LIFE GROUP
STUDY GUIDE

THE SERIES AT A GLANCE

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WALKING WITH JESUS

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each session is designed for 75–90 minutes and follows the same six-part rhythm: Opening, From Sunday, Into the Word, Going Deeper, The Practice, and Prayer. Timing suggestions are included, but treat them as a framework, not a straitjacket. If your group gets into a rich conversation, stay there.

The guide is built to work whether or not everyone attended the Sunday sermon. A brief bridge from the message is included each week, but the discussion stands on its own. Unchurched guests are welcome as the opening questions are designed to include anyone. Over eleven weeks we will watch Jesus closely. See his hands, his eyes, his knees, his voice, his feet, his face, and finally his wounds. “Watch Jesus closely. The body of Jesus reveals the heart of God.” Encourage your group to notice, each week, what a specific, physical detail about Jesus teaches us about the Father.

To know Christ, begins by walking with the incarnate Jesus. As we spend time walking with him, we will be made more like him and thus be prepared to make him known as we walk in this world. The poem of Doreen Kostynuik captures our journey well.

> Follow Jesus around the Scriptures
> Be an observer
> Watch how he looks
> Watch how he touches
> Watch how he is present to people
> Watch how he prays and takes time out
> Let him look at you
> Let him touch you
> Let him hold you
> Let him heal you
> Let him be present to you
> Then become the look
> Become the touch
> Become the presence.

Week 1: God with Skin On

Key Passage: John 1:1–5, 14–18

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Think of someone whose presence made an idea real to you; not just told you about it, but showed you. What was it like to encounter the truth in a person instead of only in words?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

This week's message opened the series in John 1: “the Word became flesh.” God did not send a memo or a philosophy; he sent a person. Before we can watch Jesus's hands, eyes, knees, and feet in the weeks ahead, we have to reckon with the strangeness and the mercy of the incarnation itself: God, with skin on, moving into the neighborhood.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side, has made him known.” John 1:1, 14, 18

1. John doesn't begin with Bethlehem, but he begins with eternity: “in the beginning was the Word.” Why does John insist on starting there before he ever gets to flesh and blood?

2. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” could be translated “pitched his tent among us”. This echoes the tabernacle, where animal skins on poles became sanctuary through the manifest presence of God. What does that image add to how you think about the incarnation?

3. Verse 18 says no one has ever seen God, but Jesus has made him known. If watching Jesus really is how we come to know the Father, what does that suggest about how carefully we should pay attention to him this fall?

4. John says, “we have seen his glory... full of grace and truth.” Grace and truth can feel like they pull in opposite directions. How does Jesus hold both together?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. If someone asked you, “What is God like?” would your honest answer come more from Scripture, from your experience of church, or from watching the actual person of Jesus? What's the gap, if any?

2. God did not stay at a safe distance to communicate with us. The eternal Son entered a body as the person of Jesus. Then he did not live at a distance but touched people, who were considered untouchable. He entered neighborhoods and houses that were forbidden to a “righteous” Jew. Where in your life have you kept God, or people, at a safe, abstract distance rather than letting them get close?

3. This series will spend eleven weeks watching specific, physical things about Jesus — his hands, his eyes, his knees, his feet. What is one thing you hope to see more clearly about him by the time we finish?

4. “Full of grace and truth,” which of those two do you find easier to extend to other people? Which do you need more of from others right now?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

This week, read John 1:1–18 slowly, once a day, in a posture of attention rather than analysis.

Notice one phrase that stops you; not to explain it, just to sit with it.
Bring what you noticed to group next week.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Ask God to make the real Jesus, and not an idea about him, the center of your attention this fall. Pray that watching him closely would actually change how you see the Father.
Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying in prayer into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 2: Gentle and Strong Hands

Key Passage: Mark 1:40–42

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Describe a time when someone's touch- whether a hug, a hand on your shoulder, a doctor's exam- communicated something words couldn't. What did it communicate?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Sunday's message showed Jesus's hands moving toward what everyone else avoided. A man with leprosy, untouchable by law and by fear, comes to Jesus, and Jesus does the one thing no one else would do: he reaches out and touches him. In the kingdom of God, healing begins with a touch.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“A man with leprosy came to him and begged him, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus was moved with compassion. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was clean.” Mark 1:40–42

1. Jesus could have healed the man with a word alone, as he does elsewhere. Why touch him at all, when touching a leper was ritually and physically dangerous?

2. Mark says Jesus was “moved with compassion” before he ever touched the man. What's the relationship between what Jesus felt and what Jesus did?

3. The man says “if you are willing” as if healing weren't the real question, but Jesus's willingness was. What does that tell us about what the man expected from God?

4. “I am willing.” A simple response to reverse a life of exclusion. Why do you think Mark preserves this exact phrase?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. Who in your life is “untouchable” right now; someone you'd rather help from a distance than get close to?

2. Jesus's hands broke a purity code to restore a person. Are there rules or reputations you protect that keep you from getting close to people who need you?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

Identify one person you've been helping “at a distance” through a gift, a text, a prayer, but not your presence.

This week, close the distance: a visit, a meal, an actual conversation face to face.
Notice what changes when your hands, not just your help, show up.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Ask for Jesus's kind of hands. Hands willing to move toward what others avoid.
Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 3: Eyes of Compassion

Key Passage: Mark 10:17-22

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Has anyone ever looked at you in a way that made you feel truly seen, not just observed, but known? What was that like?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Sunday looked at how Jesus's gaze exposes without shaming. A wealthy man runs to Jesus with a good question and an honest heart, and Mark tells us something remarkable: Jesus looks at him and loves him, and then tells him the one hard thing he needs to hear.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.” Mark 10:21–22

1. Mark tells us Jesus “looked at him and loved him” right before he says the hard thing that sends the man away sad. What does it mean that the hardest word Jesus ever speaks to someone comes wrapped in love, not contempt?

2. The man walks away, and Jesus lets him go without chasing him down. What does that tell us about how Jesus's love relates to a person's freedom to refuse it?

3. Later, after Peter denies Jesus three times, Luke tells us “the Lord turned and looked at Peter” (Luke 22:61). Peter was cut to the heart and wept. Compare that look to the look Jesus gives the rich man here. What's the same? What's different?

4. Both stories involve someone who fails: one who can't let go of wealth, one who can't hold his nerve. Neither look from Jesus includes shame. What does it look like to see someone's failure clearly and still love them?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. When have you felt exposed by God? A moment when he saw something true about you, and yet you experienced that as love rather than condemnation?

2. Is there someone whose failure you find it hard to look at without contempt creeping in? What would Jesus's kind of look toward them actually require of you?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

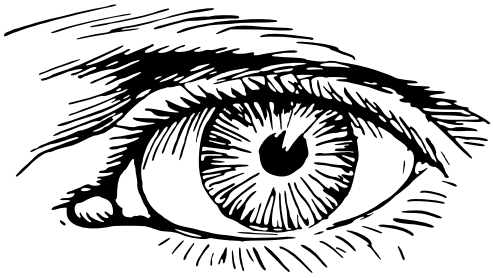
This week, practice really looking at people - full attention, no phone, no rehearsing what you'll say next.

Notice what changes in the conversation when you actually see them.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Ask for eyes like Jesus's that see truth without shame, and love without illusion.
Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.



Week 4: Worn Knees (Prayer)

Key Passage: Mark 14:32-42

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Where do you do your best praying? What usually gets in the way of your conversation with God?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

This week's message traced the strength of Jesus's ministry back to a hidden place: the garden of Gethsemane. Crowds pressed in on Jesus constantly, yet he repeatedly withdrew to pray. Power in public was born from surrender in private. On the night before the cross, that surrender came at the deepest possible cost.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Mark 14:35–36

1. Jesus, the Son of God, falls to the ground in anguish and asks the Father to change the plan. What does it tell us about prayer that even Jesus prayed this honestly?

2.“Abba, Father” is intimate, almost childlike language, used in the middle of the most agonizing prayer in Scripture. What does that pairing - deep trust and deep anguish, together - teach us about prayer?

3.“Not what I will, but what you will” comes after, not instead of, “take this cup from me.” Why does surrender have to go through honesty rather than around it?

4. Three times Jesus returns to find the disciples asleep. What is he asking of them, and why is it apparently so hard to give?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. When was the last time you prayed as honestly as Jesus does here by naming what you actually want before surrendering to what God wants?

2. The disciples couldn't stay awake for one hour. What keeps you from sustained, attentive prayer?

3. If your prayer life over the next season were shaped by this passage, what would have to change?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

This week, set aside ten minutes each day to pray as honestly as Jesus does in Gethsemane.

Name what you actually want. Then surrender it, in your own words: "not what I will, but what you will."

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Consider opening this week's prayer time on your knees, if you're able. Pray honestly before surrendering.

Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 5: Inviting Voice

Key Passage: Mark 1:16-20

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Whose voice, growing up, could get you to do almost anything? What made it carry that kind of authority?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Sunday looked at the voice of Jesus; a voice that carries authority yet sounds like rest to weary hearts. Fishermen leave their nets, sinners leave their shame, and the burdened find relief. The Shepherd's voice gathers a new family.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.” Mark 1:16–18

1. “At once they left their nets.” No negotiation, no reference check. What does the speed of their response tell us about the kind of voice Jesus has?

2. Jesus doesn't recruit Simon and Andrew for a new skill but he repurposes what they already know: “fish for people.” What does it look like for Jesus to call you into what you already know how to do, redirected toward a new purpose?

3. John 10 pictures Jesus as a shepherd whose sheep “know his voice.” How do you learn to recognize Jesus's voice among all the other voices competing for your attention?

4. Matthew 11:28 says Jesus's invitation sounds like rest to the weary — “Come to me, all who are weary.” How is authority and rest not a contradiction in the voice of Jesus?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. What net are you currently holding onto that Jesus might be calling you to leave?

2. Whose voice do you currently let define you more than Jesus's: a parent's, an employer's, social media's, your own inner critic's?

3. Have you ever sensed Jesus's voice specifically? Not necessarily an audible sound, but a clear inner call? What happened when you responded, or didn't?

If Jesus's voice sounds like both authority and rest, which do you need to hear from him more right now

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

This week, practice quiet long enough to listen for Jesus's voice, in Scripture, in prayer, in the stillness.

Write down anything you sense he's saying. Bring it to group.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Pray for ears to recognize the Shepherd's voice above every other voice competing for your attention.

Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying in prayer into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 6: Beautiful Feet (Missions Sunday)

Key Passage: Romans 10:14–15; Matthew 9:36–38

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Who is someone who brought you good news at exactly the right moment, whether a phone call, a letter, or a visit? What did their arrival mean to you?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

On Missions Sunday, we heard from our missions partners of Jesus moving from person to person and place to place in their mission field. Jesus continues to make himself known through a group of ordinary people learning to proclaim and demonstrate the good news of the kingdom. Paul later calls the feet of those who carry that news “beautiful.”

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“How can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ... As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”” Romans 10:14–15

1. Paul's chain of questions - call, believe, hear, preach, send - ends with feet, not mouths. Why does he land the whole argument on something as ordinary as walking somewhere?

2.“How beautiful are the feet” is a strange compliment asds feet aren't usually beautiful. What is Paul actually praising?

3. Matthew 9:36 says Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion because they were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” How does compassion, not obligation, change the way we think about going?

4. Jesus tells his disciples to “ask the Lord of the harvest” for workers before he sends any of them out. Why does sending begin with prayer rather than strategy?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. Where in the world, or in your own neighborhood, do you sense God growing your compassion for people who are “harassed and helpless”?

2. Is there a place, literal or relational, you have avoided walking toward because it would cost you comfort?

3. Our church supports missionaries who have quite literally gone to be “beautiful feet” in hard places. Who is one missionary or ministry you sense a call to pray for by name this week?

4. What would it look like for you to be someone's “beautiful feet” this week as you show up as and with good news, in person?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

This week, pray by name for a missionary or ministry your church supports.

Then take one step toward someone nearby who needs good news brought to them in person.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Pray for the harvest and for workers, and for the specific missionaries your church supports by name.

Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 7: Welcoming Arms

Key Passage: Mark 10:13-16

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

What does it feel like to be waved off by someone busy or important, versus being welcomed in even when you're inconvenient?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Where others saw interruption, Jesus saw the kingdom. Parents kept bringing children to him, the disciples kept turning them away, and Jesus kept gathering them into his arms. The kingdom of God belongs not to the powerful but to those who come with open hands and simple trust.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms and blessed them.” Mark 10:14–16

1. Mark says Jesus was “indignant” at the disciples for turning the children away. That's a strong word. What does his anger reveal about what he actually values?

2.“The kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Children in that culture had no status and nothing to offer. What does that say about who the kingdom is actually for?

3. Jesus doesn't just tolerate the children; he takes them into his arms. What's the difference between being permitted to approach Jesus and being gathered up by him?

4.“Anyone who will not receive the kingdom like a little child will never enter it.” What does childlike receiving actually look like for an adult?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

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THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

This week, identify someone easy to overlook — a child, a newcomer, someone with nothing obvious to offer you.

Give them your full, undivided welcome. Watch what it does.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Ask for childlike trust, and for eyes to see who's being waved away that Jesus wants gathered in.

Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 8: Anointed Feet

Key Passage: John 12:1-8

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Have you ever given something extravagant - time, money, a gift - that others thought was excessive? What drove you to do it?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Mary kneels before Jesus and pours costly perfume on his feet, wiping them with her hair. What looks like excessive devotion is actually prophetic preparation. She recognizes, even before the disciples do, that the body of Jesus is moving toward sacrifice.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus's feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume... “Leave her alone,” Jesus said. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.” John 12:3, 7

1. Judas calls the perfume a waste. Jesus calls it preparation for his burial. What does the contrast between those two readings of the same act reveal?

2. Mary uses her hair, something culturally significant and deeply personal, to wipe Jesus's feet. What does the intimacy of the gesture add to the meaning of the gift?

3. John tells us “the house was filled with the fragrance.” An act meant privately for Jesus ends up filling the whole room. What does that suggest about the nature of real devotion?

4. Jesus says Mary understood something the disciples didn't. What did Mary perceive that the others missed?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. What is your version of “expensive perfume,” the thing that feels almost reckless to give to Jesus, but that you sense he's worth it?

2. Mary's act filled the house with fragrance, whether she intended that or not. Whose quiet devotion has “filled a room” for you by inspiring you without trying to?

3. What would it look like to give Jesus something this week that feels lavish rather than merely reasonable?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

This week, do one deliberately extravagant act of devotion that isn't efficient, just love. Don't explain it to anyone. Let it be between you and Jesus.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Ask for a heart like Mary's, to give before asked, and understands what others miss.

Invite group members to say aloud one name they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.

Week 9: Fixed Face

Key Passage: Luke 9:28-29, 51

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

When you picture Jesus's face, what do you imagine? Where does that picture come from?

☀ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Luke uses a Hebrew idiom to mark a turning point in his gospel: Jesus “set his face” toward Jerusalem. This was a fixed determination to get to the cross, the expression of the Father's love. The question this leaves us with: what will I see when I look at the face of Jesus?

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning... As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” Luke 9:29, 51

1. On the mountain, Jesus's face changes as he prays, a glimpse of glory before the road to the cross. Why do you think Luke places this vision right before Jesus turns toward Jerusalem?

2.“Resolutely set out” translates a Hebrew idiom - literally, he “set his face.” What's the difference between resolve and mere resignation?

3. Luke connects the glory on the mountain with the determination toward the cross. What does it mean that the same face that shone with glory is the face set toward suffering?

4. This week's message called the cross “the expression of the Father's love.” What does it mean that Jesus's set, resolute face carries that love toward us?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. What would it look like for you to “set your face” toward something hard because you trust what's on the other side of it, the way Jesus did?

2. Where have you recently glimpsed the glory of Jesus - in worship, in Scripture, in a moment of clarity - and how did it shape what came next for you?

3.“What will I see in the face of Jesus?” was this week's closing question. What do you think you would see if you could look at his face right now?

4. Peter, James, and John wanted to stay on the mountain. Jesus led them back down toward the road to Jerusalem. Where are you tempted to stay on a spiritual mountaintop rather than following Jesus into what's next?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

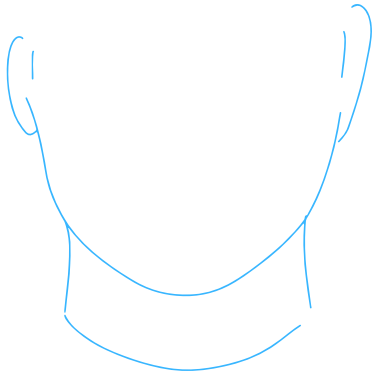
This week, sit with the image of Jesus's face turned toward you with resolute love.
Let that image shape one hard decision you're currently facing.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Ask to see the face of Jesus more clearly, both his glory and his resolve toward the cross for you.

Invite group members to say aloud one name they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.



Week 10: Whipped Back and Pierced Side

Key Passage: John 19:1–3, 31–37

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

When has someone else's suffering, endured for your sake, changed how you saw them?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

The body that healed others now absorbs violence. This week's message named the wounds of Jesus as the cost of redemption: the cross is where divine love refuses to withdraw from human cruelty.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“Then Pilate had Jesus flogged... one of the soldiers pierced Jesus's side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” John 19:1, 34

1. The same hands that healed the leper and the same arms that welcomed children now absorb violence without resistance. What does it cost you to hold those pictures of Jesus together?

2. John is careful to record the detail of blood and water flowing from Jesus's side; a physical, verifiable detail. Why might it matter to John that we know this really happened to a real body? Is there a deeper meaning?

3. Isaiah 53 says “by his wounds we are healed.” The very wounds inflicted on Jesus become the source of healing for others. How does that reversal change the way you think about suffering, yours or someone else's?

4. The cross was described this week as the place “where divine love refuses to withdraw from human cruelty.” What does it mean that God's response to human cruelty was to enter it rather than escape it?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. Where have you needed to know that God does not withdraw from cruelty or suffering, but enters it?

2. Is there a wound in your own life you have not yet let become a place where God's healing work is visible?

3. Does watching Jesus's suffering make you more likely to bring your own pain to him, or to hide it? Why?

4. What does it mean to you, personally, that the price of your healing was paid in someone else's body?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

This week, read Isaiah 53 slowly, once.

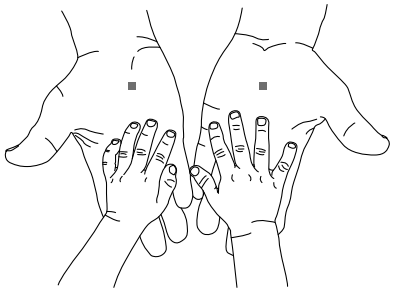
Bring one wound — yours or someone else's — to prayer, and ask Jesus to meet it.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Pray with reverence for the wounds of Jesus, and for anyone in the group carrying real pain right now.

Invite group members to say one name aloud who they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.



Week 11: Thorn-Crowned Forehead and Purple-Robed Body

Key Passage: John 19:4-19

❝ OPENING — 10 MINUTES

A question everyone can answer. No Bible knowledge required.

Since it's Thanksgiving week, what's one thing about Jesus's life, death, or presence you find yourself unexpectedly grateful for this year?

☀️ FROM SUNDAY — 5 MINUTES

Use this to bridge from the sermon into group discussion. Keep it brief.

Soldiers crown Jesus and drape him in purple as a cruel parody, yet their mockery unknowingly proclaims the truth. Pilate presents him to the crowd: “Behold your King.” The one humiliated before the world is the true ruler of it. His is a kingdom built not on domination but on sacrificial love.

✦ INTO THE WORD— 20–25 MINUTES

Read the passage aloud together, then work through these questions.

“Pilate said, “Behold the man!” ... Pilate said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” ... “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.” John 19:5, 14–15

1. The crown of thorns and purple robe were meant as cruel mockery, yet John records Pilate's words, “Behold your King,” as unintentional truth. What does it mean that even mockery couldn't hide who Jesus really was?

2. The crowd chooses Caesar over Jesus — trading a true king for a false one they could control. Where are you tempted to make that same trade?

3. A crown made of thorns instead of gold, a robe of mockery instead of honor- this is what royalty looks like in God's kingdom. How does that redefine what it means to be great?

4. Eleven weeks ago, this series opened with “the Word became flesh.” Here, that flesh is crowned with thorns. How has watching Jesus's whole physical presence - hands, eyes, knees, feet, face, wounds - changed or enhanced how you understand who God is?

GOING DEEPER —20–25 MINUTES

Move from the text toward honest personal reflection and sharing.

1. As this series and this year draw toward Thanksgiving, what is one specific thing about the person of Jesus you are more grateful for now than you were eleven weeks ago?

2. Where in your life is God calling you to a kind of strength that looks like sacrifice rather than domination?

3. If you had to summarize this whole series in a single sentence for someone who missed it, what would you say?

4. What is one way of "watching Jesus" you want to carry with you beyond this series?

THE PRACTICE — 10 MINUTES

One concrete, missional action to carry into the week.

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

This Thanksgiving week, write down three specific things about the person of Jesus for which you are grateful, not just what he's done for you, but who he is.

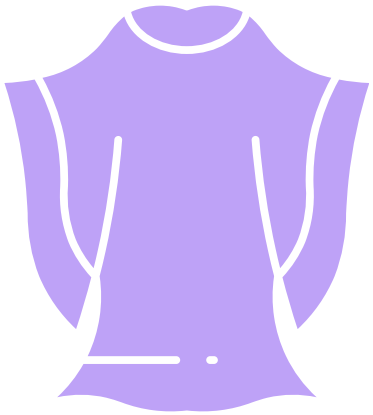
Share one of them with someone at your Thanksgiving table.

PRAYER —10–15 MINUTES

Close with focused, expectant prayer.

Close the series in gratitude — for the King who wore a crown of thorns instead of gold, and for what watching him this fall has done in you.

Invite group members to say one name aloud — someone they are carrying into this week. Close by praying briefly for each name.



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