



WEEKLY STUDY

Week Four

Rachel Armstrong, our Director of Student Ministries, led week four of our *Jesus Changed My Life* series by continuing the story of John the Baptist. While imprisoned, John asked for confirmation of who Jesus was. He asked for this information even though he himself had made the proclamation long before. Jesus changes our expectations and we find that what we thought was true was not exactly the whole picture. Something about the manner in which Jesus arrived on the scene caused John to wonder, “Is he really the one?” We can struggle with doubt as well, but Jesus will change our lives in unexpected ways.

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional question at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this or your own prayer.

God,
*Today I want to be open to your surprising ways.
Show me who you really are and how you really work—
as much as my heart can handle.
Even so, I submit to your will.
Guide me to proclaim that “the blind now see, the lame now walk,
the unclean are made clean, and the dead are raised!”
That’s more than enough for me.
Amen*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 1.39-44

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

- This account from Luke sets the stage for John and Jesus' relationship. In her message, Rachel invited us to wonder about their relationship between birth and the age of 30. The Bible doesn't give us information about it, but we can see how they were deeply connected from the womb. Have you ever had a connection with one other person that seems to go far beyond common interests and passions? Maybe even a sense of a collective calling?
- *Pray for those whom God has allowed you to journey this life with—those relationships through which God might be telling a bigger story.*

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 11.2-3

² *When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples³ to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"*

- Up until this point in John's story, we get the idea that John is fully aware of who Jesus was. But now that he is in prison, it becomes clear that John had expectations that had not been met. Do you have expectations of Jesus that have seemed to go unmet? How have you responded to those unmet expectations?
- *Pray for a glimpse of God's eternal perspective as it relates to your life and for trust in God's rescue plan of salvation.*

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 11.4-6

⁴ *Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."*

- Thank God that Jesus didn't just answer John's question, "Are you the one?" with a simple "yes!" The answer is in the fruit. Miracles have taken place, the poor have heard good news. Good news for poor people is a rare thing. The cycle of financial, physical, and spiritual poverty creates a downward pull that is difficult to climb out of. But you can be assured of the presence of "the one" when the blind see and the dead are raised to new life.
- *Pray for opportunities to share what you have heard and seen God do through Jesus Christ.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 11.7-11

⁷ *As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind?⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces.⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:*

*"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you."*

¹¹ *Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

- Even after this moment of questioning from John, “Are you the one?”, Jesus stays on point by reminding the crowd of who John was. His presence and ministry was foretold by the prophets. He himself was more than a prophet. He did not dress or act the way the crowd would expect. But through his obedience in preparing the way, and through the Son of God, the least in the crowd of followers would be greater than John. In this statement from Jesus, we are reminded of John’s own words. “I must decrease so that he may increase.”
- *Pray that you would be counted among the least in the kingdom of heaven.*

FRIDAY: PROVERBS 10.28

*The hope of the righteous brings joy,
but the expectation of the wicked will perish.*

- This teaching from Proverbs encourages the reader to focus on hope over expectation. When you hope, you will find joy. When you spend your energy and set your heart on your own expectations, you will find yourself missing the extravagant work of God.
- *Pray through all the reasons your hope is in Jesus and not in your expectations.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 62.5-7

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.*

⁶*He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.*

⁷*On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.*

- As John the Baptist sat in prison, he had time to weigh his hopes and expectations. It was a resetting moment for him. He would eventually give up his life for the cause of Christ, so it was important for him to reset his hope and trust in God.
- *Pray for resetting moments where you can be reminded, “my hope is from him”.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Pray the words of the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer. What do these words mean for your posture before God and for your daily living? What does it mean to be set aside for God? What does it mean to be full or empty?

*I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticized for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.*