



WEEK 41 – STUDY QUESTIONS

10/14 – 10/21

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JOHN 1
.....Read John 1:1-18 (*pg.1352*).

- **Why do you think Jesus is called “the Word”?**
- **What do we learn about Jesus in the opening verses (vv.1-5) of this chapter?**

Verse 14 says that “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- **What’s so significant about the fact that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us?**
- **What does it mean to “see” Jesus? What does it mean that “we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son...full of grace and truth”?**
- **What are the differences between how we see God’s glory and what Israel saw of God (*read Exodus 24:15-18, [pg.126]*)?**
- **John 1:16 uses the phrase “grace upon grace” or, literally, “grace that replaces grace.” How was the Old Testament law evidence of God’s grace?**
- **What kind of grace do we as believers have now?**
- **The “Word” is the unlimited grace of God in Jesus Christ. How can knowing that affect the way you read God’s written word and pray?**
- **What are the benefits of being adopted by God? Why is his offer such a magnanimous blessing? If we are God’s children, how should we live?**



WEEK 42 – STUDY QUESTIONS

10/21 – 10/28

MATTHEW 5-7

Read Matthew 5:1-16 (*pg.1381-82*).

Try to put yourself in the Israelites' place: All of their lives, they had studied the Laws recorded in the Old Testament. Yet, their national history was one of failure to keep God's Law. They were looking for a Savior—waiting for their promised Messiah to come. Yet many of them were looking for an earthly savior to rescue them from the Romans and set up his kingdom on earth in Jerusalem.

- **How does your understanding of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount change or deepen when you consider it through the Israelites' ears? What is so shocking about this sermon?**
- **List and explain/discuss the characteristics of Kingdom members. How does this list contrast all kingdoms set up by humans on earth?**
- **How should the realization that Jesus will one day bring in his new kingdom in all its glory change the way you live?**

Read Matthew 5:17-20

- **What did Jesus mean when he said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them"?**
- **What did Jesus mean when he said: "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven"?**
- **How are we, like the Israelites, tempted to look for a law to keep instead of a Savior to trust? How does having a Savior to trust change everything?**
- **How have your awareness of your own sin and the death of God's Messiah for the sake of your salvation developed from our study of the Old Testament?**

Read Matthew 7:1-5 (*pg.1385*)

- **Does Jesus condemn judgment as a whole, or judgment that doesn't start in our own hearts regarding our own life? Is there a place for judging?**
- **What happens to our attitudes when we focus on our own shortcomings before trying to help others? How can these verses be used as a way out of appropriately speaking truth into a friend's life?**



WEEK 43 – STUDY QUESTIONS

10/28 – 11/4

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MATTHEW 13
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When a very large crowd approached Jesus, he drifted out in a boat on the lake and began to teach them about the kingdom of heaven through the use of parables—a practical story that illustrates spiritual truth. When his disciples inquired as to why he was teaching the curious crowd with seemingly confusing stories, Jesus responded that the parables revealed God’s truth, by God’s mercy, to those who believed that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah. To those who rejected God’s truth about Christ, the parables continued to hide the truth as part of God’s judgment for their denial.

Read “The Parable of the Sower” – Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (*pg.1394-95*).

- **In the parable of the sower, Jesus explained that the sower was Christ, the seed was the message of salvation, and the soil was the human heart. What truths are revealed to us concerning the sower, the seed, and the soil?**
- **What are some illustrations/examples of these differing types of soil: the path, the rocky ground, the thorny ground, the good soil?**
- **Which type of soil represents true believers? Why is the third type of soil not a good representation of a true believer?**
- **How can we tell which soil best represents our own hearts?**
- **How does this parable encourage us to continue preaching the gospel, sowing seeds of salvation, even when we are discouraged at the results?**

Read “The Parable of the Weeds” – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (*pg.1395-96*).

- **How should we respond to the truth that many people are deceived in their own beliefs that they are followers of Christ?**
- **What aspects of our lives can we evaluate, or encourage others to evaluate, to determine if we are counterfeit believers (unbelievers)?**
- **What does it reveal about our hearts if we are unmoved by the reality of impending and terrifying condemnation for those who do not know Christ at judgment?**



WEEK 44 – STUDY QUESTIONS

11/4 – 11/11

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JOHN 11
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Read John 11:1-16 (*pg. 1433-44*).

- **Why did Jesus perform this miracle? What does it mean to “glorify” God?**
- **How does a value of God’s glory affect our view of suffering, how we pray, and everything else we do in life?**
- **The disciples were fearful that the Jewish leaders would try to kill Jesus and that identification with him would cost their lives. Why would a Christ-follower be fearful of the cost of following Jesus? How can a Christian address this fear?**

Read John 11:17-37.

- **Jesus responds to the two sisters in two very different ways. How did he respond to Martha? How did he respond to Mary?**
- **What do you think we can learn about Jesus from these two different responses?**
- **Here we also see people who were skeptical of Jesus, questioning both his ability to heal and his care for Lazarus. Why would an unbeliever today be skeptical of Jesus? Why would a Christian today be disillusioned or feel let down by God?**
- **How can we minister to unbelieving skeptics? How can we minister to disillusioned believers?**

Read John 11:38-53.

- **The phrase translated “deeply moved” in the NIV (vv. 33 and 38) literally means “to snort with anger, as of horses”; “to be painfully moved”; “to express indignation against.” Why do you think this word is used here?**
- **How do we see the gospel in this story?**
- **What does it mean that Jesus is the “resurrection and the life?” How should this truth shape our Christian life?**



WEEK 45 – STUDY QUESTIONS

11/11 – 11/18

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MATTHEW 25
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Read Matthew 25:1-13 (*pg.1451-52*).

- **How does the reality of Christ's return affect the way you think and feel right now? How would you live differently today if you knew Jesus would return tonight?**
- **What does it look like for a believer to keep watch for Christ coming as a thief in the night?**
- **How can "keeping watch" be taken to improper excesses?**
- **Have you ever been part of a worship gathering during which you felt affection for Christ and were glad to be a part of a confession of faith—yet you found yourself falling away only days later? Why do you think this falling away happens?**
- **What can we do to prepare our hearts to persevere?**

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

- **Why do you think the first two servants acted as they did, earning money for their master, while the third servant simply buried his money?**
- **What talents—or resources—has God given you? What are you doing with them? Could you be doing more for the kingdom with what God has given you?**
- **What is your heart towards God like if you bury your talents?**

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

- **In the parable of the sheep and the goats, who can you most honestly identify with, and why? What would sacrificial love and service to brothers and sisters in your city look like? What about others around the world?**
- **Why is it important to feel the weight of the two eternal destinations that one of which awaits all people? With whom might the Lord be leading you to pray for and share the gospel this week?**

WEEK 46 – STUDY QUESTIONS

11/18 – 11/25

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LUKE 23
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The beauty of the gospel cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the incredible tension between a holy God and a sinful human race. God is utterly and unimaginably holy. He is ultimately sovereign and completely righteous. He is just and therefore despises sin; he cannot allow it to go unjudged, lest his very character be put at risk. His wrath against sin is always inevitable and just. Yet, at the same time, he is loving and desires to show his love to a sinful world. This sinful world is wicked at its core, even falsely judging, crucifying, and deserting God's only Son. The ultimate tension of the gospel, then, is "How can a righteous and just God be loving to rebellious sinners who are rightfully due his wrath?" The answer to that question lies in the humble actions of Christ, the Savior. As sinners, we deserve death, but Christ took that death sentence upon himself. As a holy and perfect, Jesus took our sin and judgment upon himself, which separated him from the Father. He appeased the rightful wrath of God on our behalf through his crucifixion, fully paying the price for sin. As a result, the righteous Father can respond lovingly to us and reconcile us to himself forever as friends.

Read Luke 23:32-46 (pg.1474-75, from "JESUS IS CRUCIFIED" to "JESUS DIES").

- **How does our human understanding of wrath and sin cause us to question or see God's wrath as problematic? What does that say about our understanding of his holiness?**
- **Why can't the gospel be fully grasped without an understanding of the holiness of God?**
- **How can we end up making the cross all about us instead of primarily about God?**
- **Romans 3:25-26 says that God put forth his Son "as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith . . . to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." How does a realization that the cross was primarily to show the righteousness of God lead us to a God-centered view of the gospel?**
- **How can we clearly communicate the role of Christ's crucifixion in relationship to the Father's holiness when we present the gospel to others?**
- **Who can you relate to the most in the text, the Jewish leaders, the Roman leaders, the soldiers, the crowds, or the disciples? Why?**
- **What was Christ's attitude toward his impending crucifixion? How did He approach the pain that He knew was coming? What led him to respond the way He did?**
- **How does the realization that the cross was predominantly a spiritual suffering over a physical suffering affect the way that we view the Crucifixion?**
- **How should this truth impact the way that we share the gospel and the way we view spiritual separation from the Father?**
- **Describe how the crucifixion of Christ speaks to the holiness and loving character of God.**
- **How should this affect the way we respond to God's invitation to come into his presence?**



WEEK 47 – STUDY QUESTIONS

11/25 – 12/2

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1 CORINTHIANS 2
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Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (*pg.1533*).

- **What is the goal and motive of Christian preaching?**
- **What should we anticipate happening when we preach or when we listen to others preach?**
- **How does Paul describe his own preaching? Do you let your weakness stop you from serving God?**
- **If so, what does that reveal about what you think about God's power? How can you respond the next time you feel weak, and how can you encourage others when they feel weak?**

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 (*pg.1533-34*).

- **Define "worldly wisdom." What does worldly wisdom have to say about dating, marriage, divorce, sex, homosexuality, parenting, work, politics, etc.?**
- **How is the cross of Christ the pinnacle of all true wisdom?**
- **Knowing the wisdom of God is based on spiritual submission, laying down your pride and submitting your will to God. Why is submission such a struggle for us?**
- **What does it mean to have the "mind of Christ"? How do we participate in the Spirit's work of renewing our minds?**

WEEK 48 – STUDY QUESTIONS

12/2 – 12/9

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2 CORINTHIANS 8-9
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A research project at Stanford indicated that if all church members in America gave at least 10% of their income, in two years they could eliminate global starvation/malnutrition, provide education to every child on earth, and provide universal access to clean water and sanitation. This does not even address the dent that could be made in reaching the 6000+ people groups in the world who do not have access to the gospel.

- **Why do you think the majority of *Christians* do not give to the church?**

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul was encouraging the wealthy Corinthian church to give to the offering he was collecting for the struggling Jewish church. He used the example of the Macedonian church, which was poor but gave generously to their fellow believers.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 and 9:6-15 (pg.1556-57).

- **What are some practical principles these verses teach?**
- **The Macedonian example shows us that we should give out of an abundance of *grace* – not necessarily wealth. How does this idea go completely against the way most people view their money?**
- **How is this equation—joy from trials, and generosity from poverty—contrary to what you would expect? What motivated the Macedonians to live like this?**
- **God doesn't force us to give; he frees us to give. Why do you think people sometimes feel the opposite? What is the root problem of that thinking?**
- **Here at ECC, the tithe is *not* our standard for giving; Christ is. How does Christ's sacrifice motivate our giving? How does his sacrifice determine how we give?**
- **Often, we live like unbelievers in the ways we spend our money, making our church attendance the only real, significant difference between our lives and theirs. Likewise, unbelievers often give to causes such as world hunger, clean water, disaster relief, etc. How should the giving of Christ-followers differentiate from the giving of unbelievers?**
- **What of your possessions needs to be shared, sold, or sacrificed for the glory of Christ?**



WEEK 49 – STUDY QUESTIONS

12/9 – 12/16

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COLOSSIANS 1-2
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When Paul wrote his letter to the church at Colosse, he had never even visited that group of people, but he heard that false doctrine had crept into the church, and he wanted to correct their wrong thinking. Teachers in the church weren't necessarily denying Christ, but they were denying his sufficiency and supremacy by telling people to avoid certain foods and drinks, to observe certain days and festivals, and to exalt angels and deny the body. Paul refuted the false teacher's errors by exalting Christ, instead of a point-by-point refutation of their errors.

Read Colossians 1:24-2:5 (pg.1597-98).

- **The false teachers in today's passage were guilty of trying to add to Christ's supremacy for salvation. Though we might not be as blatant as that, what rules or regulations does today's church subtly place on people?**
- **Are their things you thought you had to do beyond trusting in Christ to receive salvation when you were younger?**
- **The Colossian error was that they had devised all sorts of doctrines and ideas around days and angels and festivals and foods; the heretics attempted to glorify other things besides Christ. How are we tempted to glorify other things besides Christ even within the Church?**
- **Why is it impossible to pursue Christ apart from his Word?**
- **What excuses do people offer for not pursuing spending time in God's Word or in biblical training?**
- **How is your worship fueled by spending time in God's Word?**
- **Colossians 1:28 says : "He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." How does the truth that we are to be preparing each other to meet God change the way you view your responsibility to your brothers and sisters in the church?**

Read Colossians 2:9-15.

- **What stands out to you the most about this passage?**
- **How does this way of thinking—a keen awareness of who Christ is and all we have in him—refute false teaching and change our daily life?**



WEEK 50 – STUDY QUESTIONS

12/16 – 12/23

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JAMES 1-2
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Read James 1:26-27 (*pg.1625-26*).

- **How can a person’s speech give witness to or witness against his or her faith in God?**
- **In what ways can we fake a changed heart with our speech?**
- **In verse 27, the word “care” or “look after” to “care” means more than bringing food or buying clothes, but it is investing your life in caring for a person. What needs characterized the widows and orphans?**
- **Who are the widows and orphans in our community? What holds us back the most from investing in the care of others?**

Read James 2:1-13.

- **What is the primary issue addressed in verse 1? How is showing favoritism towards the wealthy an expression of being influenced by the world?**
- **How does showing favoritism disrespect both man and God?**
- **What does mercy in the life of a believer demonstrate about God?**
- **How does our view of Christ, and experiencing his grace, affect how we view others?**
- **How is our favoritism toward others most prominently manifested?**
- **If we are unwilling to show mercy to others, what does that lack of action reveal about our experience of God’s mercy?**
- **In Romans 13:8-10 we read that “love is the fulfillment of the law.” How can we, both as individuals and as a church community, demonstrate the love of God in our neighborhood, community, country, and world?**



WEEK 51 – STUDY QUESTIONS

12/23 – 12/30

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1 JOHN 2-3
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Read 1 John 2:29-3:10 (pg.1658-9)

- **What are we to be doing while we wait for Christ to return?**
- **How do believers become like Christ now and see Christ now—before his return?**
- **Why do you think many believers don't live as though Christ is returning soon?**
- **How did John describe sin in these verses? How does our culture and even many in the church today tend to view sin? Is it usually a biblical perspective?**
- **Why was Jesus the only one who was able to destroy the work of the devil?**
- **How are Christ-followers supposed to react to sin?**
- **In chapter 1 verse 8, John wrote that *"if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."* Knowing that he earlier referred to the surety that believers would sin, what kind of sin does he focus on in these verses?**
- **How does conscious, persistent sin contradict with a truly repentant heart?**
- **How are children of God and children of the devil to be identified? In what ways should these two types of "children" differ from one another?**
- **How is the life of a believer changed when he seriously considers the purpose of Jesus' coming to earth?**