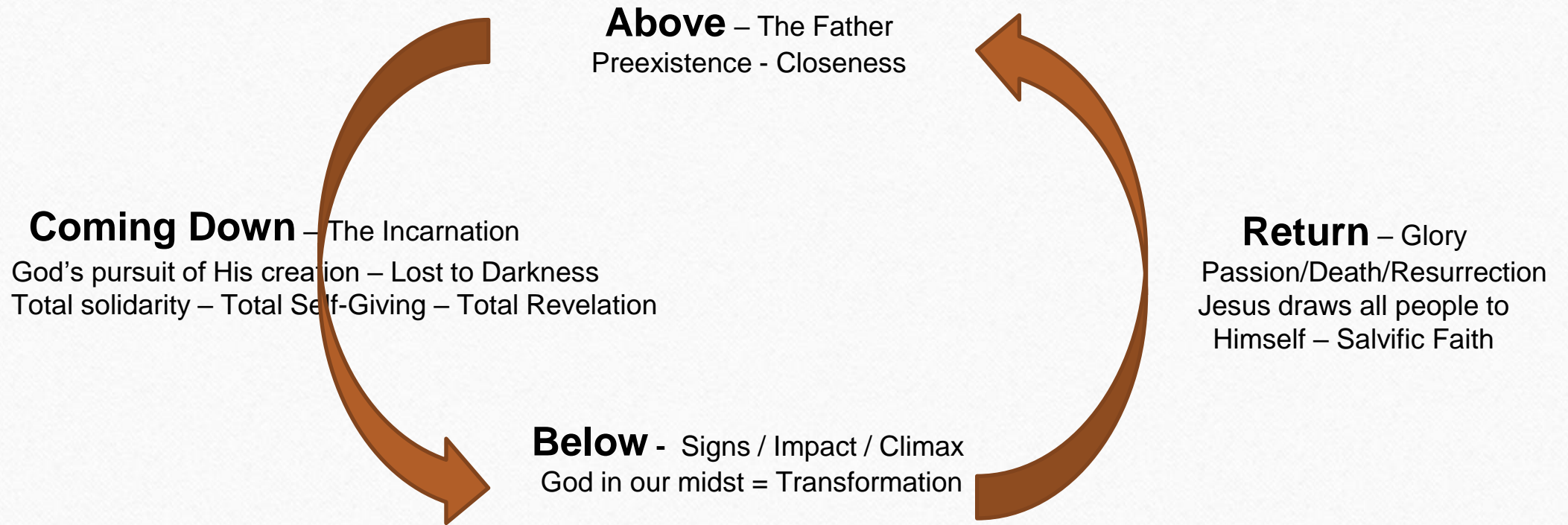


Gospel of John

Week Four - The Final Signs

Recap – The Structure



Recap – Key Points

- Jesus has shown power over nature
- His first 'I am...' statements
- The north (Galilee) is more receptive than the south (Jerusalem)
- He is hailed as the Messiah, but not the right kind
- Some are beginning to turn away, there is division

Signs

- ✓ Wedding at Cana - Water into Wine – Beginning of everything
- ✓ Healing of the official's son
- ✓ Healing of the man lame 38 years – *on the Sabbath*
- ✓ Feeding of the 5000 'multitude'
- ✓ Jesus walks on water
- Healing of the man born blind
- Raising of Lazarus

Man Born Blind (ch 9)

The Setup –

- Jesus was sticking around Galilee, because in Jerusalem He was wanted and His 'hour' had not yet come
- Another feast in Jerusalem, He opted to 'sneak' in
- Until he went into the Temple to teach... and debate

The people were divided – the authorities try to stone Him

Man Born Blind

- His disciples ask “*Who* sinned...?” because in the old covenant...
 - The righteous should be prosperous and healthy
 - There was no remedy for mortal sin – once you are a sinner, you are always a sinner
 - There must be a reason for it – even the paralytic was ‘condemned’
- Job – the suffering of the innocent was in the old covenant
- God’s name would be glorified through this man, show His power over history

Man Born Blind

Jesus expresses urgency – day/night

- Must fulfill the Father's will before the 'night' comes
- Day lasts until 'the Hour' has come and for the Church, until The End

Making the mud... Sacramental

- Physical sign instituted by Christ to confer grace
- 'Smearing' also used for sacramental oil
- Washing in the water, like Baptism

Fun Fact: Touching of the eyes is part of the Scrutinies during Lent

Man Born Blind

Making the mud...

- Church fathers, doctors see the connection to Gen 2:7
 - The Father made the first man from the dirt of the earth
 - Dirt = 'Adamah' means dirt or ground;
 - The Son uses the earth to restore this man as a new creation in the new covenant
 - "Blind from birth" – like original sin
 - The man suffered just like Israel – Blindness made them unable to see God's plan for salvation

Man Born Blind

Pool of Siloam

- Built by Hezekiah in the 7th century BC
- 'One who is sent' – Christ Himself was the One Who is sent
- Similar to Elisha healing the Gentile Naaman in 2 Kings 5
- Symbolic of baptism
- The man shows faith by obeying without question

Once again, people are debating who Jesus is

Healed on the Sabbath

Once again, Jesus 'worked' on the Sabbath

- The pharisees had gotten so immersed in the law they forgot the foundation – the Shema (The Lord is God, love Him...)
- Jesus reveals the true meaning of the Sabbath and his identity
- God's glory is revealed to us on the Sabbath
- The Lord's Day/ First day of new creation

Healed on the Sabbath

The Jews (Pharisees) question if a miracle even happened...

- Question the man
 - What happened? Born blind? *That seems unlikely*
 - The man replies “He is a prophet” (no longer just ‘the man Jesus’)
- Question his parents
 - Are you his parents, was he born blind, how was he healed?
 - Passing the buck on the third - Defending Jesus could mean expulsion from religious life

Healed on the Sabbath

The Jews (Pharisees) question if a miracle even happened

- Back to the man and things get spicy
 - Accuse Jesus of being a sinner, but the man refuses to agree
 - The man shows courage his parents did not have, begins to 'see'
- They appeal to Moses – showing just how much they were in darkness
 - The man turns up the heat – “If this man were not from God...”

When in doubt, chuck him out

Man Born Blind Healed on the Sabbath

Jesus finds him – “Do you believe..” – and the man *worshipped*

Symbolism

- Triumph of light over darkness - “I am the light of the world...”
- Light = life, Blindness = death – Jesus gave him fulness of life
- Progressive understanding–becoming a new creation
- Jesus was put on trial, but He has come to judge
- Incarnation changes everything

Small Group Questions

- If you were blind and there was a cure, what would be willing to sacrifice to be able to see?
- What does Jesus tell us about the nature of sin and suffering in response to the disciples' question about who sinned? How is sin social?
- What did Jesus mean when He declared "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world"?
- Couldn't Jesus simply touch the man and heal him? Why did He use spit and dirt in this sign? What does this sign point toward?

Lazarus

- The final sign... looking towards His Hour
- The first mention of Lazarus, Mary and Martha
- Similar to the man born blind, this sign is for the glory of God
- He returns to Judea and to danger
- Jesus waited a few days before going to Bethany

Lazarus

Jesus did not intervene when He was told Lazarus was ill

- This seems unlike God...
 - Ps 16:9-11 – God does not abandon us to death
- Dead four days – death actually happened, not sleeping or in a coma
- The Jews believed in the resurrection at the end of the world
 - Is 26:19
 - Dan 12:2-3
 - 2 Macc 7, 12:44
 - Wis 3:1-9

Martha and Mary

Martha and Mary

- The church is both contemplative and active
- Mary – contemplative; Martha – active ministry, practical
- Martha ran out to meet him, Mary lingered behind
- Both believed Jesus could heal, but belief was imperfect
- “I am the resurrection...” present reality, not just a future promise
- Similar to the man born blind... “Do you believe..”
- Friendship with Christ

At the Tomb

Jesus is 'deeply troubled'

- He will be twice more
 - Announcing His Hour has come
 - Announcing His coming betrayal
 - Death in the world, His own death, spiritual death of a friend
- He weeps
 - The Incarnation immerses Himself into human experience
 - Shortest sentence in the Bible.

At the Tomb

Lazarus placed in a tomb – foreshadowed Christ's death/resurrection

- Lazarus was buried in a wealthy space – Jesus in poverty/borrowed tomb

Jesus prayed 'Abba'

- "Father, I thank you for having heard me." (John 11:41)
- Romans 8:15 – adoption through Christ, calling God 'Abba'

Calls Lazarus by name – Death did not rob him of his dignity/identity

At the Tomb

Jesus shows that He has power over life and death

- OT – Elijah and Elisha raised the dead
 - 1 King 17 and 2 Kings 4:32

Lazarus was the 3rd resurrection in the Gospels

- Jairus' daughter (Mk 5)
- Widow (Lk 7)
- They were only dead a day or so, Lazarus was in the tomb 4 days

Raising Lazarus

Physical life – points to eternal life

- 1st death – dying w/ Christ (baptism)
- 2nd death – physical dying (resurrection)
- People who die w/ Christ will not die spiritually ('only sleeping')
- Baptism, Eucharist – union with Christ = eternal life

“Unbind him, and let him go.”

- Confession – you are unbound and raised to new life

Lazarus

- Death is common to all people
- Without resurrection
 - then life has no meaning
 - no consequence to our action
 - nothing lasts
- Jesus came to impact every human life
 - He gives the life that never ends (zoe)
 - We understand life because of Jesus

Turning Point

- Authorities started to worry about Jesus' following
- "The Hour" is approaching
- Gives life to Lazarus (us) before giving His own *for us*
- Crowds diminishing
- John 11:16 – "*Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."*
- Some Jews believed, some saw a threat
 - "Better for one to die ..."
 - Began plotting to kill Him – he left to go to Ephraim

The Plotting Begins (the Preface)

- Jesus evades them until Passover
- Mary anoints him at Bethany
 - Points to His burial
- Jews plot to kill Lazarus
- Entrance into Jerusalem

Small Group Questions

- What do you come to know from this story about Jesus' relationship with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus?
- Jesus loves Lazarus, but he waits two days longer after he hears of his illness before heading to Judea. How do you reconcile his actions with how he feels about his friend?
- Jesus wept? What does this tell you about Jesus?
- The people who saw the sign responded in two totally different ways. What does this tell us about the value of signs alone for bringing us to faith in Jesus?
- How will this help you to pray for and support friends who are going through a difficult time?