

## *Gospels Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Three: Jesus' Public Ministry – Matthew 8-9, Luke 4-5, John 2-4*

Read John 2:1-11.

- 1) These verses describe Jesus' first miracle. What was the setting and why is this meaningful?
  
- 2) John calls Jesus' miracles "signs." In what sense might Jesus' first miracle be a sign (a sign of what)?
  
- 3) Which part of your life would you like to see Jesus transform from water (ordinary) to wine (spiritually dynamic)?

Read John 2:12-25 and 3:1-21.

- 4) Those who witnessed Jesus' "cleansing" of the Temple responded to His righteous indignation with their own indignation.
  - a) In contemporary language, what did the Jews say to Him?
  
  - b) How was Jesus' reply confusing and brilliant at the same time?
  
- 5) Apparently, not long after this Temple cleansing, Jesus met privately with Nicodemus.
  - a) What do you learn about Nicodemus from John 3:1-2, 7:43-51 and 19:38-40?
  
  - b) According to John 3:8, how is blowing wind an apt representation of the Spirit's work in regenerating us (so that we are "born again")?

c) Why might John have included Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus in his gospel?

- 6) Jesus' actions (for example, his Temple cleansing) provoked or evoked a response from every individual who encountered Him (for example, Nicodemus' questions). Are there events in your life about which you would like to question or have questioned Jesus? Are your questions motivated by a sincere desire for understanding or by a secret (or even subconscious) questioning of His authority and goodness in "scattering" or "overturning" (John 2:15) your own ideas and plans?

Read John 4:1-26 and 4:39-42. Jesus returned to Galilee through Samaria. It was the more direct route but one that most Jews normally circumvented, because they despised the "half-breed" Samaritans (2 Kings 17 gives this history).

- 7) Compare Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus to his encounter with the Samaritan woman.

- 8) In what sense does Jesus' life well up to become a "spring of water" in His followers (4:14)?

- 9) Carefully reread and personalize John 4:7 and 10, as though Jesus is asking *you* for a drink (a request that you offer Him an area of your life in which you are presently dissatisfied). How do Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman in verse 10 apply to you? In what ways have you learned to drink deeply from Jesus, the source of this satisfying "living water"?

Read Matthew 4:23-25 with Luke 4:14-5:11. From the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, even while He was calling His disciples, others were rejecting Him.

- 10) According to Matthew 4:23 and Luke 4:15 and 44, what was one venue for Jesus' teaching and preaching?
  
- 11) Considering human nature, explain why the thinking of the people in Jesus' hometown changed (see Luke 4:22-30, 32).
  
- 12) How did the manner of Jesus' call in Luke 5:1-11 cause Peter, James and John to willingly leave and follow Him? Has Jesus ever called you to follow Him in some unique way that deeply resonated with you? If so, plan to share this testimony with your discussion group.

Read Matthew 8 and 9.

- 13) Over what evils and forces did Jesus demonstrate His power and authority in Matthew 8 and 9?
  
- 14) Read Psalm 146:8a, Isaiah 29:18 and 35:5-6 with Matthew 9:6, 35-36 and 15:30-31. What was the significance of Jesus' ministry of miraculous healing and signs?
  
- 15) What evidence do you find in Matthew 9:1-7 that God sees physical wellness as secondary in importance to spiritual wellness? Of what kind of healing are you in need? Will you ask your discussion group to pray with you about this?