

Lent Booklet

First Presbyterian Church of Granada Hills

The Names of Jesus

2020

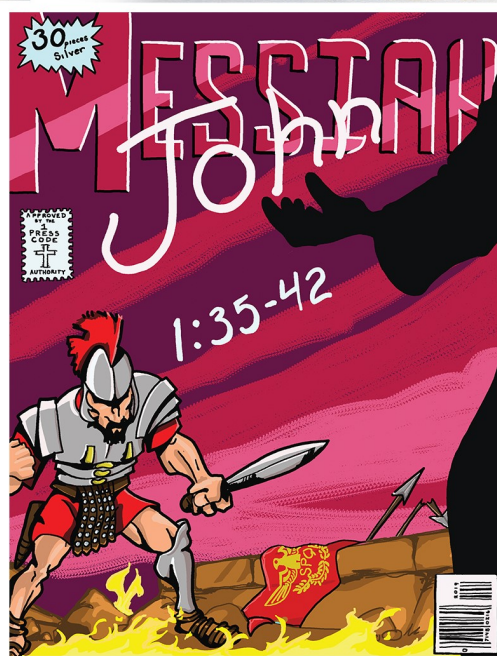


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Welcome! Lent 2020

There are many names for Jesus in the Bible. There are also many titles for Jesus in the Bible. We could have countless studies on all the names and titles and still not know all things about Jesus. This Lent season we are going to zero in on just a few of those names.

For this study we are re-visiting the tremendous talent of some of our members. You will find not only scripture to study, but art work in various forms to contemplate and discuss. Through this Lent series we hope that you will consider new ways to approach and communicate with Jesus. Perhaps you will find new challenges and adventures in your walk with Christ as you move toward him calling out to him with a name you've not used in prayer before. We hope you are blessed by the artwork, the study questions, and the vibrant conversations this Lent Series will provoke!

This study is brought to life by a village of talented artist and writers among our congregation. A very heartfelt thank you to Pastor Bryant Benitez, David Lynn, Joe & Helen Magana, Tom Shedd, Nicole Harlow, Sallie Matthews, Erik Brannon, Scott Landon, Alice Treptow, Celeste Renta, Lusineh Nasrollahi, and Stephen Deichler. Thank you Stephanie Deach-Foyle for sharing your gift of creativity not only in the art piece but our cover as well. Krystal Hoover you once again exceed all expectation and deserve so much gratitude for helping to edit, format and put this study guide together. Thank you also to Erik Harlow for your leadership of Adult Discipleship. I am grateful for your commitment to serving Christ.

Serena Griffith
Small Group Ministry

The Bible, Art and Lent

For this Lent Study we wanted to encourage First Pres to engage their head and their heart. We felt incorporating art would be the perfect element. Now some of you may think, well, I am not sure if it is appropriate or “Biblical” to have us reflect on art alongside of the Bible Study. You might think, is the Bible Study not enough? I want to encourage you to consider that art and creative elements are in the Bible, you just have to do some digging.

For example, Exodus 31; at this point in Exodus God has asked Moses to begin the building of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is the place where God dwells and meets with his people. God desires to be with his people so God provides a way via the Tabernacle.

Exodus 31:1-11

The LORD spoke to Moses: ²See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: ³and I have filled him with divine spirit, with ability, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, ⁴to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft. ⁶Moreover, I have appointed with him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have given skill to all the skillful, so that they may make all that I have commanded you: ⁷the tent of meeting, and the ark of the covenant, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, ⁸the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, ⁹and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand, ¹⁰and the finely worked vestments, the holy vestments for the priest Aaron and the vestments of his sons, for their service as priests, ¹¹and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the holy place. They shall do just as I have commanded you.

In Exodus 31 we are reading about the skilled craftsmen God chooses in a very special way in order to build the Tabernacle, decorate and fashion it. Notice in verse 3 how the Spirit of God is what fills these craftsmen. Then in verse 4 the task is to “devise artistic designs...”. Then verse 7 points the craftsmen/artisans to apply their craft to all the areas of the Tabernacle, even to what the priests wear, and even to the utensils.

Friends what I am pointing out is how God desires for his dwelling, his meeting place to be something which, I think, reflects his wonder, awe, power, majesty, holiness and so much more for who God is. How this relationship is communicated is in the partnership of art, craft, ornateness and creativity by his people commissioned by God. So then, God communicates an aspect of who God is to his people by using talented individuals who are “artistic”, “creative”, and much more.

You know Pastor Jim says frequently on Sunday mornings, “We are here to lift up the name of Jesus!” Pastor Jim is reminding us the honor and purpose of worship is to direct our everything toward Jesus. Friends, as you study these passages see it as an act of worship. You are worshipping by lifting your mind up toward Jesus. Then consider how these art pieces serve to help you lift up Jesus with your heart. Ultimately both your head and your heart should partner together so you will enter into the dwelling place of God. Remember we too have the Spirit of God in us. Remember it was Jesus who came to dwell with us, as John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

Pastor Bryant Benitez

How to Use the Lent Bible Study

First, what is Lent? Lent is a tradition from the ancient church. Lent is typically a period of 40 weekdays before Easter starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on Good Friday. Lent is a way for Christians to reconnect and remember Jesus' time in the wilderness (see Matthew 4:1-11). Christians connect with the 40 days in a variety of ways, through: fasting, prayer, devotionals focusing on Lent, giving up an object for Lent, doing charitable acts and other things. All these actions are ways to remind us of the great journey of Jesus and is something we can reflect on in tangible and practical ways. Lent is not about being more righteous. (See Matthew 6:1-8).

First Pres has developed this **All Church Lent Bible Study** as a way to assist you individually or as a small group in the 40 day period leading to Easter. A quick word on how to use this study.

First, it is up to you. Feel free to use it in a way that works best for you and/or your group. The following are thoughts.

The Lent Bible Studies follow the sermons that are preached, including the Ash Wednesday Service on February 26 and then the following Sundays (March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5). Then the studies are completed by Good Friday. There are a total of 7 Lent Studies & reflections. Here are some examples:

- Some groups like to start the study before Ash Wednesday and attend the Ash Wednesday service in order to experience both the study and the sermon.
- Other Groups start after Ash Wednesday since their group timing is a little different.
- Some groups do the Ash Wednesday study individually and then follow along with just the Sunday format.
- Other groups like to listen to Sunday's sermon and then do the studies following the Sunday service.

So, feel free to follow along in a way that will work with your schedule and your groups time line. Whatever you do, we suggest you finish before Good Friday, April 10, 2020. We hope this Lent Bible Study and Reflection will help you grow into a more committed disciple as we all near Easter.

Thank you, Pastor Bryant

Study #1: Messiah/Christ

John 1:35-42

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). ⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon, son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

Scripture Summary:

The authenticity of the Gospel of John hinges on the claim that it is a record of the eye witness account and testimony of the unnamed "disciple whom Jesus loved." This beloved gospel is in perfect harmony with its synoptic predecessors: Matthew, Mark and Luke. John's audience is broad and emphasizes that God the Father, sent Jesus His Son to redeem the world.

Some theologians believe the motivation behind the gospel of John was to set pure doctrine before the churches and correct some wrong teachings about Jesus. Readers of the gospel of John are clearly taught who Jesus really is, as the book is centered around seven great "I am" statements.

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. If someone were to ask you who Jesus is, what title would you give Him?
2. Name one or two ways you would like to be more like Jesus.
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Interpretation Questions:

1. In verse 36, John exclaimed that Jesus is the “Lamb of God.” How is John using imagery and symbolism to teach a doctrinal truth?
2. After the two disciples heard John’s declaration, what was their reaction?
3. What do you think Jesus meant when he asked “What are you looking for?”
4. What made them think they found the Messiah?

Life Application Questions:

1. In our passage, the Lord is called: Jesus, the Lamb of God, Rabbi which is translated as Teacher and Messiah which is translated as Anointed. Using the title "Messiah," how does that give insight to who Jesus really is?
2. In light of what we are taught by the example of Andrew, how can you become better "fishers of all people?"
3. Jesus' response to the two disciples that heard John's testimony was "What are you looking for?" Isn't that a great question for the world today? So, what are YOU looking for?
4. Please give a couple of examples of how knowing Jesus Christ as the *Messiah* has changed you.
5. How can your witness affect the church?



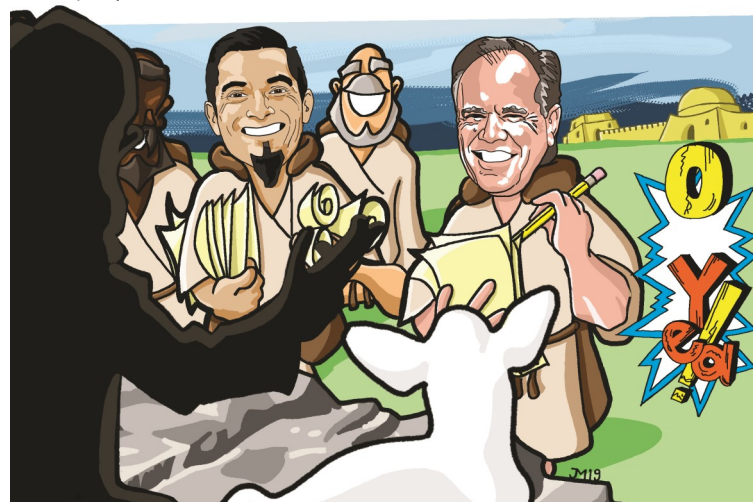
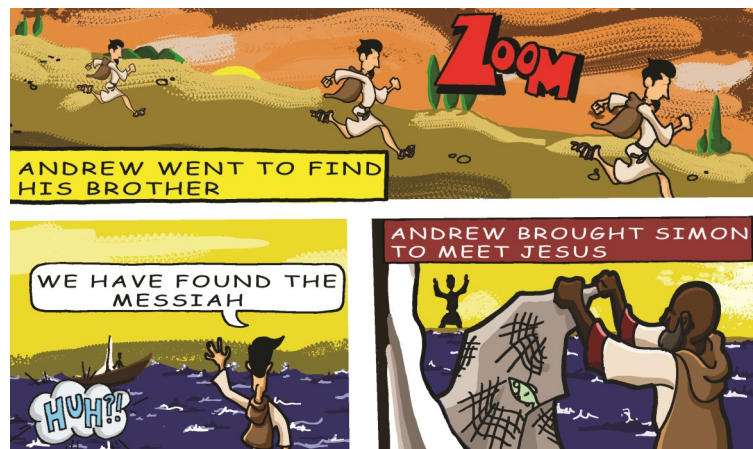
Messiah/Christ

John 1:35-42

I thought it would be a fun way to get scripture across, and tie in my religious leaders. I hope I captured their likenesses!

When I read John 1: 35-42, I felt the cover should depict how the Jewish people thought the Messiah was going to save Israel from Roman occupation...As you read the following pages of the comic, it shows that Jesus was the Lamb of God and not the warrior they expected.

Joe Magana



Study #2: Savior

1 John 4:7-16

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

Scripture Summary:

In this letter John hopes to encourage the believers to live a life consistent with fellowship with Christ. John encourages the believers to love one another—imitating the love God shows the believers. John discusses ways in which we know what God's love is versus the sin of Satan. We cannot practice God's love and be sinners. When we practice sin we are of the devil. Further, John explains that the believers must also be aware of false prophets. Testing whether a spirit is of God or not enables the believers to recognize God's love. For God is a living breathing love that dwells within the believer. Because of God's incredible love for us, Jesus was chosen to die in our place. Jesus, Savior, the innocent Son of the Father, took on the punishment of sin we rightly deserved.

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. What is the definition of “savior/Savior?”
2. Throughout Israel’s history God’s people had experienced many “saviors.” Can you think of any? In what ways can they be compared to Jesus?

Interpretation Questions:

1. What does 1 John 4:10 tell us about God’s love?
2. What does the term “atonement” mean?
3. In Leviticus 16 we see God’s instructions to Moses as to how Israel was to “atone” for their sin through a series of sacrifices. Compare and contrast the differences in the sacrifices discussed in Leviticus 16 versus verse 10.
4. There are several definitions of Jesus’ Hebrew or Aramaic name, Yeshua, that are taken from the Hebrew verb, yasha that means “to deliver, save, or rescue. Read Matthew 1:21, what reason does the angel give Joseph for naming the baby Jesus?
5. In 1 John 4:14, John states that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Read John 1:29 and Romans 5:9. How and what does Jesus do for the believer as the Savior of the world?

Life Application Questions:

1. How does our persevering in love for others make His Word real in our lives until the day He returns?

2. The death and resurrection of our Savior means being saved from eternal death on the Day of Judgment. In the meantime, our hope of receiving His salvation lies in what? Read Romans 3:23-25.

3. Read 1 John 4:11-14. Jesus gives us instruction on how to make His Word real in our lives while we await His glorious return. What should be our response to God's love?

4. How does God abide in you? What can you do this week to love more?



Savior

1 John 4:7-16

I took this photograph at The Huntington Library in the Chinese Garden. The shot was made from behind a waterfall. The photo captured the flowing water and made me think of the Living Water that Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman at the well in John Chapter 4. In this week's scripture we are examining Jesus the Savior. Verse 9 says that God sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. Verse 12 says God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. God sent his son to be the Savior of the world (v14). It struck me that as the Savior of the world, he must dwell in us. That is how we are saved. We have the Living Water dwelling in us (John 7:38). Like the ever flowing water in the waterfall, Jesus is alive and moving—living in and through us. Hallelujah!

Serena Griffith

Study #3: Son of God

Mark 1:1-12

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way”—
³ “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”*

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.

Scripture Background:

The gospel of Mark opens differently from the other gospels. Mark immediately cites Isaiah and then presents John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. It would appear that Mark is intent on establishing a specific principle in regard to identifying who Jesus was.

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. When you think of John the Baptist, what visually comes to mind?
2. When you talk or think about Jesus, do you use the title "Son of God?"

Interpretation Questions:

1. Why would Mark begin with the quotation from Isaiah? What does this tell us about who Mark felt John the Baptist was, and about his authority?
2. Why was John baptizing? Who gave him the authority to do this, and for what purpose?
3. Why would Jesus need to be baptized if He was without sin?

Life Application Questions:

1. Whether you were baptized as an adult or infant, does this passage remind you of the Son of God?

2. Considering the Son of God was baptized as you were, how does it affect your daily walk with Christ?

3. To what extent do we need both the physical and spiritual aspects of baptism in our daily lives? Is this only a one-time event, or is there a sense in which baptism is a continual experience? Or is it both?

4. It is awe-inspiring to consider the name “Son of God” whom John describes as “mightier than I.” How can you daily honor the “Son of God?”



Son of God

Mark 1:1-12

I put the sun and the clouds in the picture because I like sunny days and happy things in the pictures. I put the bird into it because it reminds me of when Jesus dies and the plant in the bird's mouth represents new life.

Lusineh Nasrollahi

Study #4: Son of Man

Mark 14.53-65

They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. ⁵⁴ Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

⁵⁵ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. ⁵⁶ Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

⁵⁷ Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹ Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³ The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. ⁶⁴ “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death. ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

Scripture Summary:

Jesus' ministry is coming to an end. He has given strict instruction for preparation for the Passover meal. Jesus has what we now call “The Last Supper” with his disciples. During the meal Jesus reveals what is coming, that one of them will betray him. He has communion with the disciples and he lets Peter know that he too will turn against Jesus by denying Him three times. All of this foretelling of the future comes to fruition in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is betrayed and arrested. Now he stands before the Sanhedrin.

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. As a society, we speak everywhere we go. Our world is filled with technology and social media, it never stops speaking through words, pictures and videos. Background music follows us everywhere. Jesus gave us an example of keeping quiet at times and of speaking at other times. The silence of Jesus recalls to our minds God's Word of Isaiah 53:7 that the Messiah had to be a silent lamb.

In what situations have you spoken out or kept silent?

Interpretation Questions:

1. Mark, in his writings, removes doubt as to who Jesus is. Jesus held his silence in this unlawfully convened court and they threw themselves into a frenzy trying to incriminate him. In desperation he is finally asked if he was the promised Messiah and Jesus answers "I am." What does that tell us of Jesus' character?

2. Mark 14:54 states that Peter followed at a distance. Knowing that he had earlier denied Jesus 3 times, how significant is it that Mark points out that Peter followed at a distance?

3. Why would Jesus need to be baptized if He was without sin?

4. "Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" The guards also took him over and beat him." Read Matthew 26:67 and Luke 22:63-64, what were they trying to get Jesus to do?

Life Applications Questions:

1. As Peter distanced himself from Jesus, we must take a look at our own lives. Bishop Lancelot Andrewes composed the following prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, look upon us with those eyes of thine where-with thou didst look upon Peter in the hall; that with Peter we may repent and, by the same love be forgiven; for thine mercy's sake. Amen." Consider this prayer. Share your thoughts about it.

2. What are some of your weaknesses? How has God used your weaknesses to strengthen your faith?

3. Considering all the false testimony in this scripture, how can you take care to be truthful in your everyday life?



Son of Man

Mark 14: 53-65

The Son of Man. Although conceived by the Holy Spirit, He was 100% human and was raised by Joseph and Mary. As an adult, we know He experienced grief, anger, pain and compassion. As a child, we can only assume He would have cried and fussed when teething, fallen down and skinned His knee when playing with His friends, fidgeted during lengthy worship, and learned the traditions and practices of his faith from His parents. As an adult Jesus drove out demons, as a child, He listened intently while His father said, "Before we eat, we wash our hands before we say the blessing. Here, my son, stretch out your hands and learn."

Celeste Renta

Study #5 :Lord

Luke 6: 46-49

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. ⁴⁸ That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.”

Scripture Summary:

Luke 6 starts out with Pharisees trying to catch Jesus breaking their rules. They call Him out on the disciples picking the grain, eating the grain, and healing the lame all on the Sabbath. These were actions not permissible in their misguided world. This made them more frustrated with Jesus. Jesus then chose 12 apostles and proceeded to ignore the Pharisees by challenging the masses that came to hear Him preach, to turn their world upside down and make the world right—God’s right side up!

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. When you pray, how do you address God? “Dear God”? “Dear Lord”? “Heavenly Father”? Why?
2. Were you taught to address God in a specific way? Or did your name for God evolve over time?

Interpretation Questions:

1. What do you think the crowd of people thought of Jesus at the time? Some likely thought He was the Messiah, but others a prophet. How would their view/impression of Christ at the time impact their response to His words?

2. Read the comparable passage in Matthew 7:24-27. We know that our hope of Salvation is to be built upon Jesus alone. Does Jesus use the illustration in this passage to help mankind understand they should turn to Him daily? Or only in times of storm or strife?

3. Violent rain and sweeping floods were common in the winter in this area, to the point where they could wipe out entire towns. The flood reference is all the more significant in that context. Is Jesus asking the crowd to build a strong foundation to withstand a season of turmoil? Or for a lifetime?

Life Applications Questions:

1. Have you ever “cried wolf” to the Lord? Have you called upon Him, asked for His help, but not followed through when you received the answer? Why is this our inclination?

2. In Southern California, we rarely experience severe rain and floods. But throughout the course of our lives, we do. What are some “storms” or “floods” you have experienced recently? Have you turned to the Lord during those times? Has He answered you, and have you followed?

3. How is your “foundation”? Do you seek Him only when there is a storm (if so, you’re in good company)? Or do you attempt to build your foundation on a rock, to last for eternity?



Lord

Luke 6: 46-49

Everyone enjoys hearing the Christmas story about the baby in the manger, but some get uncomfortable with the crucifixion and Christ rising again.

My depiction of Jesus, God's only Son, both God and man, takes place after Jesus ascends into heaven. He is robed in truth and righteousness and white raiment, but His scars are clearly visible. This portrays His suffering on the cross for our sins. He sacrificed His life, sinless as He was, for the sins of all mankind. His arms are outstretched to all. Jesus accepts all, loves all, welcomes all.

Ally Trepton

Study #6 :Good Shepherd

John 10: 1-15

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Scripture Summary

Shortly after miraculously healing a man blind from birth, Jesus is challenged by a group of Pharisees over the event. In this section of scripture, Jesus uses a metaphor of a sheepfold to explain His role in the world and draw contrast between Him, the messianic pretenders that had preceded Him, and the Jewish religious leadership, in general. He further develops this metaphor to illustrate how He, and only He, is set apart as our Messiah, as God with us.

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. In this scripture reading we are likened to sheep in a sheepfold. Have you ever seen a large group of sheep? Perhaps tended to by a shepherd or rounded up by a group of dogs? What do you recall from that? How do the sheep react to instruction?

2. Name some groups with which you have been involved throughout your life. To what purpose were you involved in each of them and what benefits did you receive from your involvement?

Interpretation Questions:

1. In John 10: 1-5, Jesus uses the metaphor of a sheepfold to describe the spiritual life of the community. If the sheep represent the people in the community, who do the following other participants in the metaphor represent?

a. Thieves/Bandits =

b. Shepherd(s) =

c. Gatekeeper =

2. In John 10: 7-10, Jesus continues with the sheepfold metaphor and likens Himself to the sheepfold gate. What is the significance of this claim? How does it differ from what was offered by previous messianic pretenders?

3. In John 10: 11-15, Jesus explicitly identifies His role in the metaphor the “Good Shepherd” and draws a stark contrast between Him and those that provide spiritual leadership but are not truly committed to the well-being of the people. How is the Good Shepherd different from the hired hand in the metaphor?

4. How does being likened to a sheep make you feel? Are you offended by this comparison or can you see some qualities in sheep that we humans share?

Life Applications Questions:

1. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep and knows you, individually. He will care for and provide for us. It is our responsibility to heed His call. With this in mind, what can you do this week to follow Jesus’ call for you? List three specific actions you can take.

2. Sometimes sheep can be led astray or, simply, wander off from the flock. What aspects of your current behavior reflect your “straying” away from following Jesus’ call? List three aspects and pray for Jesus’ help with correcting them.

3. Read Psalm 23 in addition to the description of the Good Shepherd in this scripture reading. As a “sheep” in the sheepfold, what role does the Good Shepherd play in your life and how does He provide for you?

4. While we can identify with sheep in a sheepfold in terms of our spiritual needs and dependence on the Good Shepherd for salvation, it is easy to “get in our own way” when it comes to surrendering to and becoming completely subservient to God because of our ego and cultural conditioning against and disdain for obedience to another.

5. Closely examine your feelings about becoming wholly obedient to another—any other, God or otherwise, and consider what might be in store for you in terms of spiritual growth, sense of purpose, and general well-being IF you can be brave enough to overcome your inability to truly give your life over to Jesus Christ.



Good Shepherd

John 10:1-15

For my Lent art piece, I went with an impressionist style acrylic painting. Impressionist is not usually my form of painting, but I wanted to be vague about Jesus being our shepherd. The painting could be literal or cosmic or spiritual. I won't tell you exactly what Jesus looks like, you will have to "fill in the blanks" between the four paint brush strokes of an ambiguous face. Various vibrant colors were used to rouse the creative interpretation side of the viewer.

Stephanie Deach-Foyle

Study #7: King of Israel

John 12:12-19

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

¹⁴ *Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:*

¹⁵ *“Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”*

¹⁶ *At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.*

¹⁷ *Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸ Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”*

Scripture Summary:

Jesus has been staying in Ephraim with the disciples, but it is now Passover and they head to Jerusalem along with all the other Hebrews. Mary has honored and worshipped Jesus using expensive perfume and her hair to wash Jesus’ feet. News of Jesus’ resurrection of Lazarus has fueled more than just fear and anger of the Chief Priests and Pharisees. It has caused a frenzy among the people. Everyone wants to see Jesus and Lazarus. They want to worship the man that can raise the dead and they want to see that Lazarus really is alive. Jesus’ popularity is at an all-time high. This makes the Priests and Pharisees decide that now is the time to arrest Jesus and put an end to Jesus’ reign.

Ice Breakers Questions:

1. When you hear the word “king,” what words, symbols, or images come to mind?
2. What are characteristics a good king should possess?

Interpretation Questions:

1. Great crowds of people from all over saw Jesus and heard of the miraculous things He had done, and they believed he was the long-expected King, the Messiah, the King of Israel. In this moment, what do you think is going on in the minds of the Israelites? What about in the minds of the Pharisees?
2. This passage also refers to Old Testament scriptures. Read Psalms 118:26 and Zechariah 9:9. Why are these references important?
3. In this passage, the crowd shouts “Hosanna,” meaning “save”, or salvation. Why do they shout this? What do they think they need to be saved from?
4. The crowd used the palm branches for two reasons. Palm trees and branches are viewed as a symbol of victory and triumph. Palm branches are also used in the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles (Leviticus 23:40, Nehemiah 8:15). What does this say about how the crowd felt toward Jesus? What does the crowd expect from Jesus?

Life Applications Questions:

1. In which ways were and are Jesus' role as King different than what the Jews in that day were expecting? How is Jesus being King in your life?

2. Read Matthew 20: 25-28. How are you living out this kingdom? Where in your life do you need to put others first?

3. How do you see Jesus? Do you ever find yourself praising Him, looking for something in return, like the crowd that welcomed Jesus in this passage?

King of Israel

John 12:12-19

The Revealed King was written from the perspective of a small child caravanning with his family to Jerusalem for Passover. The family happened to be in the same caravan as Jesus where stories of the miracles He had performed could be overheard. Many people were heard claiming that he was a fake while others were already followers. But after Jesus had stopped at the house of Lazarus and had raised him from the dead, the child was a witness to this and became a believer.

Stephen Deichler

The Revealed King Poem by Stephen Deichler

Journeying to a festival
With my family and our friends.
We wandered for days with this crowd
Whose people varied with no ends.

Now my mind and life has been changed
Things He's done are not trivial
They prove to me, once and for all
That He is the King of Israel.

Men and women, the young and old.
Stories were being told of one.
A magician of sorts, or so
I heard in one conversation.

Some say that he's not real, a fake.
Others say that he's the true deal.
Healing the sick? Curing the blind?
I just don't know if he is real.

Then along the way we had stopped.
We stopped at a dead man's house!
Why are we here? What could we do?
But Jesus caused the dead to rouse.

John 12: 12-19

The creator of the piece wishes to remain anonymous.



About Our Artists

Joe Magana:

My family has been with First Pres for 7 years, with a break in between (moved to Rancho Cucamonga). I've been drawing animation based art (cartooning) all my life. No formal training, just advice from close friends in the industry. I focus my talent on retirement caricatures and T shirt designs for members of my department; strictly a hobby.

Joe Louis Magana, 49, Married to Helen and blessed with four children; Andrew, Emily, Ryan and Maya. Born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, and works for the Los Angeles City Fire Department as a Fire Captain. I've been involved with Boy Scouts, coached Youth Baseball, been an avid Volleyball fan, played WOW, a watcher of English Television Dramas and did I forget to mention I take Karate. All this has been in support of my children's activities as well as my wife's. So my fun fact is that I'm just a family man.

Serena Griffith

I've been attending First Pres for about 12 years. I am not really a photographer. I like the medium and am always in awe of others in my midst that can take an amazing photo. Every now and then I see something that really strikes me. This shot was one such instant. I assume it's more divine intervention rather than my skill with a camera lens! When I became a member of this church, I immediately got involved in the small group ministry. I've been helping to write the Lent Study every year, and every year, I am in awe of the people who participate in its production and how well they use their spiritual gifts for our congregation. I have been leading the same small group these many years as well. I continue to be showered with blessings from them and God as we seek to strengthen our walks with Christ together.

Lusineh Nasrollahi

Lusineh was introduced to First Pres when she joined the Mommy and Me class six years ago. She became more and more in touch with the church as she continued on to the preschool program and as her family joined MOPS. Lusineh joined Carpenters' Union when she was 5 years old, and this involvement was central in really bringing our family closer to the church. As Lusineh continued to the elementary division of the church's school, we, as a family, decided to officially join the church, becoming members, about a year ago. Lusineh has been experimenting with multimedia art on a regular basis for 3 years now. She started when she was a kindergartener. Fun fact "I love to make people laugh."

Celeste Renta

I've been with First Pres since 2015. I've enjoyed working with colored pencil on and off for a few years now, but have only recently begun to learn its range and possibilities. I've limited myself to still life objects, so this was a challenge for me. Something fun about myself? I lived in Australia for two years from 1979 to 1981. Another is that even though Michael and I were married in 2001, we were engaged in 1968.

Ally Treptow

I first started attending First Pres. In 1985 when I married and moved to Granada Hills. I have been attending ever since.

All my life I have wanted to paint, but was totally immersed in music and never found the time. I became a mother in 1989 and took care of my mother and uncle until 2009. I also went back to school and got my second master's degree. I have always been a busy person. I was finally slowed down by a total knee replacement, and retirement, So I decided to take an art class at the Rinaldi adult center. I had a wonderful teacher and she taught me the rudiments of water color. I began painting and found I enjoyed it immensely. It was mental therapy for me and relaxing. I've been at it ever since.

My father painted in oils. I remember the smell of the linseed oil aromas coming from the basement where he did his painting. He also suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. From taking mega-doses of cortisone he developed severe osteoporosis. He sneezed the night before my brother's wedding and severed his spinal cord. For the last 11 years of his life he was paralyzed from the neck down. He continued painting but with the paintbrush in his mouth. My dad inspired me not only through his love of art, but through his tremendous faith and love of the Lord Jesus.

Stephanie Deach-Foyle

I first started making art with acrylic paint so it was fun to come back to my roots as an artist for this project. I graduated from a visual effects school in Hollywood called Gnomon last year where I specialize in 3D animation and effects. At Gnomon I also learned other art forms such as sculpting, watercolor, graphic design, games, editing, photography, and a lot more. I currently focus on graphic design here at First Pres; I'm a bit of a "jack of all trades, master of none."

I've been with First Pres since birth. My grandparents were Elders and Deacons here, my parents are Deacons and employees here, and now I am also a Deacon and an employee here. I was the first person Pastor Jim baptized as a baby and then officiated my marriage many years later.

Stephen Deichler

I came to First Presbyterian Church of Granada Hills for the first time in late 2004 after the passing of my step-mom to support my dad. I had no intent at the time of becoming part of a church family, but unknowingly stepped into my new family. I have been actively writing poetry since the summer of 2009 with the intent of someday publishing a book of poetry. Fun fact about me... Many people here know me as a roofer. But within my 30+ year career as a roofer I did have a 3 – 4 year hiatus during which I worked as a limo driver for the entertainment industry.