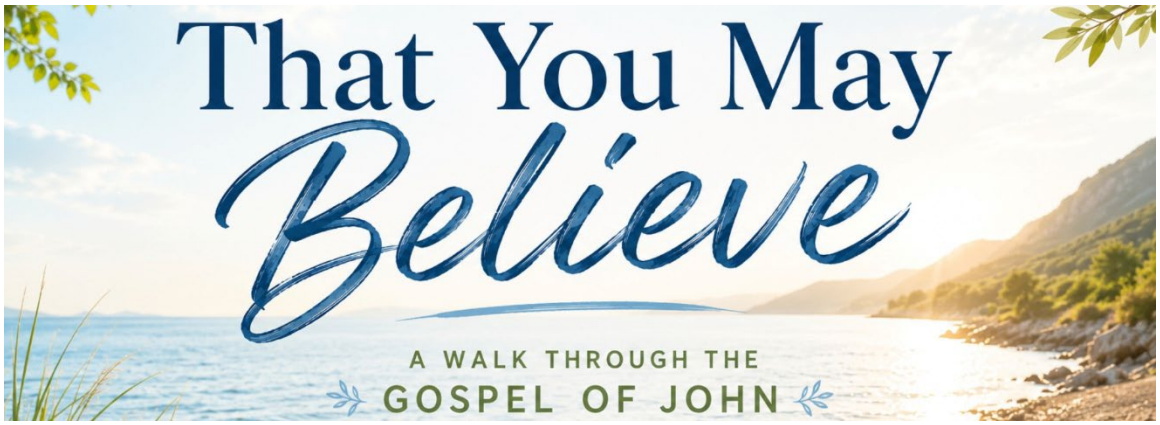

That You May Believe: A Walk Through the Gospel of John - Wk 26

(John 16:16-31)

Sunday, November 22, 2026

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Themes: Faith, Suffering, God's Love, Hope, and Divine Presence

Day 1: You Can Follow and Still Have Questions

Reading: John 16:16-19

In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples that in a little while they will no longer see him, and then a little while after that they will see him again. The disciples are confused and begin questioning among themselves what he means.

Devotional: Following Jesus does not require having all the answers. The disciples walked with Jesus daily, witnessed his miracles, and heard his teaching firsthand, yet they still struggled to understand what he was doing. Their confusion did not disqualify them. It is worth noting that questions and movement are not mutually exclusive. You can ask why and still take the next step. The danger is not in having questions; it is in allowing those questions to bring your spiritual walk to a standstill. God is not threatened by your confusion. He is patient with it. Whatever you are facing today that you do not understand, keep moving. Keep following. Trust that clarity often comes on the other side of obedience.

Reflection: What question have you been waiting to have answered before you take your next step of faith? What would it look like to take that step today, even without the answer?

Practical Application: Write down one area of your life where confusion has caused you to stall spiritually. Commit to taking one step of obedience in that area this week, even without full understanding.

Day 2: Sorrow Can Become Joy

Reading: John 16:20-22

In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples that they will weep and mourn while the world rejoices, but that their grief will be turned into joy. He compares this to a woman enduring the pain of childbirth, whose anguish gives way to joy the moment her child is born.

Devotional: Jesus does not promise to simply replace your sorrow with something better. He promises to transform the very thing that brought you pain into a source of deep and lasting joy. That is a fundamentally different kind of hope. A substitution says your suffering is discarded. A transformation says your suffering is redeemed. The image of childbirth is striking because the pain and the joy share the same origin. The same experience that brought the mother to her knees in agony is the very experience that placed a child in her arms. God is not indifferent to your pain. He is working within it. Do not judge what God is doing by how you feel in the moment.

Reflection: Can you identify a past season of pain that God eventually transformed into something meaningful or joyful? How does that memory inform the way you are viewing your current difficulties?

Practical Application: Spend time in prayer today specifically naming the sorrow or difficulty you are carrying. Ask God not merely to remove it, but to redeem it and reveal his purposes within it.

Day 3: Do Not Let Sorrow Become a Barrier

Reading: John 16:23-24

In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples that they will be able to ask the Father directly in his name and that the Father will grant their requests. He encourages them to ask, so that they may receive and their joy may be made complete.

Devotional: Before Jesus came, access to God required an intermediary. The disciples understood that dynamic deeply. So when Jesus told them they could approach the Father directly and personally in his name, it was a radical and stunning promise. It was also a promise given in the middle of a conversation about suffering and sorrow. That timing is not accidental. Jesus knew that difficulty would tempt them to withdraw from God rather than draw near to him. The same temptation exists for us. When life is hard, prayer can feel hollow or even pointless. But Jesus instructs us to do the opposite of withdrawing. He calls us to bring our sorrow directly to the Father, who loves us and hears us.

Reflection: Do you tend to draw near to God or pull away from him when circumstances are painful or confusing? What does your honest pattern reveal about your view of God during hard seasons?

Practical Application: Make prayer your first response today rather than your last resort. Before seeking outside counsel, scrolling for distraction, or attempting to solve a problem on your own, bring it to God first and wait for his direction.

Day 4: God's Love Is Greater Than Your Uncertainty

Reading: John 16:25-28

In this passage, Jesus speaks plainly about his relationship with the Father and reminds his disciples that the Father himself loves them dearly, not merely because of Jesus, but because they have loved Jesus and believed that he came from God.

Devotional: One of the most subtle and damaging habits in the Christian life is interpreting God's love through the lens of circumstances. When things are going well, we feel loved. When things fall apart, we quietly wonder if God is disappointed in us or has withdrawn his favor. Jesus directly challenges this thinking. He makes clear that the Father's love for his people is personal, deep, and unwavering. It is not contingent on favorable conditions. It existed before your difficulty began, it remains steady within it, and it will outlast it entirely. His love is not a reward for good seasons. It is the constant beneath every season. Whatever you are facing, you are not facing it as someone unloved.

Reflection: In what ways do your current circumstances tempt you to question whether God loves you or is present with you? What does Scripture say in response to that temptation?

Practical Application: Memorize or meditate on Romans 8:38-39, where Paul declares that nothing in all creation is able to separate us from the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus. Let that truth speak directly to whatever uncertainty you are carrying today.

Day 5: Take Heart -- He Has Overcome

Reading: John 16:29-33

In this passage, Jesus acknowledges the disciples' declaration of faith, then gently challenges whether it will hold under pressure. He closes by telling them plainly that in this world they will have trouble, but that they should take heart because he has overcome the world.

Devotional: This is one of the most honest and encouraging statements in all of Scripture. Jesus does not promise his followers a trouble-free life. He promises them a trouble-filled life with an overcomer at their side. The word translated as "overcome" carries the weight of complete and final victory. Jesus is not saying he will help you manage your difficulties. He is saying he has already conquered everything you will ever face. There is no trial too deep, no grief too heavy, no confusion too great that falls outside the scope of his victory. You do not fight for victory. You fight from it. Whatever you are walking through today, you walk through it with someone who has already been to the other side.

Reflection: Where in your life do you most need to hear the words "take heart"? How does the reality of Christ's victory over the world change the way you face that specific struggle?

Practical Application: Identify one area of your life where fear or discouragement has taken root. Write down John 16:33 and place it somewhere visible this week as a daily reminder that your circumstances do not have the final word. He does.