



BROKEN SIGNPOSTS

**Sermon-based Guide
for Reflection and Discussion**

Week of November 7

Scripture: John 4:16-26, 15:1-8

Sermon Title: *Broken Signposts: Spirituality*

Summary:

In John 4:16-26, Jesus encounters the woman from Samaria and reveals that both her internal longing to be known/loved and her external desire to worship rightly are fulfilled in his own person.

NT Wright describes spirituality as “anything but Christian” in most modern minds.

At its best, people who desire to explore “spirituality” want to be attentive to the inner life of the soul and the invisible realities of the world. But it goes astray so quickly—at its worst, “spirituality” means no external constraints or forms, the self becomes god, a new form of the old heresy of gnosticism. Hence the phrase “spiritual but not religious.”

People are right to reject empty “religion” that has no spiritual depth. But we’ve too often thrown out the baby with the bathwater.

In Jesus it all comes together and makes sense, and is fulfilled. In Jesus, spirituality looks different: the completion and fulfillment of both the internal rearranging that the soul requires, and the external (re-)orientation in worship and fellowship.

John 15:1-8 unfolds the image of “abiding” in Jesus. That’s how disciples stay “spiritual”—by staying connected to the vine and allowing ourselves to be pruned/cleansed. Only then can we be little Christs in the world, branches of his Spirit extending out.

Questions:

1. How do you understand the word “spirituality”? Does it have positive or negative connotations to you?
2. Describe how spirituality relates, or doesn’t relate, to your own Christian faith.
3. Consider Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:1-10. Have you been “born from above” or “born again”? What does that mean in your life?
4. Think about Jesus’ invitation to abide in him (John 15:4). What practices help you to abide in Jesus—corporate worship, prayer, walks in nature, Bible study, etc?