



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of December 24, 2017

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a “worship discussion” guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

John 1:19-29 “Jesus, Our Sacrifice”

¹⁹ And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹ And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²² So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³ He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

²⁴ (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵ They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶ John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸ These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. ²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

- Who, or what, first pointed you to Jesus?

Read John 1:19-23

- What questions do the priests and Levites ask John?
- What do the questions reveal about why they were sent?

Read [Isaiah 40:3-5](#)

- John quotes Isaiah’s prophecy in answer to their questions. What does this reveal about John’s identity and mission?

Read John 1:24-29

- How does John compare himself to Jesus in v.27?
- John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament prophets who pointed to the Messiah. What does John prophetically reveal about Jesus?
- What did John mean when he identified Jesus as the Lamb of God?
- Is it Good News to you today that Jesus takes away the sin of the world? Why? Spend time in prayer confessing your sin and thanking God for the ministry of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

WEPC has been taking a break from *Numbers* for the seasons of Advent & Christmas, but we will resume Sunday, January 7. *Worship Study Guides* will continue to be published each week.

- Dec 31: Jesus, Faithful Son (Luke 2:41-52)
- Jan 7: Resume the Book of Numbers

Questions about this week’s study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [John 1:19-29](#).

- Is it possible to miss Jesus?
- Apparently so. The delegation of experts from Jerusalem has come out to the Wilderness to check out John the Baptist. John says something worth pondering...
- "He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ'" (20), and "But among you stands one you do not know." (26)
- A devastating critique.
- "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him." ([John 1:10-11](#))
- Jesus is our sacrifice in two ways first in His life and secondly most certainly in His death.
- Have you considered what it was like for Jesus to take on flesh and walk among us?
- To walk among us and for many not even be seen. With all of the witness to Him and by Him, even His closest community missed Him.
- What discouraging loneliness He must have warred against in His own soul, day after day. There was little or no empathy for Him because no else has ever done what He did.
- Certainly Jesus teaches and demonstrates love for us in His incarnation but He also firmly rebukes our conception of "community".
- What is community?
- A voluntary collection of individuals around a common interest, persuasion, viewpoint or stage of life.
- If we look at Jesus we will see a few problems with our definition.
- First, I am the one in control.
- Second, while it is good to have all this affirmation and positive vibes coming from this group of people, I might miss something even richer.
- "Jesus comes in the flesh to a place and time and people. The people He comes to with all their problems and bad breath and sweaty palms and an overwhelming focus on their own concerns that keeps them from seeing Him. And if we look at the ways in which we're currently trying to 'live in community,' we'll discover that we're attempting to get the 'pros' of community without any of the perceived 'cons.' True, we've realized that we can't live alone, and that we want and need our lives to be shaped by others. But in choosing the specific 'communities' we want to be a part of, we are betraying the fact that we still, deep down, want to be the center of our own universes. We only want to be shaped by others in the ways that we want to be shaped by others. And that isn't community. Rather than being something centered on a shared perspective or idea, community is rooted in place—and, deeper still, shared humanity and history. Community is not an echo chamber for a group of politicians or painters. Community is sitting in the living room with a group of relatives with whom you have nothing in common and recognizing that they are worth your time. It is staying close to home because Dad can't work as well as he used to. It is tense political conversations, school plays, and funerals. It is a God who identified himself with a people who wanted nothing to do with him, and united himself to them against all odds. Any sort of community that avoids personal discomfort or inconvenience cannot be honestly described by the term. The truth of the matter is we don't get to decide who our people are—our people are our people. It's a painful thing. But like all the greatest stories and pleasures in life, pain is a necessary ingredient. And if we are really committed to defying the American idols of independence and self-interest, we must embrace the pain that comes with the pleasure. The unavoidable reality of true community is that we don't always get what we want—but what we want isn't always what we need. To choose daily the people, places, and limitations that we have received—this is what constitutes community. This is what makes life worth living." (*Andrew Russell*)
- Jesus demonstrates love and sacrifice by the community He makes himself vulnerable to.
- His death.
- "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."
- Only Jesus is the Lamb of God. Only Jesus could bear the weight of the sin of the world.
- See how He loves us.