



Camp Talk Scheme | John 18-20

6 Evening Talks

Overview / Context

Chapters 18-20 are in many ways the climax of John's gospel. Jesus came into the world to reveal what the Father is like and to save people from their sins. John, throughout his gospel has recorded many 'signs', beginning with the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Chapters 18-20 are the climax of John's gospel because they contain the penultimate and most important sign that John records; Jesus' death and resurrection. John helpfully tells us why he has recorded these signs; so that the reader might believe that Jesus is God's king, and so receive eternal life [John 20v30-31].

But John has quite a job on his hands. Dying on a cross as a criminal looks like a terrible thing to happen to anyone; let alone to the one who John claims to be God's king. But the story and detail of chapters 18-20 explain to us what is actually happening at the cross and why it makes total sense. Jesus is no criminal, he really is the King that he claims to be, he really is the one that the prophets looked forward to, he really did come to complete God's plan to bring peace between God and humanity. As John shows us who Jesus really is and why he came, we are left with no sensible choice but to believe in King Jesus and accept the place in his heavenly kingdom that he offers. John even includes the story of doubting Thomas to show us that you don't need to see Jesus face-to-face to believe in him, you just need to hear about him from those who have.

Aim – for us to believe Jesus is God's King

Some of the young people on camp don't believe in Jesus or can find it difficult to keep believing in him through their teenage years. So it is good to know that our aim in doing this short series is the same as John's aim; to help people to believe and keep believing in Jesus [John 20v30-31]. John writes to give his readers concrete, eyewitness evidence to believe in. So, we will want to expound chapters 18-20 as the solid and rational truth that John presents them to be. This will mean being confident and persuasive in the way that we speak, yet always trusting God to work by his Spirit in all who hear the truth.

Summary Statement

To help us understand and remember what we learn, we are going to form a summary statement through the week, adding a few words each day. In the outline table below you can see how this comes together.

Outline

Day	Passage	Point	Statement
Sunday	18v1-11 Jesus' arrest <i>The Choice</i>	Jesus chose to die to take God's judgement	Jesus chose to die
Monday	18v12-27 Jesus before the Jews <i>The Swap</i>	Jesus died as a substitute for failures	Jesus chose to die as a substitute for sinners
Tuesday	18v28-19v16a Jesus before Pilate <i>The Kingdom</i>	Jesus is the King and saviour of heaven	King Jesus chose to die as a substitute for sinners
Wednesday	19v16b-42 Jesus dies <i>The Mission: complete</i>	King Jesus died to save – just as God planned	King Jesus chose to die as a substitute for sinners just as God planned
Thursday	20v1-23 Jesus rises and appears twice <i>The Miracle</i>	Jesus rose from the dead bringing peace	King Jesus chose to die as a substitute for sinners to bring peace just as God planned
Friday	20v24-31 Doubting Thomas (who shouldn't have doubted) <i>The Way</i>	Jesus gives eternal life to anyone who believes	You can believe King Jesus chose to die as a substitute for sinners to bring peace just as God planned

3 Tips for Teaching John 18-20

1. **Tell the story** – John has included some brilliant narrative, so let's use it well to engage the young people and give them a vivid view of who Jesus is and why he came.
2. **Beware too much detail** – John has however included a lot of detail, so we need to be careful what to choose, otherwise we risk overloading those listening.
3. **Apply John's purpose** – As we have said John's aim is belief, so as you apply a given passage, apply it to our belief. Think; how does each passage help us to believe in Jesus as the Christ? How does the passage shape our view and perspective on him? Avoid the danger of going quickly to 'doing' applications – they are less likely to be what John is aiming for.

Talk Scheme Notes

Passage: John 18v1-11 (Jesus' arrest)

Title: The Choice

Point: Jesus chose to die to take God's judgement

Text Notes: Jesus, who has spent the last 5 chapters in the 'Upper Room' teaching and praying with his disciples (Ch 13-17), now heads out to his arrest (v1). Judas the betrayer (Jn 13v2) guides a band of soldiers to arrest Jesus (v2-3). On a first glance it could seem like Jesus is ambushed and weak, but John adds detail; Jesus knew what was going to happen (v4), Jesus has power that far exceeds the soldiers (v6) and Jesus decides to be arrested (v11), he even has time to fulfil a quick prophecy (v9). Jesus is in control; but why is he letting himself be treated like this? He is following his fathers plan (v11) to take the cup his Father has given him. Given what John has told us about Jesus since the beginning of the gospel (cf. 1v29) it is clear that the cup he is referring to is the cup of God's wrath (cf Jer 25:15, Is 51:17).

Talk Notes: This is the first talk in the series, so you may need to give a *very* brief introduction to John's gospel (it's eyewitness material, it is going to help us to consider Jesus and whether we should believe and keep believing in him – 20v30-31). It could be easy to miss one of the shocks of this passage; Jesus, who John has claimed to be God's king, is choosing to be arrested as a criminal and ultimately ends up dying on a cross. Surely this is ridiculous. It will be worth setting this idea up well for the rest of the week so that slowly we can knock down the idea and show how brilliant and strong Jesus is. Don't worry too much about explaining sin and judgement here in great detail, other talks later in the scheme will help us with this. Just make sure we know what 'the cup' is (it's not a Starbucks).

Passage: John 18v12-27 (Jesus before the Jews)

Title: The Swap

Point: Jesus died as a substitute for failures

Text Notes: There are two trials taking place in this passage, the trial of Jesus before the Jewish authorities and the trial of Peter. The two trials are inter woven in the structure to deliberately show the contrast between the two characters. Jesus being questioned by the revered High Priest (v19) remains resolute, calm and innocent (v20-23), despite even being beaten (v22). Peter however cannot even stand up to the questioning of a servant girl (v16-18) opting to deny Jesus and warm himself by the fire instead. What are we learning? Jesus' determination to die even for those whom completely fail him like Peter. Jesus even knew Peter was going to betray him like this (13v38). Jesus choice to die is not based on what we do, much the opposite. John even manages to remind us at the beginning of the passage why Jesus is going to die (v14), he was going to die in their place – Substitution: innocent Jesus for failing humanity.

Talk Notes: Be careful not to conflate two ideas – Jesus is dying for failures like Peter, but Peter's denial is not a good illustration for sin (that is coming in the next passage). Rather this passage shows us that we are not doing anything positive to earn our salvation, contribute to salvation or to persuade Jesus to save us. Instead we are learning Even when Jesus' closest friend denies him, he is still resolute to die for him. The same is true for us. This should make us amazed at Jesus' love for people who have not earned or deserved it.

Passage: John 18v28-19v16a (Jesus before the Jews)

Title: The King

Point: Jesus is the King who came to save

Text Notes: The narrative moves from the religious Jewish court, to the state Roman court with the local governor, Pontius Pilate, in the judges chair (v28). A number of themes run through this narrative; Jesus' innocence (18v35, 38, 19v4, v6, v12), Jesus' Kingship (18v33, v36, v39, 19v2, v3, v5, v14, v15) and the guilt/sin of the religious and state rulers (18v31, v40, 19v6, v7, v11, v12, v15, v16). How do these themes tie together? Jesus is the King from heaven who is coming to die in place of the people (v38-40; Barabbas story is a little illustration of substitution) because they are sinners. The only way he can do this, is because he is innocent. So what to focus on? Within the narrative of chapters 18-20 the main focus here is Jesus' identity as king. John contrasts the two different sets of leaders against Jesus – who think they have the power (19v10) but in fact Jesus has it all (18v36, 19v11). Ironically his most kingly act, is choosing to give up himself up to be crucified. Jesus is the king, but not how you might expect, he's even better!

Talk Notes: This is a long passage so carefully choosing what to leave in/out will be really important. As the main focus of the passage is on Jesus' kingship, it will be helpful from this talk to explain Jesus' identity (as king of heaven and earth) and to explain sin (the rejection of Jesus as king). One way of doing this is to tell an abridged version of the narrative and to then go back over it, explaining the significance.

Passage: John 19v16b-42 (Jesus dies)

Title: The Mission: Complete

Point: King Jesus died to save – just as God planned

Text Notes: The climax of John's gospel comes in these verses, the 'hour' to which Jesus came for (Jn 2v4, 7v30, 8v20, 13v1, 17v1) finally arrives. Jesus accomplishes his mission as he dies on the cross, uttering the words 'It is finished' (19v30). It is important to note that John chooses not to include much on the purpose/significance of Jesus' death, presumably because he has already explained this in great detail throughout the gospel, but especially in chapters 18-19 already. Instead in these verses John dispels a popular myth; that Jesus didn't really die. He does so by explaining the manner and detail to his death (v28-30), confirmation of his death (v31-37) and his burial (v38-41). But even more important that this, John's desire is to prove that the death of King Jesus was exactly what God planned. John details 4 separate fulfilments of prophecy (v24, v28, v36, v37). These help us to see that even though Jesus' death made him look like a weak criminal, his death was no mistake, it was instead the strongest, most God-ordained moment of history.

Talk Notes: The temptation will be to spend lots of time explaining the purpose and significance of Jesus' death, after all the whole gospel points to this. But as John decides to focus on the credibility of Jesus' act, so should the talk. Obviously it will be necessary to give a summary of what Jesus death accomplishes, which should be easy given the material in the preceding talks. However, the main aim of the talk should be to give us confidence to believe in what Jesus is doing, rather than understanding what he has done. Like others in the series, this is a long passage, so careful selection of what narrative material to include will be paramount.

Passage: John 20v1-23 (Jesus rises and appears twice)

Title: The Miracle

Point: Jesus rose from the dead bringing peace

Text Notes: Jesus predicts his resurrection right back in John 2v18-22 and hints to it in 10v 17-18 and 11v25. These predictions and hints amazingly come true. John is keen to prove the validity of the resurrection, having separate eyewitnesses (Mary and the disciples) confirm the linen strips in the empty tomb and the appearing of the risen Christ. Jesus even shows them 'his hands and side' (v20) to prove his identity as the man who they saw crucified on 3 days previous. This section also aims to show the reader what Jesus' death and resurrection has accomplished – peace (v20 and v21). Jesus reminds the disciples that his death has brought them eternal peace with God, so much so, that God the Holy Spirit can now dwell within them (v22) and the forgiveness of sins can now be proclaimed to the world (v23).

Talk Notes: It is easy to give an apologetic defence of Jesus' resurrection from this passage, indeed it is partly John's aim, he wants us to believe that Jesus really rose from the dead. It will also be important to remind us what Jesus' death achieves – peace with God in eternity. Feel free to explain what this really means for us; how wonderful it is (and will be) to have a full, unhindered relationship with the God who made us; how much more satisfying and perfect a relationship with him is compared to any other relationship of vice this world has to offer.

Passage: John 20v24-31 (Doubting Thomas - who shouldn't have doubted)

Title: The Way

Point: Jesus gives eternal life to anyone who believes

Text Notes: The story of 'doubting Thomas' is a famous one, but the meaning of it possibly less so. The short section gives us even more proof to believe that Jesus really rose from the dead. Thomas was not content to only listen to the eyewitness account of Jesus' resurrection (v25) and only believes when he has met and touched the risen Lord (v27-28). We might have sympathy with Thomas, thinking it reasonable to want to see Jesus ourselves. Jesus doesn't think so (v29), instead telling Thomas how blessed one can be for simply believing the testimony of others. Jesus is saying here that it is entirely normal for people to believe in him even though they have not met him. John immediately follows the story with his own comment – explaining that he has written his account of Jesus' life for this exact purpose, so that people like Thomas can believe even though they will not have met him themselves (v30-31). Fundamentally, belief is all that Jesus requires of any sinner who wants to be forgiven and live eternally (v31).

Talk Notes: It is common to hear people say 'if only God would show himself to me, meet me face to face, then I could/find it easier to believe in him'. Jesus says this is not the case though. Jesus / John are trying to persuade us to have confidence in the eyewitness material of the bible. It will be helpful to reflect this in the talk, be confident in the scriptures as God's own way of communicating the Christian faith, and encourage us that all we need to believe / keep believing in Jesus, is right in front of us in the bible. As this is the last talk in the series it presents a good opportunity to recap what we have learnt; namely that 'King Jesus chose to die as a substitute for sinners to bring peace just as God planned' (summary statement). Eternal life is not won by those who believe and keep believing in King Jesus.