



Seven Signs

A LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

A Journey to Easter

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About the Author

Pastor Burt is a Master of Divinity graduate from Bangor Theological Seminary and ordained in the United Church of Christ. Beginning as a youth minister and later serving as a licensed pastor in Maine, he brings over 30 years of ministry experience. He blends thoughtful leadership with a personable approach, focusing on hope, healing, and community. As a husband and father of four, he nurtures his congregations like family—creating spaces where all are embraced, grow together, and encounter God. He hopes to leave a legacy of fostering welcoming places where people walk in faith together.

Introduction

This Bible study is not designed to be rushed, mastered, or completed in the way we often approach tasks or lessons. It is offered as an invitation—a shared journey through Lent shaped by Scripture, conversation, prayer, and attentive listening.

Throughout these seven weeks, we will walk together through the **Seven Signs of Jesus in the Gospel of John**. John calls these moments “signs” because they point beyond themselves. They are not simply miracles to be explained, but encounters meant to reveal who Jesus is and how God’s life is unfolding among us. Our time together is not about gathering information or arriving at the “right” answers. It is about making space for God to speak—sometimes through the text, sometimes through one another, and sometimes through silence.

This study is intentionally **relational rather than lecture-based**. The questions are meant to open conversation, not close it. The goal is not to cover everything, but to notice what rises to the surface as we listen together. You may find that some weeks feel clear and energizing, while others stir questions, discomfort, or longing. All of that belongs here.

Lent is a season that calls us to slow down. Along this journey, you are invited to rest, to pay attention, and to reflect honestly on your own life of faith. There is no pressure to perform, explain, or resolve everything.

Growth often comes quietly—through presence rather than effort.

As we gather each week, trust that God meets us exactly where we are. Come as you are. Listen deeply. Speak honestly. And allow the Spirit the time and space to do the work only God can do among us.

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A Journey to Easter Through the Gospel of John

Week 1 – The Wedding at Cana

Theme: Transformation and New Beginnings

Read: John 2:1–11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ ⁴ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.’ ⁵ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ ⁶ Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, ‘Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.’ So they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.’ ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Opening Devotional

John’s Gospel begins Jesus’ public ministry not with a sermon or confrontation, but with a celebration. A wedding feast is underway, filled with joy, expectation, and community. Yet in the midst of that joy, a quiet problem emerges—the wine runs out. It is not a crisis that stops the celebration, but it is a lack that threatens joy. Jesus steps into this ordinary human moment and performs His first sign, revealing God’s glory not through spectacle, but through transformation.

Lent often begins in similar ways. We arrive aware of our limits, our unfinished places, and our quiet sense that something is missing. This sign reminds us that God’s transforming work does not wait for perfect conditions. Jesus takes what is ordinary—water, stone jars, human trust—and turns it into something new.

Transformation begins in the midst of daily life, inviting us to trust that God is already at work in places we may overlook.

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Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in this story?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose a wedding as the setting for His first sign?
3. What does this miracle reveal about how God works in ordinary moments?

Going a Little Deeper

1. What is the significance of the stone jars used for purification?
2. What does Mary's trust reveal about faith and surrender?
3. Why does the steward call this the "best" wine?

Personal Reflection

Where might God be inviting transformation in your life right now?

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we thank You for meeting us in ordinary places and revealing Your glory in ways we do not always expect. As You transformed water into wine, transform our hearts, our habits, and our hopes. Help us trust that You are already at work in the places of our lives that feel unfinished or overlooked. Give us patience to wait, courage to trust, and openness to receive the new things You are doing. We place ourselves in Your hands, believing that Your grace is more than enough. Amen.

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Week 2 – Healing the Royal Official’s Son

Theme: Faith Across Distance

Read: John 4:46–54

⁴⁶ Then he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you^[a] see signs and wonders you will not believe.’ ⁴⁹ The official said to him, ‘Sir, come down before my little boy dies.’ ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your son will live.’ The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, ‘Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him.’ ⁵³ The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, ‘Your son will live.’ So he himself believed, along with his whole household. ⁵⁴ Now this was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Opening Devotional

This sign unfolds almost entirely in the space between promise and fulfillment. A desperate parent comes to Jesus seeking healing for his child, and Jesus responds not with immediate action, but with a word. The official must decide whether that word is enough. He leaves without proof, without certainty, and without seeing the miracle for himself.

Lent often places us in this same in-between space. We pray, we listen, and then we wait. Faith here is not certainty—it is movement. The journey home becomes an act of trust, one step at a time, before knowing how the story will end. This sign reminds us that faith is not always about seeing God work; sometimes it is about trusting that God already has. God’s word carries life even when the outcome remains unseen.

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Discussion Questions

1. What does this story teach us about trusting God without immediate proof?
2. Why might Jesus choose not to go with the official?
3. How does the official's response shape your understanding of faith?

Going a Little Deeper

1. How does the journey home mirror the journey of faith?
2. What does the belief of the entire household suggest about lived faith?

Personal Reflection

When have you been asked to trust God “at a distance”?

Closing Prayer

Faithful God, we thank You for the gift of Your word, which speaks life even when we cannot yet see the outcome. Teach us to trust You in the spaces between promise and fulfillment. Strengthen our faith when answers feel delayed and help us walk forward one step at a time. We lift before You those we love and those we worry about, trusting that no distance is too great for Your care. Hold us steady in hope, and help our lives bear witness to Your faithfulness. Amen.

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Week 3 – Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

Theme: Restoration and Hope

Read: John 5:1–15

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

² Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew^[a] Bethesda,^[b] which has five porticoes. ³ In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.^[c] ⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ ⁷ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.’ ⁸ Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ ⁹ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, ‘It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.’ ¹¹ But he answered them, ‘The man who made me well said to me, “Take up your mat and walk.”’ ¹² They asked him, ‘Who is the man who said to you, “Take it up and walk”?’ ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in^[d] the crowd that was there. ¹⁴ Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.’ ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Opening Devotional

This story introduces us to a man whose life has been shaped by waiting—thirty-eight years of disappointment, routine, and survival. When Jesus asks, “Do you want to be made well?” it is not a cruel question. After so long, hope itself can feel risky. Healing would mean change, and change is not always easy.

Lent gives us permission to name the places where waiting has worn us down. Jesus does not explain the man’s suffering or fix the system around him. Instead, Jesus sees him, speaks to him, and calls him into a new way of living. Restoration here is not only physical; it is relational and spiritual. God meets the long-waiting with compassion, not judgment, and invites them to rise—even when the future feels uncertain.

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Discussion Questions

1. What emotions might this man have carried after such a long wait?
2. Why does Jesus ask if he wants to be healed?
3. How does this story speak to people who feel stuck or forgotten?

Going a Little Deeper

1. What does healing on the Sabbath reveal about Jesus' priorities?
2. How does Jesus point toward deeper healing beyond the physical?

Personal Reflection

Where in your life do you long for restoration?

Closing Prayer

Compassionate God, You see us in our waiting and meet us with mercy rather than judgment. We bring before You the places in our lives where we feel stuck, weary, or forgotten. Speak Your word of healing and invite us into new life, even when change feels risky. Restore what has grown tired within us and renew our hope. Help us rise when You call and trust that You are leading us toward wholeness. We place our longings in Your care. Amen.

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Week 4 – Feeding the Five Thousand

Theme: God’s Abundance

Read: John 6:1–14

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias.^[a] ² A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?’ ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, ‘Six months’ wages^[b] would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’ ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’ ¹⁰ Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they^[c] sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.’ ¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’

Opening Devotional

The crowd gathers with hunger—both physical and spiritual—and the disciples see only scarcity. What they have is clearly not enough. Yet Jesus begins not with what is missing, but with what is offered. A small meal becomes a sign of God’s abundant care.

Lent invites us to confront our assumptions about lack. We often approach God convinced that what we bring is insufficient. This sign reminds us that God works through willingness, not excess. Jesus takes what is offered, gives thanks, and places it in God’s hands. Abundance follows not because resources increase, but because trust deepens. Nothing is wasted, and everyone is fed.

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Discussion Questions

1. What does this story reveal about God's provision?
2. Why does Jesus involve the disciples?
3. How does this sign challenge fear of scarcity?

Going a Little Deeper

1. How does this sign prepare us for Jesus as the Bread of Life?
2. Why does gratitude come before the miracle?

Personal Reflection

Where have you seen God provide unexpectedly?

Closing Prayer

Generous God, we thank You for providing for us in ways we often fail to imagine. Take what we bring—our time, our gifts, our small offerings—and place them in Your hands. Teach us to trust Your abundance rather than fear scarcity. Open our eyes to the ways You are already at work among us, feeding us with grace and gathering every fragment with care. Help us live with gratitude and generosity, trusting that You are always enough. Amen.

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Week 5 – Walking on the Water
Theme: Courage in the Storm

Read: John 6:16–21

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles,^[a] they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰ But he said to them, ‘It is I;^[b] do not be afraid.’ ²¹ Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

Opening Devotional

This sign unfolds in darkness, wind, and fear. The disciples are doing exactly what Jesus told them to do, yet they find themselves overwhelmed. When Jesus comes toward them, they do not immediately recognize Him. Fear distorts vision.

Lent reminds us that faith does not remove storms. Instead, it teaches us how to recognize Christ in the midst of them. Jesus does not calm the storm before speaking peace; He speaks peace into fear first. Courage grows not from calm circumstances, but from trusting who is present with us.

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Discussion Questions

1. What does this story say about Jesus' presence in fear?
2. Why do the disciples react with fear first?
3. What storms make it hard to recognize Jesus?

Going a Little Deeper

1. What does "welcoming Jesus into the boat" look like today?
2. How does courage differ from control?

Personal Reflection

Where do you need courage rooted in Christ?

Closing Prayer

Steady and faithful God, You come to us in the midst of fear and uncertainty, speaking peace into troubled hearts. When storms rise around us and within us, help us recognize Your presence and trust Your voice. Give us courage not rooted in control, but in confidence that You are with us. Teach us to welcome You into every part of our lives, especially where we feel most vulnerable. Carry us safely forward, held by Your strength and love. Amen.

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Week 6 – Healing the Man Born Blind

Theme: Seeing with New Eyes

Read: John 9:1–12

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ³ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We^[a] must work the works of him who sent me^[b] while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’ ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷ saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, ‘Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?’ ⁹ Some were saying, ‘It is he.’ Others were saying, ‘No, but it is someone like him.’ He kept saying, ‘I am the man.’ ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, ‘Then how were your eyes opened?’ ¹¹ He answered, ‘The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed and received my sight.’ ¹² They said to him, ‘Where is he?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’

Opening Devotional

The disciples begin with blame; Jesus begins with purpose. This sign challenges the assumption that suffering must always be explained. Jesus reframes the man’s blindness as a place where God’s work will be revealed.

Lent invites us to reconsider how we see—ourselves, others, and God. Healing unfolds gradually, not all at once. Sight is restored, but understanding grows over time. Faith matures through honest testimony rather than complete certainty.

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Discussion Questions

1. What does this story teach about blame and purpose?
2. How do people respond to change?
3. Where might God be inviting you to see differently?

Going a Little Deeper

1. How does the man's understanding of Jesus grow?
2. What does spiritual blindness look like today?

Personal Reflection

Ask God to reveal any blind spots in your life.

Closing Prayer

God of light and truth, we thank You for opening our eyes—slowly, patiently, and with grace. Where we have been quick to judge, teach us compassion. Where we have been blind to Your work, give us new sight. Help us trust that You are at work even when understanding comes gradually. Shape our lives into honest testimony of what You have done, and continue to draw us into deeper faith. We place ourselves before You, asking to see more clearly through Your love. Amen.

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Week 7 – Raising Lazarus

Theme: Resurrection Hope

Read: John 11:1–44

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus,^[a] ‘Lord, he whom you love is ill.’ ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’ ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus^[b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, ‘Let us go to Judea again.’ ⁸ The disciples said to him, ‘Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?’ ⁹ Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.’ ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.’ ¹² The disciples said to him, ‘Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.’ ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’ ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin,^[c] said to his fellow-disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’

Opening Devotional

This sign brings us face-to-face with grief, delay, and death. Jesus does not hurry past sorrow. He listens, weeps, and enters fully into human pain. Yet He also speaks a word that changes everything.

Lent reminds us that resurrection hope does not deny suffering—it redeems it. Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb and invites the community to help unbind him. New life is given by Christ, but it is lived together.

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Discussion Questions

1. What does this story reveal about Jesus' authority over death?
2. How do Martha and Mary express faith differently?
3. What areas of life feel beyond hope?

Going a Little Deeper

1. What does "I am the resurrection and the life" mean now?
2. Why does Jesus involve the community?

Personal Reflection

Where might Jesus be calling you into new life?

Closing Prayer

Risen Lord, we thank You for meeting us in grief, delay, and doubt—and for speaking life where death seems to have the final word. Call us out of the places that bind us with fear, despair, or resignation. Surround us with community that helps us live into the freedom You give. As we move toward Easter, anchor us in resurrection hope that shapes how we live today. We trust that Your love is stronger than death and Your life is still unfolding among us. Amen.