relationships, or self-effort. Jesus' question gently exposes where hope may be misplaced.

When Jesus tells the man to rise, the healing is immediate. No ritual, no formula. His word carries authority. Yet John signals that more is happening than physical repair. Jesus later seeks the man again and speaks to his deeper life. The sign points beyond mobility to renewal.

The response of the religious leaders adds another layer. Their attention centers on rule-keeping while restoration stands in front of them. John invites us to see that Jesus' concern is not rule-breaking but life-giving. Mercy and wholeness are close to the heart of God.

This sign suggests that Jesus is not content with partial repair. His work reaches toward the whole person.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Where in your life do you feel stuck or resigned?
- Are there places where you rely on familiar "pools" for change?
- How do you hear Jesus' question, "Do you want to be made well?"
- What might it mean to trust His word in areas of deep need?

Often, the place of helplessness becomes the place where grace is most clearly seen. This sign leads to Jesus, who moves toward the needy and invites us into a greater wholeness.

MARCH 15

JESUS IS YOUR TRUE BREAD

John 6:1–15

BIG IDEA

This sign invites us to consider what we are truly hungry for and whether we want what Jesus gives or Jesus Himself.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone understands hunger. Some of it is physical, the kind we feel in our stomachs. But much of our hunger runs deeper. We hunger for reassurance, for meaning, for belonging, for a sense that life is secure and enough.

John tells us that large crowds followed Jesus because they had seen His signs. They were drawn to His power and His compassion. Yet this story gently shows that it is possible to be near Jesus and still misunderstand Him. Some seek what He can provide without seeking who He is.

On a hillside near the Sea of Galilee, a practical problem arises. The crowd is large, the hour is late, and food is scarce. Jesus responds with real care for real need. But John wants us to see that this moment is more than a meal. It is a sign.

The timing matters. Passover is near, the season when Israel remembered God's provision of manna in the wilderness. John carefully connects this scene to that older story. The question beneath the miracle is not only whether Jesus can provide bread, but what kind of provider He is and what kind of life He offers.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 6:1–15 slowly. If possible, read it out loud. Notice Jesus' attention to the crowd and the details John highlights.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- What draws the crowd to Jesus?

- What question does Jesus ask Philip?

- How do the disciples assess the situation?

- What does Jesus have the people do before the meal?

- How much does each person receive?

- What is gathered afterward?

- How does the crowd respond?

John includes small details that point to larger meaning.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

Jesus takes a small offering—five loaves and two fish—and provides enough for thousands, with more left over. John emphasizes the

abundance. The people eat as much as they want, and twelve baskets remain. Jesus is not a minimal provider.

Yet John reminds us this is a sign. It points beyond the bread. The crowd begins to draw conclusions, even wanting to make Jesus king by force. They recognize His power but interpret it through their own expectations.

The Passover setting deepens the meaning. Israel once received bread in the wilderness through Moses. Here, Jesus provides bread again, but the story hints that He is not merely repeating the past. He is pointing forward. Later in this chapter, Jesus will speak of Himself as the bread of life.

For now, John lets the sign raise the question: do we come to Jesus mainly for what He gives, or for who He is?

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- What do you find yourself hungry for in this season?
- Where are you tempted to look for satisfaction apart from Christ?
- Do you relate to Jesus more as a provider or as a person?
- How does His generosity shape your view of Him?

Hunger often reveals what we rely on. This sign invites us to consider what truly satisfies. This sign leads to Jesus, who provides generously and invites us to find our life in Him.

JESUS OPENS BLIND EYES

John 9

BIG IDEA

This sign invites us to consider whether we are willing to admit our blindness and whether we will come to Jesus for true sight.

INTRODUCTION

One of the simplest truths in the world is also one of the most profound: without light, there can be no sight. Eyes may be healthy, but if there is no light, vision is impossible.

John 9 is not mainly a story about eyesight. It is a story about illumination. Jesus gives a man physical sight, but John is drawing our attention to something deeper, which is the way Jesus brings spiritual light into human lives.

The timing matters. Jesus is in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, when large lamps were lit to remember how God guided Israel in the wilderness. In that setting, Jesus had said, “I am the light of the world.” This sign shows what that claim means.

Here we meet a man born blind. He knows his condition. He does not pretend otherwise. And he becomes the place where Jesus’ light is displayed. Around him stand others who assume they see clearly, and that assumption becomes its own kind of blindness. This sign invites us to notice the difference between needing light and resisting it.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 9, the whole chapter if possible. Notice the contrast between the man whose sight grows clearer and the leaders whose certainty grows stronger.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- What assumption do the disciples make about the cause of suffering?

- How does Jesus redirect their thinking?

- What does Jesus say about Himself before the healing?

- What does He ask the man to do?

- How do the neighbors respond?

- How do the Pharisees respond?

- How does the man's understanding of Jesus develop?

John lets the reactions tell much of the story.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

The disciples begin with a question about blame. Jesus shifts the focus from fault to God's work. He does not reduce suffering to simple explanations. Instead, He points to the possibility of God's grace at work in broken places.

The healing itself is striking but simple. The larger emphasis falls on what happens next. The man is questioned, doubted, and eventually pushed out. Yet as pressure increases, his clarity about Jesus grows. He moves from knowing Jesus as a man, to seeing Him as a prophet, and finally to trusting Him as Lord.

Meanwhile, the religious leaders move in the opposite direction. Faced with the same evidence, they resist. Their confidence in their own understanding keeps them from receiving light, insight, and understanding.

John invites us to see that spiritual sight is not about intelligence or status. It is about posture. Light is received by those willing to admit they need it.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Where do you most need clarity right now?
- Are you more comfortable admitting need or maintaining control?
- What is something you already see about Jesus that you need to act on?
- Where might pride make it hard to receive light?

Often sight grows gradually. We respond to the light we have, and more light comes. This sign leads to Jesus, the Light of the World, who gives sight to those willing to receive it.

JESUS IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

John 11:1–44

BIG IDEA

This sign invites us to consider whether we trust Jesus not only in life's needs, but in life's endings, and whether we believe He truly holds authority over death.

INTRODUCTION

Few experiences are as universal and as unsettling as death. Every culture, every family, every generation must face it. We find ways to delay it, soften it, or make sense of it, but none of us escapes it.

John 11 brings us into a story shaped by loss, love, and unanswered questions. A beloved brother dies. Two sisters grieve. Friends gather. And Jesus—the one who could have intervened—arrives later than hoped.

John does not tidy the scene. He lets us feel it. This is not a theoretical moment but a deeply human one. And it is here, in the presence of grief, that Jesus reveals something essential about who He is.

This sign stands at a turning point in the Gospel of John. After Lazarus is raised, opposition to Jesus intensifies and the road to the cross becomes clear. When Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb, He is also stepping toward His own grave. John wants us to see that this is not only a story about one man's life restored, but about the One who holds authority over life and death itself.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 11:1–44 slowly. If possible, read it out loud. Notice the delay, the grief, and the words Jesus speaks at the tomb.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- What message do Mary and Martha send to Jesus?

- What does John emphasize about Jesus' love and His delay?

- How do the disciples misunderstand Jesus' words about sleep?

- What does Martha believe about resurrection?

- What claim does Jesus make about Himself?

- What emotions does Jesus display?

- What does Jesus command at the tomb?

- How is belief connected to seeing God's glory?

John lets the details carry meaning.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

John tells us plainly that Jesus loved this family, and then tells us Jesus delayed. Love and delay appear side by side. That alone challenges many of our assumptions about how God should act.

Both sisters speak words many believers have quietly felt: “Lord, if you had been here...” Their words hold faith and disappointment together. Jesus does not rebuke them for their honesty.

With Martha, Jesus speaks to understanding. He shifts her focus from a future event to a present reality: “I am the resurrection and the life.” Resurrection is not only something Jesus does; it is bound up in who He is.

With Mary, Jesus responds differently. He weeps. The Son of God stands at a graveside and enters human sorrow. His tears show that divine authority is not distant from human grief.

Then the moment turns. Jesus speaks, and death yields. The sign reveals His authority, but it also foreshadows His path. In giving life to Lazarus, Jesus moves closer to His own death. The victory here points toward a greater victory to come.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Where have you felt that Jesus was late?
- Do you find yourself relating more to Martha’s questions or Mary’s tears?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus calls Himself the resurrection and the life?
- Where are you being invited to trust His timing?

This sign meets us honestly. It does not rush grief, and it does not ignore hope. It invites trust in Jesus at the edge of the tomb. This sign leads to Jesus, who stands in the face of death and speaks life.

APRIL 3 - GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU

John 19

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP

11 AM - BROADWAY CHAPEL

All through John's Gospel, we have watched Jesus bring life. The sick are restored. The hungry are fed. The blind receive sight. The dead are raised. Again and again, the signs show us that life is found in Him. Good Friday invites us to see where that life comes from.

The cross is not a detour in Jesus' story; it is the destination He spoke about from the beginning. It is where the One who gave life now gives His life. Not as a tragic ending, but as a willing act of love. Not merely to inspire us, but to save us. Christians have long said it simply: He gave His life for ours.

Good Friday is a day to slow down and behold the cross. To remember that forgiveness is not cheap, that love is not abstract, and that hope is grounded in what Christ has done. Before we rush to the joy of Easter morning, we pause here, because this is where the depth of God's love is most clearly seen.

Come and behold the love of Christ.

Come and reflect.

Come and remember.

A free boxed lunch will be provided after the worship service.

"IT IS FINISHED"

APRIL 5 - EASTER SUNDAY

THE SIGN THAT SETTLES IT ALL

The Verdict of Easter

John 20:24-31

Easter brings us to the heartbeat of John's Gospel and the center of the Christian faith. John tells us plainly why he wrote his account of Jesus: "that you may believe... and that by believing you may have life in his name." That is not religious filler language. It is a claim about reality and an invitation into a different kind of life.

All through this season we have watched Jesus turn water into wine, bring healing to the sick, sight to the blind, and hope to the grieving. Each sign has been pointing somewhere. None were ends in themselves. They were windows. Signals. Arrows. Easter is where those arrows finally land. The resurrection is not one more sign; it is the sign that makes sense of all the others.

On Easter Sunday, we will consider what kind of life Jesus is actually offering. Not a slightly improved life. Not a busier religious life. Not a life insulated from suffering. Jesus speaks of life as a restored relationship with God, forgiveness that lifts shame, hope that outlasts the grave, and joy that is not fragile. Jesus offers life that even death cannot extinguish.

If you are exploring faith, this Sunday is for you. John wrote with you in mind. He wanted honest seekers to look carefully at the testimony about Jesus and wrestle with it. If you are weary, skeptical, curious, or carrying quiet questions, you will not be out of place. Easter is not for people who have it all figured out; it is for people who want life.

And if you already believe, Easter steadies our hope. Our confidence is not built on optimism or tradition but on a risen Savior. The resurrection tells us that despair does not get the last word, sin does not get the last word, and death does not get the last word. Jesus does.

So come and consider the claim. Come and hear the story again. Come and weigh the evidence. John extends the same invitation to every reader and every generation: that you may believe, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

BIG IDEA

This sign invites us to consider whether we believe the resurrection is not only a claim to examine, but a reality to trust—and whether we are willing to follow where that belief leads.

INTRODUCTION

Easter brings us to the center of John's Gospel and the heart of the Christian faith. John does not hide his purpose. He tells us plainly that he wrote about Jesus so that people might believe and, by believing, have life in His name.

All through this season we have been reading the signs. Each one revealed something about who Jesus is. None were ends in themselves. They were windows, signals, arrows pointing beyond themselves.

The resurrection is different. It is not simply another sign alongside the others. It is the sign that gathers them all together and confirms what they were pointing to all along. The One who gave life now shows His authority over death itself.

John lets us see the first Easter honestly. There is confusion before clarity, grief before joy, and doubt before belief. The risen Jesus meets people in each of those places. This is not only a story about what happened then, but an invitation for how we respond now.

READ THE SIGN

Read John 20:1–31. Notice the movement in the story—from uncertainty to recognition, from fear to belief.

SEE THE SIGN / OBSERVATION

- What details in the resurrection story stand out to you most?

- Where do you see movement from confusion to clarity or from fear to courage?

- Why do you think John includes both belief and doubt in his account?

- What do you notice about how people respond differently to the empty tomb?

John lets the story unfold through real human reactions.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGN / INTERPRETATION

John connects the signs of Jesus to belief because he wants readers to consider what the signs reveal about Jesus' identity. They are not spectacles but testimony.

Thomas often receives attention for his doubt, yet his story is also one of invitation. Jesus does not push him away. He meets him and calls

him to trust. Thomas moves from hesitation to one of the clearest confessions in the Gospel: “My Lord and my God.”

John then turns to his readers and says, in effect: you were not there, but this testimony is given so that you may believe. Faith in John’s Gospel is not blind certainty; it is trust rooted in the testimony about Jesus.

The resurrection does not answer every question, but it reframes them. If Jesus is risen, then death is not ultimate, hope is not fragile, and life with God is not wishful thinking.

FOLLOW THE SIGN / REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

- Where do you find yourself in this story—confusion, doubt, curiosity, or belief?
- What questions about faith or Jesus do you still carry?
- How would everyday life look different if the resurrection is truly real?
- What do you think it means to have “life in His name”?
- Where might Jesus be inviting you to trust Him more deeply?

John lays out the testimony and points to Jesus. The question is not simply what happened then, but how we respond now.

The resurrection reminds us that faith is not pretending certainty, but placing real trust in a risen Savior.

What do you make of the evidence John offers us?

Do you see a series of signs pointing to Jesus?

Have you found life in his name?

**"THESE ARE WRITTEN SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE
THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BY BELIEVING
YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME."**

- JOHN 20:31

"Reading the Signs" Study Guide was written by
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