

Study Guide for the Week of October 7, 2007

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. For 2007 the Study Guide is designed to help you read through the New Testament in a year. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday, October 8. Read John 18:19-38 in the New Testament. Jesus before Annas...Jesus is now face to face with the most powerful man in Israel. This is also the man most monetarily effected by Jesus' disruption of the traders in the temple courts. Jesus' statements in his own defense actually point to justice issues regarding the Jewish laws about a fair trial. Then the scene switches to Peter and his denial. As you think about Peter's shortcomings on this side of the cross, remember his courage on the other side of the resurrection. How are we like Peter in both regards? Jesus is then led to the Roman governor, who is essential in the Jewish leaders' plans for Jesus removal.

Tuesday, October 9. Read John 18:38-19:16 in the New Testament. Take some time with this reading today. Read it again, slowly. Let the images soak in. Roman flogging was expertly administered to take a man within an inch of his life. Flesh is ripped open. Bones are exposed. Think of the mockery of a king as they place a robe on his ripped flesh and a crown that produces blood on his head. Do you read some sympathy from Pilate in this version? It even says that short of turning the crowd against himself, he tried to set Jesus free. What do you think of the irony of the chief priests (representative of God, who is the rightful king of Israel) saying that Caesar is their king?

Wednesday, October 10. Read John 19:16-42 in the New Testament. Again, read this passage through a second time. Don't avoid the painful images, John wants us to soak them into our mind and remember the kind of sacrifice Jesus makes for us. In John's version, Jesus does not say, "My God, why have you forsaken me?", but read Psalm 22 in the Old Testament (quoted in verse 24).

Thursday, October 11. Read John 20:1-18 in the New Testament. Carefully go through the sequence of discovery and belief. Mary, John, & then Peter discover the empty tomb. Who does John record as believing first? Why do you think that Jesus chose to first reveal himself to Mary? What did Peter and John do with their discovery? What did Mary do with her news?

Friday, October 12. Read John 20:19-31 in the New Testament. Later Jesus appears to all the disciples at one time (except Thomas) and gives them his Spirit. In Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew, the same word is used for wind, breath or spirit. So Jesus breathes his spirit into his followers. Notice what Jesus says to Thomas about future followers. And then John's purpose for writing this gospel is found in verse 31.

Saturday, October 13. Read John 21 in the New Testament. What a beautiful story. Some call it the reinstatement of Peter. Maybe it could also be called the empowerment of Peter. There is one theme present in this passage that is very consistent with the example and teachings of Jesus before the cross...that to love others is to love him. The focus is always toward ministering to others. Look for opportunities today to express love to Jesus by taking care of someone else's needs.

Sunday, October 14. Read the First Letter of John, chapter 1 in the New Testament. John was writing this book to a church that was struggling with an early Christian heresy called gnosticism. This was a mutation of the gospel that believed that one had to be taught a secret knowledge (not grace) to get into heaven. They believed that they were spiritually superior people of the "light". Now read 1 Jn 1 and see what John is saying about light and darkness, sin and forgiveness, and the separation of faith, knowledge and action. What inconsistencies do you have between your belief and your action?