



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

JOHN

Week 4

DAY 22

Taking Stock of Your Fruit

John 15:1-17

OPENING
up to the Word

More food! This time it's grapes, the fruit of the vine. What's your preference? (a) seedless, (b) ruby, (c) concord, (d) white, (e) green.

DIGGING
into the Word

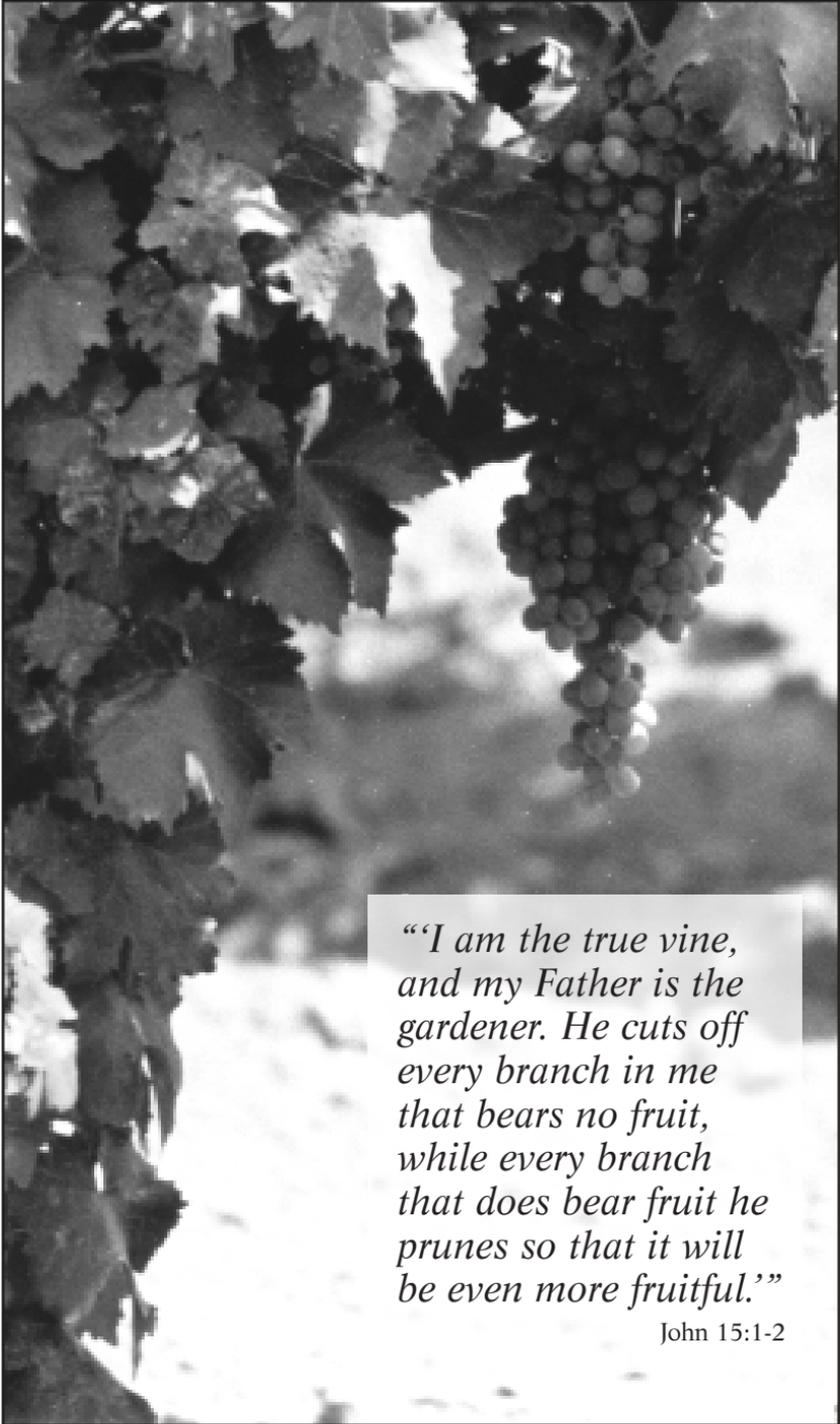
1. What can we learn from the symbolism of the vine and branches about life, communion and bearing fruit (vs. 1-8)? What role does the Father have?
2. How many times does Jesus call for his disciples to "remain in me" (vs. 1-17)? Is this the only way to a productive life?
3. Does God's unconditional love for us inspire us to treat others as he does us (vs. 9-13)? And to respond to him in the same manner?
4. Does Jesus' love make us his friends (vs. 14-17)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Take stock of the fruit that Jesus, the vine, is producing through you, the branch. Have you been pruned?
2. Jesus has "friended" you. How do you talk with him? Do you seek his advice? Do you love him?

WINDOW
on the Word

*In the Old Testament, **the vine** was a symbol for Israel (Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21). God loved Israel, so he nurtured and pruned her. However, Israel rebelled and did not bear spiritual fruit. In the New Testament, Jesus is the true vine. Only in Jesus is there true life.*



*“I am the true vine,
and my Father is the
gardener. He cuts off
every branch in me
that bears no fruit,
while every branch
that does bear fruit he
prunes so that it will
be even more fruitful.’”*

John 15:1-2

Living in a Hostile World

John 15:18-16:4

OPENING
up to the Word

What is the opposite of love? (a) hatred, (b) indifference, (c) permissiveness, (d) indulgence, (e) all of the above.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What can Christians expect from the religious, political and business world (15:18-25)? Does union with Jesus mean acceptance by the world?

2. How often is the word “hate” used in verses 18-25? Can hatred be conquered?

3. Since Jesus claims to be the truth (14:6), why does he refer to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth (15:26-27)?

4. How did Jesus’ warning help prepare the disciples for persecution (16:1-4)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Does someone hate you? Why? Have you forgiven them?

2. Has the Holy Spirit helped you understand truth (15:26)? Try to be as truthful as possible today.

3. Have you ever been discriminated against because of being a Christian? How did you respond? With grace?

WINDOW
on the Word

***The Nicene Creed** (fourth century) expresses belief “in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.” The eternal source of the eternal Son and eternal Spirit is the eternal Father.*

The Work of the Holy Spirit

DAY 24

John 16:5-33

A well-known spiritual song says it best: “Every time I feel the Spirit movin’ in my heart, I will pray...” Do you ever feel the Spirit movin’ in your heart?

1. Since God is one and is distinctly Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, how is God’s master plan being carried out (vs. 5-10)?
2. What is the work of the Spirit (vs. 8-15)? How is God glorified?
3. How did Jesus use the analogy of childbirth to explain the sorrow of the cross (vs. 19-22)?
4. Did the disciples pray to Jesus *before* his glorification (vs. 23-28)? After? Why?
5. How do disciples find true peace in a world of trouble (vs. 29-33)?

1. Consider praying for deeper conviction by the Holy Spirit—to more fully know Jesus—the Truth.
2. Have you ever given birth or “coached” at the birth of a child? Consider the pain of childbirth. How do you share in Jesus’ suffering on the cross? How do you share in the joy of his resurrection? Thank Jesus for his death and his life.
3. May Christ grant you peace, and be of good cheer!

*John develops the understanding of the **nature of God** more fully than the other New Testament writers, perhaps because he wrote late in the first century after the Holy Spirit had established the gospel beyond Judea. There is a unique oneness of the Father, Son, and Spirit even as there are distinctions in each Person of God.*

OPENING
up to the Word

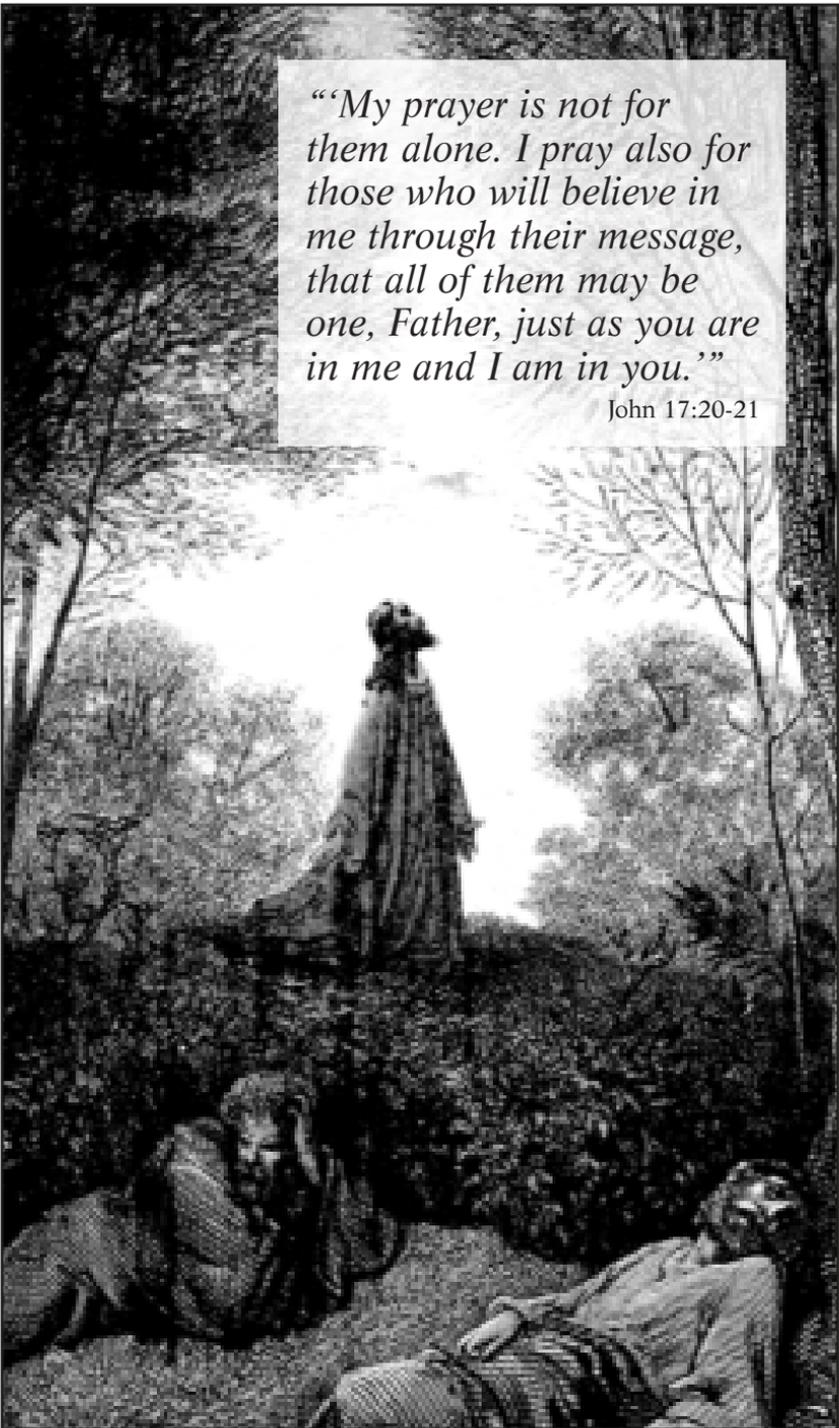
DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
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WINDOW
on the Word

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.”

John 17:20-21



Can You Ask Him for What You Need?

John 17:1-26

Christians, as God's children, talk to God through prayer. While we are invited to ask God for what we need (or at least think we need) is that the sole purpose of prayer?

1. What did Jesus ask God for in regard to himself (vs. 1-5)? What is Jesus doing for humanity?
2. What major responsibility lay in the hands of the apostles (vs. 6-19)? How were they to relate to the secular world?
3. Did Jesus call for his disciples to remain distinctively separate from "the world" (vs. 13-16)? Compare with John 8:23-31 and 18:36. What key did Jesus give in all three cases (8:32-36; 17:17-19; 18:37)? How would you define "the world"?
4. What was Jesus' concern for future believers (17:20-23)?
5. In Jesus' prayer, what binds Christians together with God and one another (vs. 24-26)?

1. Pray for yourself, that, like Jesus, you may finish the work God has for you and that you will glorify him.
2. Pray for the people of Jesus Christ, that they will share the gospel out of pure motives.
3. Pray that the body of Christ will exalt Jesus rather than their own denomination.
4. Pray for the world, that many more will become disciples of Jesus!

Prayer is a response to God's call. God's word does not return to him empty (Isa 55:11). At the end of his farewell discourse, Jesus' prayer, in the company of his disciples, falls into four segments: for himself (Jn 17:1-5); for the apostles (vs. 6-19); for the church (vs. 20-23); and for all believers (vs. 24-26).

DAY 25

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

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on the Word

The Betrayal

John 18:1-27

OPENING
up to the Word

Where is your favorite place to find peace from the wear and tear of your daily grind? (a) a park, (b) a garden, (c) the beach, (d) the forest, (e) the mountains (f) the backyard.

DIGGING
into the Word

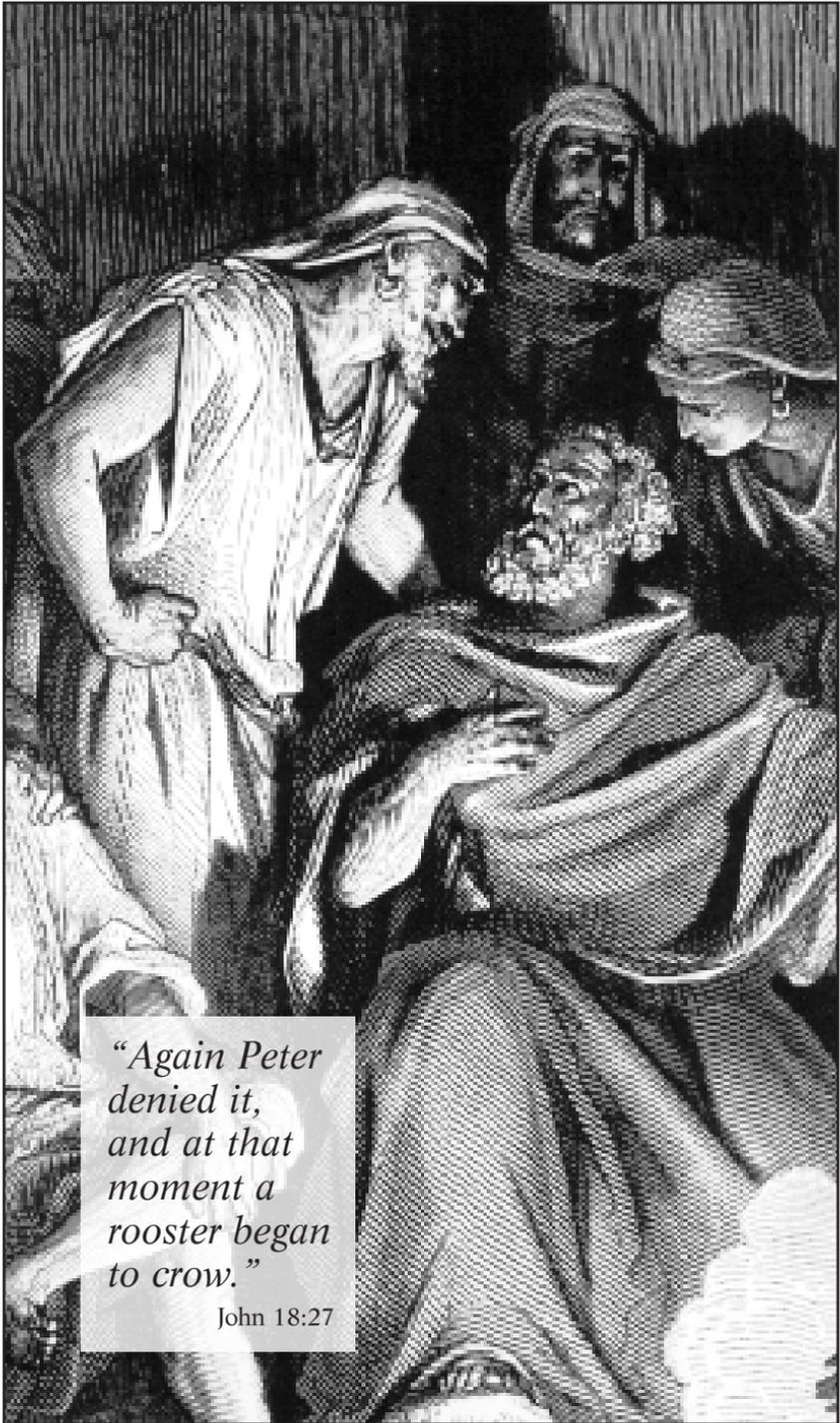
1. Who assisted in the arrest of Jesus (vs. 1-14)?
2. How confused was Peter (vs. 10-11)? Was he angry? Trying to protect Jesus? Encouraging the Messiah to conquer?
3. Trace the story of Peter. What pressures led Peter to deny Jesus three times (vs. 15-27)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever betrayed Jesus? Denied Jesus? Do you openly express your belief in Jesus and your love for him?
2. Thank God that Jesus is the peacemaker—though betrayed, he forgave. Though innocent, he died for our sins.
3. Thank God that Jesus is faithful—in spite of any denial by us.

WINDOW
on the Word

*The story moves to subversive activities on the part of **Judas Iscariot and the religious leaders of the Jews**. They confronted Jesus in one of his favorite retreats, the garden of Gethsemane. Once he had been taken into custody, Jesus was asked about his disciples and his doctrine (v. 19), two essential elements of his ministry.*



*“Again Peter
denied it,
and at that
moment a
rooster began
to crow.”*

John 18:27

“So Pilate came out to them and asked, ‘What charges are you bringing against this man?’”

John 18:29



Artwork by Rembrandt van Rijn, National Gallery, London

Kangaroo Court

DAY 27

John 18:28-19:16

Have you followed a famous trial in person, on TV or in a book? Was the outcome based on justice and truth?

1. Since the Jewish charge of blasphemy was not a Roman concern, what charge was leveled at Jesus (18:28-35)?
2. How would you define Jesus' kingdom (vs. 36-37)?
3. "What is truth" (v. 38)?
4. How did Jesus, though innocent, end up being scourged while Barabbas, though guilty of murder, was released (18:39-19:4)? Do you see Barabbas as representative of humanity?
5. How ironic it is that the Jews rejected Jesus as king but "accepted" Caesar whom they hated (19:5-16)! How sincere were they? What motivated them?

1. Do you find that people in your circles or business contacts know what truth is? Or is truth a subjective matter for each of them to decide?
2. Pray to the King for peace in the world—that his kingdom may come to everyone.
3. Praise the King for the truth that he has given us—and that he lives in us.

*The main trial of Jesus took place before **Pontius Pilate**, the highest Roman official who lived in Judea. The Jews would not enter the Praetorium for fear of being ceremonially defiled before the Passover, so Pilate provided communication to the Jews about his talk with Jesus.*

OPENING
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DIGGING
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The Crucifixion

John 19:17-42

OPENING
up to the Word

What does the cross mean to you? (a) human existence, (b) difficulties in life, (c) painful suffering, (d) death, (e) forgiveness, (f) the new covenant.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Consider the sign placed above Jesus on the cross, written in Hebrew for the Jews, in Greek for the Hellenists and Latin for the Romans (vs. 17-22). Although it was intended to ridicule Jesus, was it true?

2. How did Jesus show his love on the cross (vs. 25-30)?

3. Do you find any significance in the blood and water pouring from Jesus' side (vs. 31-37)?

4. Do you feel the cross was more about punishment or more about restoration?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Does the cross have meaning in your culture? To you personally? Have you ever knelt before a cross as a sign of worship to Jesus?

2. Take time today to give a friend or family member a call, or send them a letter or e-mail to let them know you love them.

3. Encourage someone who has lost a loved one. Let the person know he or she is not alone.

WINDOW
on the Word

***Crucifixion** was invoked by the Romans for the worst criminals and rebels. A painful death, it often took days for suffocation to finally kill. Many times a soldier would break the victim's legs to hasten death (v. 32), so the soldiers were surprised that Jesus had died so quickly.*

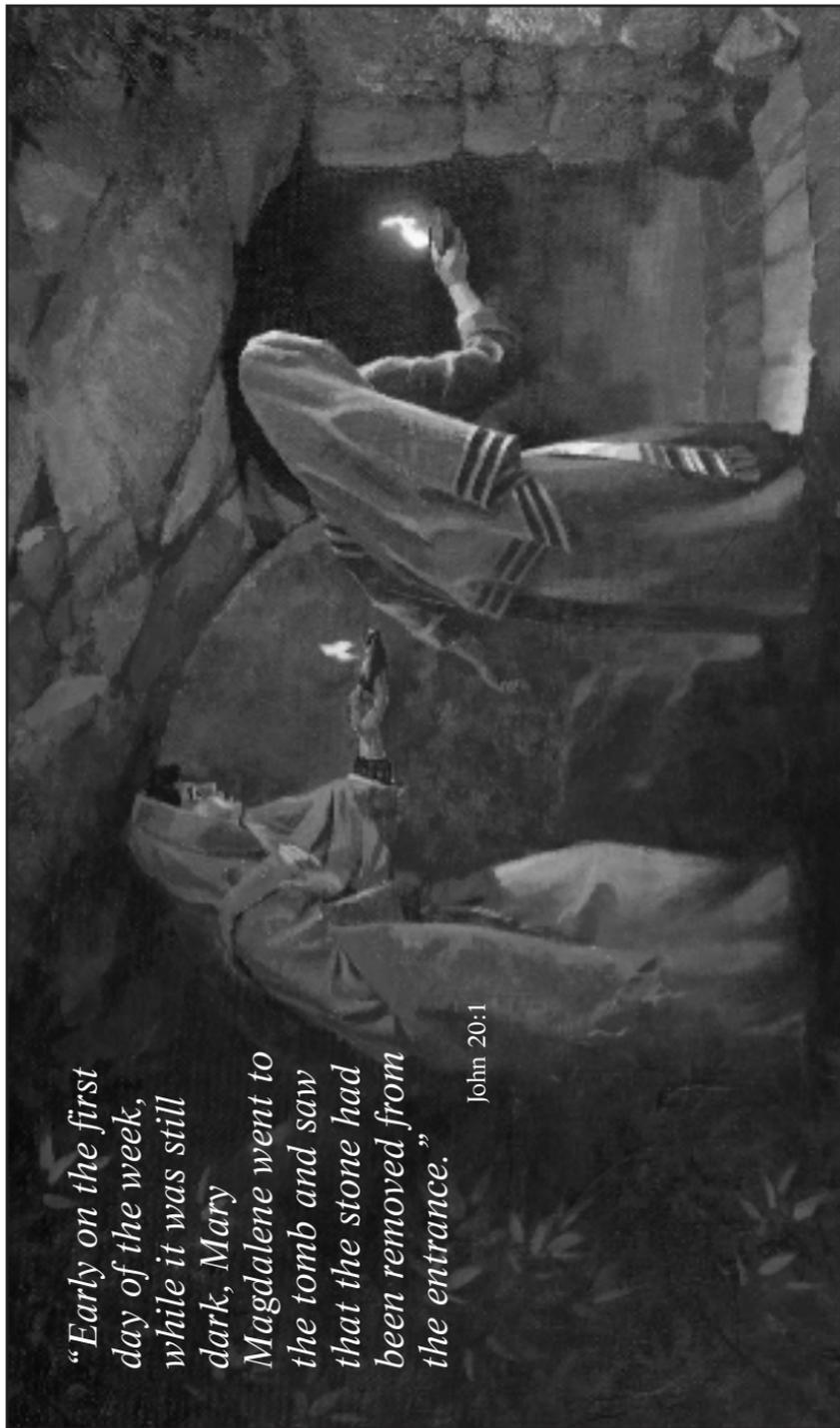


“Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.”

John 19:18

*“Early on the first
day of the week,
while it was still
dark, Mary
Magdalene went to
the tomb and saw
that the stone had
been removed from
the entrance.”*

John 20:1



The Empty Tomb

DAY 29

John 20:1-31

Have you visited the grave of a loved one lately? How did you feel? Are you still grieving? Can you celebrate his or her life?

1. Trace the steps of Mary Magdalene on Easter Sunday (vs. 1-18). Was Mary's life transformed?
2. Trace the steps of Peter and John (vs. 2-10). Which one rushed into the empty tomb? Why did the other stand outside?
3. How were the disciples commissioned to carry on the ministry of Jesus (vs. 19-23)?
4. Did the doubts of the disciple Thomas (vs. 24-29) stem from confusion? Or stubbornness? Or caution?
5. What motivated John to write his gospel (vs. 30-31)?

1. Consider the empty tomb. Do you believe? Do you need to feel the marks of the nails in Jesus' hands?

2. Does the Holy Spirit live in you? Does the Spirit empower you to serve and lead others to know Jesus?

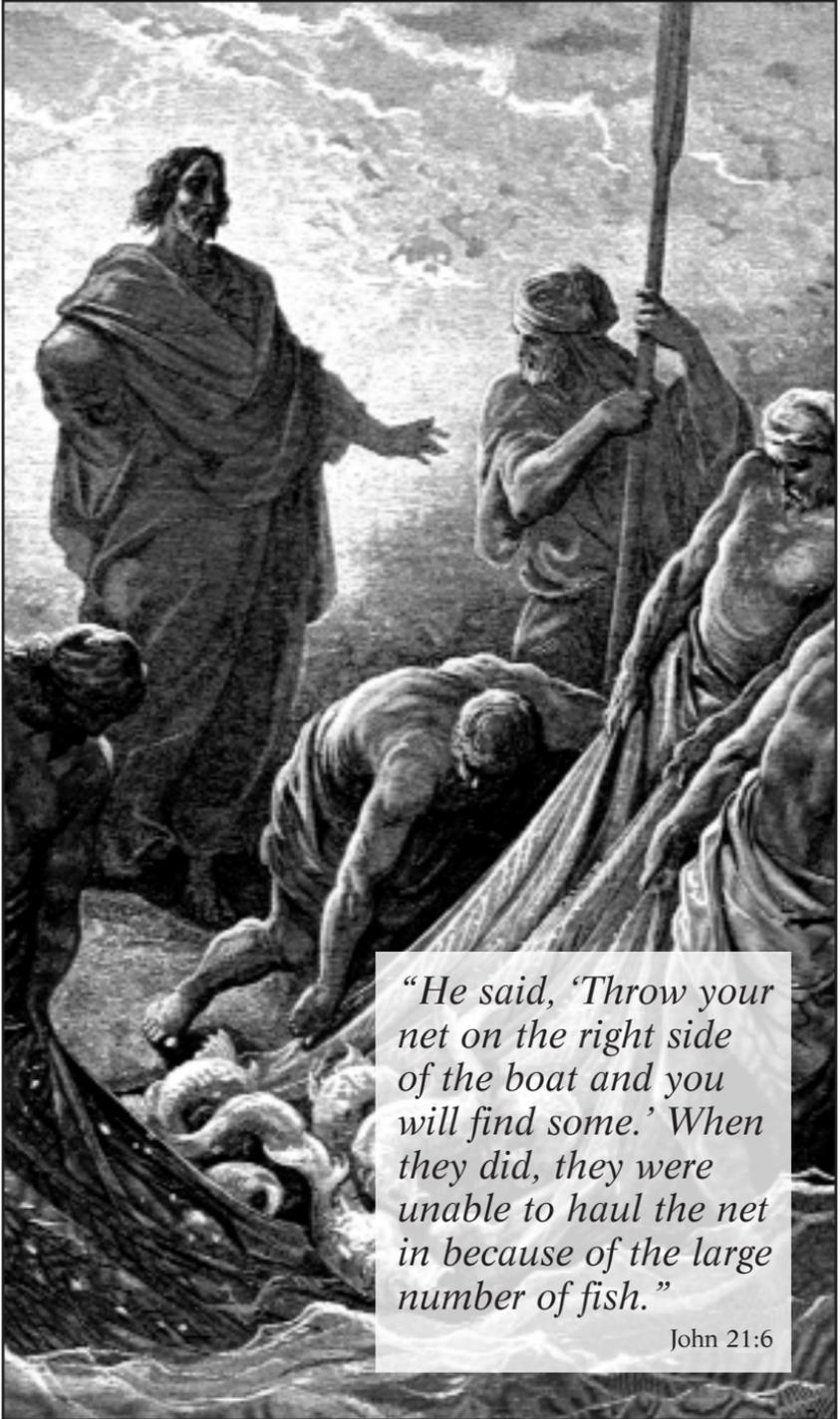
*Jesus was crucified, was buried in a new tomb and was **resurrected the third day**. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to more than 500 believers at one time (1Co 15:6). According to the Gospel of John, Jesus appeared on Sunday to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:14-18), to ten Apostles that evening (vs. 19-23), to eleven apostles including Thomas a week later (vs. 24-29) and then to seven apostles on the Sea of Galilee (21:1-14).*

OPENING
up to the Word

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“He said, ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.”

John 21:6

Artwork by Gustav Doré

What's for Breakfast?

DAY 30

John 21:1-25

What living human being has most heavily influenced you? Will you carry on that influence after his or her death?

1. Why did the disciples not recognize Jesus at first, even though this was the third time he appeared to them since his resurrection?
2. What was for breakfast (vs. 11-13)? Was there any symbolism in the menu?
3. How did Jesus' three questions to Peter bring the denials to mind (vs. 15-19)? Would Peter be loyal afterwards? In spite of future pain (v. 18)?
4. What message lies in the response by Jesus to Peter's envy of John (vs. 20-24)?

1. Consider eating a meal of fish and thinking about its symbolism for Christianity. Today the symbol of a fish is used by many to symbolize and convey their commitment to Christ. The Greek word for "fish" is *ichthus*. To early Christians, its five Greek letters formed an acrostic standing for five Greek words descriptive of Jesus: **I**esous **C**hristos **T**heou **U**ios **S**oter (Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior).

2. How have you shared with others your journey with Jesus? Like Peter, comparing himself with John, have you ever compared your joys and pains with those of anyone else?

The apostle John was given a long life. Although traditions attest to the martyrdoms of the other Apostles, we know that John outlived the others and courageously led the church to the end of the first century.

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