



## Evangelistically Active Week Two

Welcome to the third week of our bible reading notes looking at 'Evangelistically Active', which is our topic for the next five weeks in our morning service, leading up to Easter Day.

Our aim with these notes is to encourage one another to read God's word, so you may want commit with a friend to do these bible readings and to pray each day – and then ask each other how you've got on during the week.

*This week we're going to spend some time looking the early chapters of John's gospel, as we think about what it means to believe in Jesus.*

These notes should hopefully be useful for individuals and for families with and without children. Each day, there is a bible passage to read – **read that first**, and **pray** - ask God to help you understand it. (If it is your habit to spend some time with the passage and make your own notes, then do that now.)

Once you're read the passage and thought about it – have a look at the accompanying notes. The notes cover some of the context of the passage, an explanation and an application. There are also some accompanying questions or suggestions for action. As God speaks to you through his word, you may wish to write down what he is calling you to do (and share it with someone!) However, don't worry if sometimes you don't receive an obvious answer to prayer or clear instruction – just keep faithfully reading God's word, and He will use it in your live, as the Holy Spirit works in you.

After you've looked at the bible passage is a

good time to pray – pray for strength to do what you need to do – thank God for what you have learned about him – and bring your requests before him.

Then, you'll see that there is an activity for families with children; the target age range of these activities is 4-11ish, so you may need to modify them. This activity draws on one or two of the verses you've been reading, and give you some suggestions for sharing them with the family – over the breakfast or tea table perhaps. There's a starter activity to get people thinking, then reading the passage, some questions to answer, and then something to read – and a prayer so you don't forget to pray (just a starting point – do pray for longer if you can). Should take about five minutes – but can easily expand if you want it to.

Don't worry about communicating everything – particularly if you've got small children – communicating something of the good news of Jesus Christ every day is a great place to begin.

Enjoy – and let me know how you get on

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'James'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.



## Monday

### John 3:1-5 Being born again

#### Read John 3:1-5

This week we're going to spend some time thinking about what it means to believe in Jesus. We start by going back a few verses in John's gospel from where we were on Sunday morning (John 3:16-21) to look at Jesus' meeting with a Pharisee named Nicodemus (v1).

Nicodemus comes at night to see Jesus (v2) - perhaps wary of what others will think, and starts by recognising that Jesus is a teacher sent from God. However, Jesus moves swiftly to challenge Nicodemus' assumptions, by telling him that he must be born again in verse 3.

Nicodemus misunderstands what Jesus is saying, thinking he is talking about a literal birth, verse 4, and so Jesus clarifies what he is saying, that Nicodemus needs to be born of water (natural birth) and the Spirit (being born again). This is not another natural birth, but a spiritual rebirth (v5).

Two questions arise from this. First—why does Jesus say this to Nicodemus? Because he needed to understand that to enter the kingdom of God, he needed a new spiritual birth. Being a devout Pharisee and Jewish leader wasn't going to earn him entrance to the kingdom. Only spiritual rebirth, through knowing Jesus, was going to do that. So Jesus wasn't—and isn't just another teacher from God—He is the one in whom salvation is found.

And that brings us to the second question what does this mean for us? Well, we are reminded here that we cannot rely for salvation on anything other than knowing Jesus—

and being born again in him, by the work of the Holy Spirit in us. We need new life—and that new life must come from Jesus, who came into the world to save the world (John 3:17), and in whom we are called to believe and trust.

*So today:*

*Give thanks to Jesus for coming and suffering and dying in our place*

*Give thanks that in Jesus we can be born again*

*Pray for opportunities to share this good news with others*

#### Activity for Families with Children

**Starter:** talk about some of the birth stories of your children, or about birth more generally. Talk about how small babies are when they are born. Think about how hard it would be to do that again!

#### Read John 3:3

What does Jesus say we need to do to see the kingdom of God?

What do you think that means?

**Read:** Jesus tells us we need to be born again. This means trusting Jesus for salvation, and being born again by the Holy Spirit coming to live within us.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to live and die for us, so we might be born again. Amen.



## Tuesday

### John 4:11-15 Living Water

#### Read John 4:7-15

Yesterday we reminded ourselves of the need to be born again to enter God's kingdom. Today we're moving into John 4, and Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, as we think about what Jesus says about living water.

The first thing to notice about this conversation is how surprising it is—Jesus, a Jewish teacher, talks to a Samaritan woman at a well – and she is clearly not a very moral woman (v16-18), who has to come to the well in the middle of the day (v6-7).

Jesus asks her for a drink, and she is surprised that he would (v7-9). Jesus then turns the conversation to his identity in verse 10, just as we saw yesterday how he turned the conversation with Nicodemus to where it needed to go. He offers the woman living water—like Nicodemus, she takes him literally, and wonders where this better water will come from (v11-12). Jesus then draws a contrast between water from the well, which will be needed again, verse 13, and the living water that He will give—a spring that leads to eternal life (v14).

At the end of the section the woman has not quite yet understood—verse 15—although she will. Just like Nicodemus, she needed to see that Jesus was talking about spiritual realities. Not water for temporary thirst quenching, but the water of life, which only Jesus can give.

We are reminded here of two things. First, how easy it is to focus on our day to day needs and neglect our spiritual needs. We do need water day by day—but we need, most of all, the water of eternal life. Then second, this is about who Jesus is, and what Jesus has come

to do. He is the one who has living water to give. So we come to him—and encourage others (just as the Samaritan woman did, v28-30) to come as well. Everybody needs living water.

*So today:*

*Give thanks to God that Jesus gives us the water of eternal life.*

*Pray for courage to encourage others to come and drink this water.*

#### Activity for Families with Children

**Starter:** talk about all the things we need water for. Water is essential for life.

#### Read John 13-14

What kind of water is Jesus talking about in verse 13?

What kind of water does Jesus offer in verse 14?

**Read:** we all need water to live. But we also need the water of eternal life. Jesus offers us that water, to know Him as Lord and saviour

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us the water of eternal life. Amen.



## Wednesday

### John 4:39-42 Believing in the Saviour

#### **Read: John 4:39-42**

Today we pick up the story of the Samaritan woman and Jesus. After the conversation about living water that we looked at yesterday, Jesus has shown the woman that he is the Christ (v16-26), and she has gone to tell others about him (v28-30).

The Samaritans are impressed by her testimony, and they come to see Jesus in verse 39. Jesus stays with them for two days, teaching them about who He is. (v40). Then notice what John says next—they believed in Jesus because of His word (v41). In fact the Samaritan make this point to the woman—they don't believe on her testimony, but because of what they have heard from Jesus—they have heard his word, and so they know he is the saviour of the world (v42).

Three things follow from this. First, we need to make sure that we are responding to Jesus's word by reading it for ourselves. And not just up until Easter!

Second, we need to recognise that the purpose of our evangelism to bring people to hear and respond to God's word, to the bible, so that they might come to know Jesus. However we get there, that is our goal.

Third, different people will respond to the word of God differently. Here we see a positive response—as we look at John 6 over the next few days, we'll see different responses. We can't control how people respond to the good news, but we can encourage people to come and hear it.

*So today:*

*Give thanks to God for his word.*

*Pray that we would be ready to respond to what God is saying to us.*

*Pray for wisdom as to how to share God's word with others.*

#### **Activity for Families with Children**

**Starter:** talk about how we get to know things—because people tell us, or we read about them. But what is the best way of getting to know what someone thinks (talk to them, and listen to them)

#### **Read John 4:40-41**

How did the Samaritans get to know Jesus?

Why did they believe in him?

**Read:** people come to know Jesus through reading or hearing his Word, the Bible. We can read it—and we can share it with others.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord Jesus we thank you that you have spoken to us. Help us to be ready to listen. Amen.



## Thursday

### John 6:25-27 The right diet

#### **Read John 6:25-27**

As we continue to move through the book of John, we come to chapter 6. Jesus has fed the five thousand (v1-15), and then walked on water (v16-21) —which means he is not where the crowd expect him to be (v22-24). Eventually, as we read in verse 25, they find Him.

A dialogue between Jesus and the crowd begins in verse 26, and goes all the way through to verse 59 of John 6, where we are told that it all took place in the synagogue in Capernaum. In it, Jesus explains, for the benefit of the crowd, of his disciples, and for our benefit, what the significance of the signs—feeding the five thousand and walking on water—is.

In verse 26, Jesus has a strong rebuke for the crowd. The crowd think they're looking for a sign — Jesus tells them that they are looking for him because they ate loaves and had their fill — he fed them. If they were truly looking for a sign, then they would be interested in where the sign pointed; nobody sees a road sign and stops there—they go where it points. And these signs point to Jesus.

Jesus says—in verse 27: don't focus your efforts on food that will spoil — but on food that endures — on eternal life, which the Son of man will give you. Jesus wants the crowd to focus not on the physical, but the eternal. Of course, he knows that we need food — he fed the five thousand — but he doesn't want the crowd to be so focussed on the food — to be so caught up in the sign — that they miss what the sign is pointing to — to Jesus.

We need to see beyond the material — see beyond the sign, to where the sign points. The signs point us to Jesus, and who he is.

We also need to help others to do the same.

*So today:*

*Give thanks that Jesus showed us who he was with many signs, and explained what they mean*

*Pray that we might recognise who Jesus is, and trust in Him.*

*Pray for help in bringing others to meet Jesus.*

#### **Activity for Families with Children**

**Starter:** talk about why we need food, and how good it is.

#### **Read John 6:27**

What kind of food do we need most of all?

Who do you think the Son of Man is?

**Read:** Jesus, the Son of Man, tells us to come to Him for food that leads to eternal life.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank you that we can come to you for eternal life. Amen.



## Friday

### John 6:28-35 The Right Desires

#### Read John 6:28-35

As we continue in John, another dialogue begins in verse 28. The crowd, still caught up with the physical, still focussed on what they can do, ask another question—they have not understood that it is not about doing, but about believing in what God will do (v29).

Jesus calls them, directly to believe in the one who God has sent – to believe in Jesus. And their next question shows they understand what they are called to do – although they don't want to do it. In verses 30 and 31 the crowd ask for a sign. To be more precise, the crowd ask for another sign. They've seen one – they've eaten it. They suspect there was another to bring Jesus back to Capernaum. And now they want another.

Why do they want a sign? Because they want to see if Jesus truly is the one sent from God – the prophet they thought he was just after dinner yesterday – and so they want more manna. After all, didn't Moses give them bread from heaven? Well not quite—the manna came from God (v32-33).

Again, the crowd has focussed on the wrong person. They've looked back to Moses as the one who gave them Manna, forgetting that God gave them the bread from heaven, and not seeing that God is now giving bread from heaven. That bread, as verse 35 tells us, is Jesus Christ himself.

The crowd had got attached to a person, and idea – and they wanted Jesus to fit with their idea. Instead, as we see in verses 34 and 35, they needed to come to Jesus who is the bread of life.

We need to stop trying to get Jesus to conform to how we want him to be. This can be a particular challenge when we want to share Him with others—but know they have questions and reservations about what Jesus has said or done.

Instead we need to recognise who Jesus is—and come to Him, the one who offers us the bread of life.

*So today*

*Give thanks for who Jesus is*

*Pray that we would know who Jesus is more and more, and share Him with others*

#### Activity for Families with Children

**Starter:** talk about where all the things we have come from—supermarkets, shops—or perhaps parents or others—and of course ultimately, God.

#### Read John 6:32-33

Who did the people think gave Israel the Manna?

Who is it that gives true bread?

**Read:** We need to remember that all the good things we have come from God, and we give him thanks for them

**Prayer:** Dear God thank you for all the good things you give us. Amen.



## Saturday

### John 6:35-40 the Bread of Life

Read John 6:35-40

We pick up where we finished yesterday. In verse 35. Jesus is the bread of life – he calls us to come to him, and to believe in him – to have life. But there is a problem in verse 36. The people have seen Jesus, but they haven't believed – they haven't come to trust in him. They still don't believe – they have had plenty of chances, but they haven't trusted in Jesus.

And this leads Jesus to teach about what it means that he is the bread of life. In verses 37 and 38 we see that Jesus has come to do his father's will. He has come to receive all those who the Father gives. Not everyone responds positively to Jesus – but those who God has given to Jesus will come. And then look at the second half of verse 37 – whoever comes will not be driven away.

In the first half of this verse we get a strong statement of how those who come to Jesus are the ones who the Father calls. And so we might wonder – well, am I one of those that the father has called? Do I qualify? Well, look at the second half of verse 37 – yes you do – all those who come to Jesus – Jesus will receive.

If you have ever wondered if you are one of the people who the father has called – the answer is here. Come to Jesus – he will not drive you away. Jesus is the bread of life.

And then we see in verses 39 and 40 that Jesus will not lose any that God has given Him, but that Jesus will raise them—us up on the last day. When Jesus Christ returns, he will raise up his people to be with him – he

will give them eternal life.

Jesus is the bread of life – he gives his people eternal life. We need to live with this perspective, whatever life is like now. In Jesus we have eternal life. We need to recognize what wonderful news this is, and share it with others.

*So today*

*Give thanks for eternal life in Jesus.*

*Pray for courage to share this amazing news*

#### Activity for Families with Children

**Starter:** talk about how easy it is to lose things—and the kind of things that get lost (keys etc.)

#### Read John 6:39-40

Will Jesus lose anything?

What will Jesus do?

**Read:** God won't lose hold of us—instead he will raise us up to be with him of the last day, when He returns.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord Jesus, thank you that we can have confidence in you. Amen.

**Your Notes...**