

Low Budget Theology Daily Reflection Series:
The Seven Signs of the Gospel of John
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Presenter Notes and Outline for Each Video Session

Session One: Introduction to the Series

Welcome to the series

- Why do a series?
- A new way to do adult formation in our digital and personal-preference driven age.

What is the format?

- 16 videos, around 20 to 25 minutes each.
- You do not need to watch them, you can listen- there will not be visual aids or maps.
- I will be focusing mainly on seven signs or events given to us in John's Gospel.
- Some of the content is straight theology
- Other portions are more homily-type reflections, lessons, meditations
- You may have the videos emailed to each day as the series is unveiled, you can find them on the web, you can re-listen, you can email them to friends and to your enemies.

What is required?

- Nothing. But, you might like a Bible because I am not going to read aloud the Scripture passages that I will be talking about, I will only provide the citations.
- If you want written notes to follow, they will be on the website to download.

Opening Prayer: Hail Mary

Some Points on How the Gospels came to be and how to understand them

- The 4 Gospels are the inspired word of God and they provide our most treasured literary portraits of Jesus Christ.
- The Church has preserved and protected them because we believe they present Jesus in a way that is critical for how the community of faith must know him then and now.
- Bear in mind that they are not really eye-witness reporting stories. They are works of literature which means that they were crafted by authors in such a way as to capture the Jesus who the authors knew with the faith of the Church.
- Therefore, each Gospel writer is going to emphasize different points about Jesus because they feel it is important that their convictions about the truth of Jesus' identity come through.
- The Church has always believed that the process of listening to Jesus, preaching about Jesus, and then crafting these literary portraits of Jesus was protected and inspired by God to give us the picture of him that we need for salvation and faith.
- The Four Gospels share a tremendous amount in common about Jesus, but they do not line up on every detail. But that is okay- all of it is part of our rich, combined portrait of the Savior.

- *This all means that we can learn a lot by studying what is unique about each Gospel writer to understand how they intentionally craft their story to show us what is important to them, and therefore to us, about who Jesus is.*

Some points about John's Gospel as a Whole:

John is unique:

- John has a different approach to portraying Jesus than Matthew, Mark, and Luke
- Possibly written the latest of the four Gospels and is the product of more extended reflection on the events themselves
- John is a mix of very historical with precise details, and also deeply theological, and heavily symbolic.

What Are Some Key Attributes of Jesus as John Presents him?

In John, Jesus' ministry is marked by a series of feasts and festivals of the Temple

- Three years of time is covered in his Gospel, as marked by the festivals that are observed.
- Jesus will show himself to be the one who fulfills and replaces the major feasts, and who also fulfills and replaces the temple.

In John, Jesus has strong opposition to "the Jews"

- "The Jews" means the leaders of the Temple- the establishment

In John, Jesus is always being misunderstood

- Jesus is the revealer of the Father and the Holy Spirit and the plan of God in a radical and unrepeatable way.
- Humanity does not understand or accept Jesus
- Various characters and events in John's Gospel represent different types of responses to Jesus.
- Jesus is going to show that we are loved anyway even in our misunderstandings.
- *One must read John on several layers at once, with every detail and event communicating multiple meanings about the person of Jesus Christ and our response to him.*

In John, salvation means being in friendship with Jesus

In John, this friendship means believing his word, and it means sacramental life: Baptism and Eucharist especially.

In John, Jesus is the bringer of indestructible life that he wants to give to us all.

In John, Jesus spends his public ministry leading up to his greatest act of love, namely, his death and resurrection, which Jesus calls his hour

This is how Jesus completes and perfects the salvation offered to the Jews, and then expands it to the whole world.

The signs:

- In John, Jesus is going to reveal himself in a very important way through the working of a series of signs, which will all lead up to the ultimate act of revelation of the Cross and Resurrection.

- These seven signs and the dialogue around them make up the largest portion of the Gospel of John, and they will be the central focus of this series.
- What are they? How do we understand them? What lessons do we learn from them? How are we saved by them?

End of Session One