

A Reader's Guide to Discipleship©: Readings in the New Testament

2009

The sufficiency of the scriptures for all things pertaining to life and godliness
(II Tim 3:16)

Meditations on the Miracles of Jesus as told by John

John 20:31- "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ
and that believing you may have life in His name"

Introduction:

- Jesus' miracles are purposeful demonstrations of power not random acts of kindness
- the 7 miracles chosen by John stand as book marks in his letter to convince us that Jesus is the King and THE source of life for this world and all eternity. Except for the feeding of the 5000, these miracles are only recorded in John's gospel.
- each miracle reveals Jesus' glory in His character and nature

1. Jesus, the empathetic healer at the wedding of Cana John 2:1-11

- demonstrates the engagement of God in the day to day life of man and His respect for the institution of marriage. Perhaps anticipation of His wedding with us when He says His time has not yet come.
- demonstrates his kindness, humility, and happiness (attending a celebration). Made a priority of preventing the shame of the host without taking honor for Himself.
- revealed the miraculous only to the servants and disciples. This is consistent with how Jesus came for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.
- revealed His glory by avoiding the spotlight- we must redefine our concept of 'glory'. Not about drama and attention- it is about absolute power under absolute control.

2. Jesus, the authoritative healer when the powerful become powerless John 4:45-54

- in Cana Jesus heals the Roman Centurion's son in Capernaum the future center of His ministry
- well-to-do had no power to protect his son or heal him
- centurion tells Jesus what to do then he finally trusts what Jesus tells him to do. He no doubt had faced many rabbis before but he must have seen Jesus' authority in His face.
- his faith deepens when he sees the result of trusting Jesus word. Then it became personal and contagious!
- Jesus dealing with authority showing respect, giving honor, using His power to support someone in power, saying nothing about how he may have misused his position

3. Jesus, the gracious healer of the reluctant and ungrateful

John 5:1-15

-Jesus travels to Jerusalem from Galilee through the north gate (sheeps gate)

-specific pool located near the temple that attracted the sick. Volcanic activity vs. actual supernatural activity.

-profile of the man:

1. 38 years at the side of the pool? Family? Friends? Or had he become content with this way of life? Successful beggar?
2. Infirmary- not sure what exactly it was but must not have been terribly striking.
3. Did not answer Jesus question about wanting to be healed! Gave an excuse rather than an answer?
4. Did not know who Jesus was?! Jesus was the religious buzz in Jerusalem at that time because of His miracles. Perhaps this man was spiritually apathetic- had no belief in miracles or Messianic promises.
4. Blamed Jesus when he was accused of breaking the law
5. No evidence of gratitude- rather he turns Jesus in to the authorities- probably hoping to play the informer.

-why did Jesus ask him if he wanted to be made well? Perhaps Jesus could discern his desire to stay "sick".

-Why didn't the Jews take notice him? He was visibly breaking the law. But Jesus concern was the sin inside. The infirmity was an opportunity to address the sin.

-Jesus connects the miracle with the need for a changed life.

-Jesus lord of the sabbath. Jews missing the point.

-Jesus healing someone who apparently had no real interest.

Quite the contrast to the royal officer who would not take no for an answer.

-demonstration of Jesus amazing grace.

-did not overrule the man's will but the miracle was a divine intervention not a response to faith.

4. Jesus, the endless source of food John 6:1-15

-see Mark 6:30-44 returns to Galilee crossing from Tiberias to Bethsaida (hometown of Peter, John, James, Andrew, and Philip) by boat with his disciples for rest and first debriefing. They had just returned from their first tour of preaching. John the Baptist had just been beheaded.

-compare with accounts in other 3 gospels gives insight into John's unique purpose. Miracle was for the benefit of those who were walking with Him.

-John's account begins with *Jesus* asking where to buy the bread when He sees the crowd. Other accounts start with disciples saying Jesus should send the people away to eat after a long day. He asks the ones who grew up in the area.

-serene scene of grassy land with people waiting to eat. John captures the picture of the people coming to eat the Passover (no other

accounts mention this). Maybe Ps 23 in mind? Perhaps Jesus is thinking of the Passover feast as he blesses the bread.

-Note the disciples pass out the bread not Jesus. He is the source but not the means.

-Perhaps John's point isn't the feeding per se- it is the picture it gives of Jesus as the bread of life. John is the only gospel that relates Jesus words about the bread of life. (John 6:30-35)

-Note "as much as they wanted" is emphasized. Maybe John is pointing out how this was not just filling but satisfying them.

-12 baskets may represent the abundance for the 12 tribes

5. Jesus, the authority over creation John 6:15-41

-the crowds and the disciples waited for Jesus but darkness came and they leave Jesus in Bethsaida alone on the mountain.

-Probably needed to find lodging for the night and perhaps could not stay in Bethsaida (even though this was hometown) because of the uproar Jesus had caused and the crowds of people who were still there waiting to make Jesus king.

-Jesus comes to them as they are approaching Capernaum (John leaves out the story of Peter walking on the water). He emphasizes the simple fact that Jesus took them to land. Perhaps John was amazed that Jesus came when He did and took them where they were going after a long period of struggle and fear.

-John seems more interested in the reaction of the crowds than in the miracle of walking on the water.

-a continuation of the story of the feeding. The bread of life discourse.

Reaction of the crowd shows their lack of understanding, They think of Him as "the Prophet" (Moses come back from the dead). They didn't understand how he got to Capernaum on foot in one day. The crowd was more interested in the food than the miracle. They were satisfied with far less than Jesus was offering! They think it is all about Moses coming back to Israel to offer an eternal source of bread!!

-Jesus paints the picture of himself as the Passover lamb who must be eaten to have life. His blood is not painted on the door posts but is personally received for death to pass them by.

6. Jesus, the healer of the blind John 9:1-41

-many "disciples" had now walked away from him. The tone was now more secretive. Crowds are now confused and Jewish leaders are on the verge of violence.

-Jesus back in Jerusalem despite the risk. The adulterous woman provides an opportunity to confront the Pharisees. Jesus proclaims himself the light of the world and the "I Am" eternal God.

-Jesus escapes a stoning and as he slips away, he notices a blind man.

-disciples notice that Jesus is interested in this blind man and thinks He will teach a lesson about the cause of disease. Instead, Jesus makes it clear that this is about revealing God's glory.

-the clay and spit followed by washing in pool that is named "sent". Jesus had a clear method in mind. Perhaps a picture of forming man from the dust of the ground and breathing into him?

-miracle is confirmed but no one will verify it was Jesus except the blind man. Blind man meets the Son of Man and "sees" and believes. Responds in worship.

-Jesus teaches that God's judgment separates those who believe from those who do not. The truth is for the blind who know they are blind. John's theme of God's sovereign selection is repeated here in new terms. "No one comes unless the father draws him" 8:47, 8:42, 6:65, 6:44, 6:39, 6:37

7. Jesus, the resurrection and the life John 11:1-44, and 12:1-11

-five scenes: disciples, Martha, Mary, the tomb, the reunion

-back story: Jesus sets the stage for God to be glorified (1-6)

-Disciples (7-16):

1. note Jesus timing

2. nothing to fear if you walk in the light

3. play on words- Lazarus sleeping

4. Thomas is bold but misdirected about how God will be glorified

-Martha (17-27):

1. Martha's personal growth

2. left Mary sitting in the house (compare with Luke 10:40)

2. Martha's eschatology compared with Jesus soteriology

-Mary (28-37)

1. note comment from 11:2 which has not happened yet

2. Jesus groans, Mary at Jesus feet

-Jesus at the tomb (38-44)

1. foreshadowing of His death (He had to die so that He could be raised to glorify God)

2. Jesus groans again

3. Questions raised about why He did not save Lazarus from dying

-last reunion (12:1-11)

1. foreshadowing of His death, anointing with oil

2. Dinner at Simon the lepers house (? Judas father) see Matt 26:6-13