

“Breakthrough!” in 2022

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 08.14.2022

THE MESSAGE IN THE MIRACLE – JOHN 5:17-47

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

Jesus’ miracles were more than just party tricks. They always served a greater purpose. At the end of his gospel, John tells us what the ultimate purpose of Jesus’ miracles was when he says, ‘Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.’ {John 20:30-31} According to John, the reason Jesus did miracles was to lead people to a saving faith in Him. The miracles were the thing that opened the door to faith. The religious leaders saw the miracle, but they missed the point of it because they were focused on the wrong thing. Jesus didn’t fit in their box, so they rejected Him. Their devotion to their own rules blinded them from recognizing the Messiah even when He was standing right in front of them. Instead of rejoicing over the fact that a guy who hadn’t walked in 38 years was standing in front of them or taking the time to investigate the claims of this man named Jesus who had just performed the miracle, they chose to focus on the fact that the guy Jesus healed was carrying his mat on the Sabbath. If we’re not careful, the same thing can happen to us. We can end up becoming more committed to our own religious systems and understanding of the way God works than we are to Jesus. It’s a slippery slope and one that’s easy to fall into. That’s why we’ve got to be careful and make sure that our focus is always on Jesus. Otherwise, we’ll end up just like these religious leaders. Let’s get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from the message this last weekend?
2. Have you ever been under the scrutiny of religious people?
3. What’s the difference between the religious person and someone who loves God?

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 5:16-30

1. Why is Jesus giving this speech? What is he responding to (see vv. 9-15)?
2. What are some of the claims Jesus made about Himself in these verses?
3. What are the implications for us since Jesus has the right of judgment? Do we typically think of Jesus as judge? Why or why not?
4. What is the difference between the judgment of Jesus and when we pass judgment on someone?

Jesus claimed He had the right of judgment, and then He backed up His claim by saying that His judgment was true and final because His judgment was the very judgment of God. When we judge others, we might make all kinds of mistakes. We might judge based on pride, self-righteousness, or lack of information. But the judgment of God, and therefore Jesus, is perfectly holy. When we approach Jesus, we should know that He is more than a friend; He is the righteous Judge of all humanity.

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HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 5:31-47

1. What are the different things Jesus points to as evidence (witnesses) that his ministry is valid?
2. Why do you think so many people, both then and now, don't believe what Jesus said about Himself despite the testimony of witnesses like these?
3. How does Jesus criticize their use of the Bible? Do you think there are any parallels in our lives and churches today?

John the Baptist, His own works, God the Father, and the Scriptures written by Moses all bear witness to who Jesus truly is. But people have always refused to not only believe Jesus, but believe these testimonies about Him. In these verses, Jesus flips the question of who He is on its head; because of these witnesses, it's not Jesus who is on trial. It's really the world, and these witnesses testify against the world who does not believe.

1. In your own life, what were some of the witnesses that helped you believe the claims of Jesus?
2. In these verses, how do you see the difference between knowing information about Jesus and actually believing in and following Him?
3. Jesus told the people that if they truly believe in Moses, they would also believe in Him. Why is that true?

According to Jesus, all the Scriptures, even the Old Testament that Moses wrote, brought testimony about Him. These people were experts in the writings of Moses, yet somehow were missing Jesus. These verses are a warning to make sure that in the midst of their religious study, they don't miss the faith that all the writings were leading them to.

1. What are some ways we might, today, read and study the Bible and yet miss the main point?
2. Why is that as dangerous for us today as it was for the people who heard the words of Jesus?

Because we live in a world where there is so much information available about everything, including the Bible, we might treat reading the Bible like an intellectual or scientific exercise. We can diagnose it, cut it apart, and analyze it, but the point of the Scripture is to reveal to us the character and the will of God. Sitting right at the center of God's character and will is Jesus. These verses are a warning to us still today: Don't mistake knowing about Jesus for believing in and following Jesus.

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

1. Do you need to change anything about your perspective when you read the Bible based on our discussion today?
2. How might it be helpful for you to remember that Jesus is the Judge as well as the Savior?
3. What safeguards can you put in your life to make sure you aren't just learning more things about Jesus, but actually believing in and following Him?

PRAYER - Pray and thank God not only for sending Jesus, but for providing testimony about His true identity. Pray that you and your group would not be people who learn about Jesus for the sake of knowledge, but would instead truly believe in and follow Him.