

# In Him is Life



**A Devotional Study of The Gospel of John**

**Len Rossow**  
City Link Resouce Centre  
Email: [len@citylinkgc.com.au](mailto:len@citylinkgc.com.au)

**OUTLINE**

- Week 1:** Introduction and structure of John's gospel
- The Prologue: John 1: 1-18 ...The themes of John's gospel
  - John the Baptist and the first disciples 1: 19-51

- Week 2: The Book of Signs:**
- 1. Jesus and the institutions of Judaism** 2: 1 – 4: 54
- The wedding in Cana 2: 1-11
  - Cleansing the Temple 2:12-25
  - Nicodemus & the new birth 3: 1-15
  - The woman at the well 4: 1-42

- Week 3:**
- 2. Jesus and the Festivals of Judaism** 5: 1 – 10: 42
- Sabbath .. Healing the Lame Man 5: 1-30
  - Passover .. Jesus: the Bread of Life. 6: 1-71
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- Week 4:**
- Tabernacles .. Jesus: The light of the World. 8:12 - 9:41
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- 3. The Foreshadowing of Jesus Death and Resurrection:**
- Lazarus – the sign of death conquered 11: 1-57
  - Jesus, anointed for burial, enters Jerusalem to die 12: 1-50

- Week 5: The Book of Glory:**
- 1. Jesus prepares His disciples for His Departure.** 13:1 – 17:26
- The Foot –washing, betrayal & denial 13
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  - Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life 14: 6-11

- Week 6:**
- The promise of answered prayer 14-16
  - The gift of the Holy Spirit 14-16
  - Overcoming through persecution and trouble. 15-16
  - Jesus, the True Vine 15: 1-17
  - The high priestly prayer 17
  - The arrest and trial. 18:1-19:16

- Week 7:** The Glorification of the Son of God -
- Crucifixion 19: 17-37
  - The Disciples journey to faith. 20
  - Epilogue: 21

## Introduction:

**Purpose:** The purpose of the gospel of John is clearly stated in 20:31 ***but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing you may have life in His name.***

**Audience** - for whom is the Gospel written? There are two schools of thought .. either

1) **Intensely Greek:** The gospel was produced in a Hellenistic community strongly influenced by the writing and thoughts of Plato, Philo and early gnosticism.

Or

2) **“Thoroughly Palestinian”** written as an apologetic against the backdrop of:

- Rabbinic Judaism
- Hellenistic Judaism
- Sectarian Judaism - the Essenes & The followers of John the Baptist

## Author and Date:

John's gospel is dated between 60 – 90AD.

Is John, the son of Zebedee, the enigmatic “beloved disciple”? Though he does not name himself, both internal evidence (elimination of other close disciples - Peter and James) and external evidence (Polycarp; Irenaeus; Papias) confirm his authorship.

## Simple yet Profound:

John's gospel has the smallest and simplest Greek vocabulary of any New Testament book; he uses just over 400 Greek words. But in spite of this simplicity, there is incredible spiritual depth in this book. One theologian said it is “*shallow enough for babies to wade in, but deep enough for elephants to drown in*”.

## Outline – Structure:

If we break up John's gospel into units noting major narrative shifts, it becomes clear that the gospel is *topically arranged*, even though the units or stories themselves have a clear historical and chronological character. In Chapters 2-4, the context is related to institutions in Judaism; while Chapters 5-10 are set in the context of Jewish festivals. In each of these (institutions and festivals) Jesus brings messianic fulfilment into an aspect of Jewish religious life. (water from the ceremonial law becomes wine; manna becomes living bread ) John is telling us more about the transformation Jesus as Messiah brings than about the sequence of events in Jesus' ministry. Here we have a careful, deliberate structure.

Keep in mind that the present chapter divisions in the gospel were added in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. When we look closely at the flow of the gospel we can identify the following structure. The Book is divided into 2 basic sections.

**Chapters 1-12** is called the “**Book of Signs**”, since it records Jesus' numerous miracles that unveil who Jesus is. It is a record of Jesus' public ministry including these signs and teaching that flows out of them..

**Chapters 13-21** (uniting the upper room and passion sections) is called the “**Book of Glory**”, since on the cross Jesus is glorified (13:31)

## The Book of Signs (John 1-12)

The opening verses (1:1-18) serve as a curtain-raiser to the drama, which really begins at 1:19. In 1:19-51 we walk with the early disciples as they meet Jesus. The story moves quickly from scene to scene: a miracle at Cana; cleansing the temple; Nicodemus, the woman at the well...

### a. Jesus and the Jewish institutions, 2:1- 4:54

In 2:1- 4:54, the significant element in the Jewish institution is identified, and Jesus is seen replacing it with His own presence.

- At Cana, purification vessels 2:1-12
- In Jerusalem, the temple, 2:13-25
- In Jerusalem, a rabbi, 3:1-21
- In Samaria, a sacred well, 4:1-42
- Return to Cana (close of the institutions section), 4:43-54

### b. Jesus and Jewish festivals, 5:1-10:42

As in the previous section, the festival is mentioned and its primary symbols described. Jesus then replaces the symbol or demonstrates His own authority over its meaning. At tabernacles, when the temple was performing water and light ceremonies, Jesus stands in the temple and announces that He is “living water” and “the light of the world.”

- a. Sabbath, 5:1-47
- b. Passover, 6:1-71
- c. Tabernacles (A festival of water and light), 7:1-52
  - A sermon on light, 8:12-30
  - A conflict narrative on light and blindness, 9:1-41
- d. Dedication (or Hannukah), 10:1-39
- e. Return to the Baptist (close of the festival section), 10:40-42

### c. Foreshadowing of Jesus' death and resurrection, 11:1-12:50

- a. Lazarus: A sign of death being conquered, 11:1-57
- b. Jesus, anointed for death, enters Jerusalem to die, 12:1-50

The literary units are introduced by *internal* signals as below:

- Events in Cana (**the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> signs**) frame the section on Jewish institutions.
- **The festivals are named** .. In each scene Jesus does something that utilizes the symbol of that festival in His teaching (Sabbath-work, Passover-bread, Tabernacles-water and light, Dedication-Jesus' consecration). In the following debate and teaching, He builds on the meaning of the symbols.
- **The final reference to John the Baptist** (10:40-42) refers back to the beginning of the entire sequence of signs (1:19 ff), making another closing frame and reiterating the value of Jesus' signs.
- The closing two chapters serve as a sobering warning of what is to come.

**The Book of Glory (John 13-21)**

In this section Jesus turns in private to his disciples during His final Passover.

- He teaches them privately about servant-hood, washing their feet,
- He explains the coming Holy Spirit in terms of personal revelation and persecution,
- He prays at length for his followers and their disciples.

Chapter 18 opens the story of the trial and death of Jesus. As an extended narrative it reads much like the other gospels, moving quickly from scene to scene without the characteristic discourses that are central to the rest of the gospel.

- The crucifixion is followed by a detailed resurrection account in which Jesus imparts the Spirit to His Disciples.
- Chapter 21 adds resurrection stories in Galilee and the restoration of Peter.

A suggested outline of the Book of Glory is as follows:

<b>1. The Passover meal,</b>	<b>13: 1-30</b>
a. The footwashing,	13: 1-20
b. The betrayal of Judas,	13:- 21-30
<b>2. The farewell sermon</b>	<b>13: 31 –17:26</b>
a. Jesus' departure and provision,	13:31-14:31
b. The True Vine,	15:1-17
c. The disciples and the world,	15:18-16:33
1. The hostility of the world,	15:18-16:4a
2. Further Work of the Spirit,	16:4b-33
d. The priestly prayer of Jesus,	17:1-26
<b>3. The Suffering and Death of Jesus,</b>	<b>18:1-19:42</b>
Arrest, and interrogation,	18:1-19:16
1. Arrest,	18:1-11
2. The Jewish trial,	18:12-27
3. The Roman trial,	18:28-19:16
b. Crucifixion and burial,	19:17-37
<b>4. The Resurrection,</b>	<b>20:1-29</b>
<b>5. Epilogue,</b>	<b>21: 1-25</b>
a. The miracle of 153 fish,	21:1-14
b. Jesus and Peter,	21:15-23
c. Editorial appendix,	21:24-25

The book of Glory is dominated by the events of the upper room and the passion account. From chapters 13-17 Jesus is centre stage, preparing His disciples for His death. John 18-19 has more parallels with the other Gospels than any other section.

## **Week 1: Day 1**

The Prologue (John 1:1-18) introduces the major theological themes explored in John's Gospel. This Gospel has the feel of many years of theological reflection on the identity and mission of Jesus undergirded by years of experience of walking with the risen Lord.

**Read through John 1:1-5      Compare with Genesis 1:1-3**

### **1) The Word and God**

*in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with God and the Word was God***

*"In the beginning"* contains two concepts.

- the initial moment of creation - The Word was already before time began.
- at the root (basic cause) of the universe. - The Word was the agency through which creation came to be. There never was a time when the Word was not.

*"with God"* - not just existence alongside, but the preposition here carries the nuance of **towards** God (in personal relationship with)

Note how verse 2 repeats this concept (ie This is being highlighted)

***The Word was God*** -

- This is not 'God was the Word' – which would mean they are the same.
- The Word was God leaves open the possibility that there is more to God than the Word.

From John's word order in the Greek, he is saying emphatically that the Word is fully God.

**In Summary then:** We are dealing in the first verse with the Word in:

- His origin - beyond time - always was
- His personal existence - in active communion with God
- His nature - fully God

### **2) The Word and Creation      (vs 3-5)**

- The Word is the agency through which all things came to be.
- Not one thing exists outside His creative activity / power and sustaining presence.

***Personal Meditation:***

***The Word was with God .... Think about why John includes this statement and what significance it holds.***

## Week 1: Day 2

## John 1: 1-5

**Background Notes:** ( The material below is adapted from Xenos Christian Fellowships Web Site ... *An outline of John 1 :1-18* by Gary DeLashmutt .) accessed February 2003

***The WORD.*** (Greek ...Logos)

This term is found in Greek philosophy –It was creative energy – the all-prevailing force that holds the universe together – the force that originated and permeated all things.

It also has a strong Jewish background. Creation comes into being through God's spoken word (Gen 1:1-2:4a). God's word always accomplishes God's will (Is 55: 6-11).

**For the Greek,** John uses their own philosophical term as the starting point for his message. From their observation of order in the external universe and human rationality, they believed there must be some universal "reason" which undergirds reality and provides meaning for the universe. They sometimes called this "cosmic rationality" (or Ultimate Reality) the *logos*.

But the philosophers weren't sure where to go from there. There was endless speculation and disagreement about the nature of this *logos*: is it personal or impersonal? is it eternal? What is its relationship to the material world? is it interested or disinterested in humanity? Using their own term for Ultimate Reality, John answers their questions with a series of staggering statements

- **The *logos* is eternal (vs 1a).** "In any beginning already there was the *logos*." The *logos* is the uncaused Cause, the self-existent Ground of Reality beyond which it is impossible to go.
- **The *logos* is the Creator of the universe (vs 3).**  
The universe is of itself not eternal (NATURALISTS), nor is it somehow God (ANIMISM & PANTHEISM). It was "spoken into existence" by the *logos*.

**For the Jew,** he takes them back to the beginning in Genesis and proclaims that this word became flesh in Jesus Christ. ( vs14)

- **The *logos* is a Person.** The *logos* is not called "it," but "he" (vs 2) and "him" (vs 3).
- **The *logos* is deity, or God (vs 1c).** The Greek construction emphasizes this.
- **The *logos* is also personally distinct from God**

He is both God, and was also always "**face to face**" with God. ....

- **The *logos* is Jesus (vs 14a).** The historical Person Jesus of Nazareth, who was born into the human race at Bethlehem around 4 BC and died around 30-33 AD, is in fact God, the infinite-personal-eternal Creator of the whole universe! ...But John doesn't stop here. Jesus is not only the answer to the most abstract philosophical questions about Ultimate Reality.
- He is also ***the Saviour of humanity***. Read vs 4,5 and 14-18

**LIFE .....( ZOE)****Vs 4-5 "in him was *life*,"**

Here John uses a special Greek word to define a special kind of life. He doesn't use **bios** (physical life) or **psuche** (human consciousness). He uses **zoe**, ( creative, vital ) to refer to the spiritual life that comes from God.

In John Zoe (life) and zao (live) appear 55 times – referring particularly to the special gift of God - eternal life - life that death can't destroy - life that consists of a vital and intimate relationship with the Father and the Son. It is a qualitative term, different from natural life. John 10:10 & John.17:3.

**"This life was the *light* of mankind."**

This spiritual life is what gives human existence meaning and direction. We have been created to know God personally, to fellowship with him and live in his purpose for our lives.

Life is in the Word and it gives Light to the soul – ie reveals spiritual realities wisdom / revelation / understanding / direction for life – exposes human sin – reveals Divine Truth.

**Where can we get this spiritual light / life?**

Like us, John was living in a world where there were many competing claims for spiritual light and life. John powerfully presents Jesus ... the Word (logos) as the only true source: "*In him was life . . .*" (vs 4). "*There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every person . . .*" (vs 9). Only in Jesus has "*the logos become flesh*" (vs 14). Only through Jesus who *comes from the Father's side has the Father been made known.* (vs 18) There is no room here to consider Jesus as one of many ways to God. He is either God incarnate and *the Way the Truth and the Life* (John 14:6)-- or Christianity is false.

***The Light shines in the darkness but the darkness did not understand it (vs5)***

It is the nature of LIGHT to diminish the DARKNESS. It continues to shine from the beginning and for all time. The darkness *could not take hold* of the light, in the sense of - *understand; take it prisoner; overcome it.* Note the change of tense in vs. 5:

- *shines* - present continuous tense.
- *did not overcome* ( aorist tense) ie past action of one moment of time. (ie. the crucifixion)

***Personal Meditation:***

**Meditate on the verse *In Him was Life and that life was the Light of men. In what ways is that life the light of humanity?***

## Week 1: Day 3

## John 1: 6-13

*There came a man sent from God ..... He came as a witness to the LIGHT  
He himself was not the LIGHT*

*The true light was coming into the world (according to the unfolding plan of God).*

### **The WORLD. (kosmos)**

*John uses this word primarily as the world turned away from God. Even though it was created through the Word, it doesn't know Him (v10). It is like children not knowing (or appreciating) their parents. It is this world that God so loves (3:16) and to which the light / Son is sent to save (1:9, 3:17, 19). The world will hate Jesus' followers (15:18-19, 16:33,17:14), but we, following in His steps, are sent to live in the world (17:11,18).*

**The Great Tragedy:** The Word was in the world continuously .... The world that He made and yet the world did not know Him - at the point of time when He came into their midst they were in darkness.... They did not recognize Him.

**But the tragedy is even greater:** **HIS OWN.** (God's special treasure) **did not receive Him** (the very people who should be expected to receive Him) "*did not receive*" – a decisive act of rejection (aorist tense in the Greek).

**But some did receive Him - to them He gave** (a gift) **the Power** (an authority to stand in a particular relationship with the Father. They are empowered by His grace to live in their position as children of God.)

**to become children of God** ( power to change to be like Him... His children.)

- this gift is entirely God's action.
- not of natural descent (*we are Abraham's children*)
- Not of human action
- Nor of any human decision

**Born not of natural descent ....** **le** not about being from a particular family / ethnic background. .... It is about believing / receiving.

- **"the will of the flesh"**--human moral achievement. Being morally better than most people doesn't qualify you to be a member of God's family--you have to receive Christ. And being morally worse than most people doesn't disqualify you from becoming a child of God--you can still do so by receiving Christ.
- **"the will of a husband"**--other people's decisions about Jesus. You have to make your own decision....

### **Personal Meditation: How Will You Respond To Jesus?**

*Jesus is who he is regardless of how you respond to him. But that doesn't make your response to him unimportant. In fact, your response to Jesus is the most important decision you will ever make ..What does it mean to receive Him? Have you?*

**Week 1: Day 4 John 1: 14-18**

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us*

**The Word and God** vs 1 (in eternity) vs 14 (in time)

*The Word was **in the beginning** - became (in time)*

*The Word was **with God** - tabernacled amongst us*

*The Word was **God** - He became flesh*

**DWELT (tabernacled )**

***The Word (logos) became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us.***(1:14).

The Greek word *skenoō* translated 'dwelt' can be translated 'tabernacled'.

In the Old Testament, God's glory filled the Tabernacle (*skene*).

***and we have seen His Glory.*** The glory resulting from the immediate presence of the Lord is referred to quite often in Jewish writings. It is linked with the *Shekinah*, a word that means 'dwelling' and is used of God's dwelling among His people.

As A.M. Ramsey says, "*we are reminded both of the tabernacle in the wilderness and of the prophetic imagery of Yahweh tabernacling in the midst of His people, and of the Shekinah which He causes to dwell among them ...the place of His dwelling is the flesh of Jesus*"

*"All the ways of tabernacling of God in Israel had been transitory or incomplete: all are fulfilled and superseded by the Word-made-flesh and dwelling among us"*  
(*The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*; London 1949 pp 59-60)

What had been experienced in Israel's history now has another yet fuller dimension. That John had in mind the *Shekinah* and the glory that was associated with it seems further indicated by the his statement that the glory was ***"the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father."***

**For John - the true glory that was seen in Jesus is not that of outward appearance but rather it is seen in His humility and sacrificial death on the cross**

**It is a glory full of grace** (power to redeem) **and truth** - revelation of what God is like.

**only son**, Literally the Greek means "of a single (*monos*) kind (*genos*)" *Monogenes* describes a quality of Jesus, his uniqueness. It reflects the Hebrew *Yahid* "only, precious," which is used in Gen 22: 2,12,16, of Abraham's son Isaac, as *monogenes* is in Heb 11: 17.

***Personal Meditation:***

***Vs 14 is an astounding verse. Meditate on the claim John is making here.***

## Week 1: Day 5

## John 1: 14-18

**The Word's Surpassing Excellence (vs. 14-18)** (A new era of redemptive History)  
 Jesus Christ fulfils what was foreshadowed and surpasses the elements of the O.T. era:

- The prophets (John the Baptist) John 1:15
- The Law (Moses) – This is the gift of Grace and Truth that Moses brings.
- Jesus brings grace and truth that replaces / surpasses that of Moses

**Full of Grace and Truth** ..... (Greek...*charis* and *aletheia*;) )

These two words are used here in a unique way reflecting the Hebrew O.T. pairing of *hesed* and *'emet*.

- God's *hesed* is His kindness or mercy in choosing Israel in the covenant. Suggested translations are: "covenant love," "merciful love," "loving-kindness."
- God's *'emet* is His faithfulness to the covenant promises. Suggested translations are: "constancy, faithfulness"

In Exodus 34: 6 we hear this description of Yahweh as He makes the covenant with Moses on Sinai: "The Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and *rich in hesed and 'emet*" See also Ps 25: 19, 61: 7, 86; 15; Prov 20: 28

**The One and Only who came from the Father was full of Grace**

"Grace" means more than God's unmerited favour. We could understand it as God's empowering presence. It covers not only the incredible free gift of his love, mercy and forgiveness, but also the power to transform lives. The same Jesus who knew and exposed the disciples' sinfulness was also an inexhaustible source of grace (vs 16) to both cleanse and renew. No matter how badly we fail; no matter how foolish and sinful we are; there is enough grace to more than meet us in loving transforming power.

**He was full of Truth**

"Truth" means reality, the way things really are. The Truth Jesus reveals, is not the teaching about God, facts or information but rather **a reality to be entered into and experienced**. This reality is one shaped by the Creator of the universe and is therefore the only one with any ultimate validity.

As they came to know Jesus, he inevitably exposed people for who they really were. He exposed the pretence and hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders.

**NIV: From the fullness of His grace, we all have received one blessing after another**  
 (Vs 16) **literally: Grace in place of grace**

**Of His fullness** ... Christ is the infinite source of all our blessings

**Different from the Old Testament**

God's Law gave an outline of His moral character and a foreshadowing of His mercy. But Jesus showed us all we could grasp about God's character and made God's mercy and transforming power accessible to us. vs 17 contrasts the enduring love shown in the Law with the supreme example of enduring love shown in Jesus. There is no suggestion in

John that when the Law was given through Moses, it was not a magnificent act of God's love. A contrast similar in spirit to that of John 1:17 is found in Hebrews 1:1: "God spoke of old to our ancestors through the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us through His Son."

Verse 17 is identifying two wonderful gifts of grace:

- **the Law given through Moses** and
- **grace and truth given through Jesus Christ.**

There is no repudiation of the gift of the Jewish Law in the Fourth Gospel. It was something of value, but now a new gift is being offered which fulfils and perfects the former gift to Israel.

***No one has ever seen God. It is God, the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, (vs18)***

( literally: into the bosom of the Father ... "Bosom" denotes affection/ intimacy.)

***has made Him known .... "exoegeomai"*** (related to "exegesis") –  
Jesus "draws out .. interprets " the Father for us.

Lowe and Nida in their Semantic Lexicon give these two definitions for the Greek word:

- (1) "to provide detailed information in a systematic manner"
- (2) "to make something fully known by careful explanation or by clear revelation."

This is the great mission of Jesus - the *Logos* - The True Light

### ***Personal Meditation:***

***Take time to reflect on the blessings you have received in Christ as part of the new covenant.***

- ***What grace have you experienced from His fullness***
- ***What grace do you need today .... Ask Him to supply out of the richness of Fullness.***
  
- ***How has He revealed Himself as Truth to you.***
- ***What Truth do you need to see today.***

## Week 1: Day 6

## John 1: 1-18

Today go back and read John 1:1-18 as a whole.

What catches your attention as you do that. Meditate on that for the next 10 minutes.

Themes in the Prologue (these concepts continue to be developed through John's Gospel)

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Titles of JESUS: | a) The Word  |
|                  | b) The Life  |
|                  | c) The Light |
|                  | a. The Son   |

### 1) In relation to God, .. He is the WORD and the SON.

**Jesus as the WORD**, i.e. the *expression* of God, not only towards man, and not only from ancient times but before all creation. He was not merely *from* the beginning; He already was, "in the beginning" (verse 1). He was not only "with God"; He "was God".

As a word may be distinguished from the thought that lies behind it, so can the Son be distinguished from the Father. Yet as there cannot be a word apart from the thought behind it, so also "God" and the "Word" must exist together. They are distinguishable but inseparable.

**Jesus as The SON** -- the concept of the Word in relation to God is made more personal through the use of Son in relationship with the Father. As we struggle to grasp all this with our limited categories and understanding, John proclaims to us *The Logos is "with" God (vs 1). The One and Only Son is "in the bosom" of the Father (vs 18)* This is a great picture of tenderness and reciprocal love within the Godhead.

These two metaphors, the "Word" and the "Son" supplement and protect each other. Taken separately they might lead people to widely different & equally erroneous conceptions of our Lord; but when taken together each correct the possible misuse of the other.

To think of our Lord only as the eternal "Word" might suggest merely an impersonal quality or faculty in God. To think of Him only as the "Son" might falsely limit us to the concept of a personal yet created being. But the two terms combined bring home both aspects of the truth to us, and at the same time guard us from error.

### 2. in relation to humanity – He is LIFE and LIGHT.

From Him all creation is given life. From Him comes all true illumination / wisdom – both intellectual and spiritual. (vs 4 and 9)

The two terms are as equally suggestive of our Lord's deity as are the figures "Word" and "Son." In Fact, "Life" and the "Light" correspond with the "Word" and "Son."

- As the Word He is the expresser, the revealer, the illuminator, the Light.
- As the Son He is the personal executive, quickener, imparter, the Life.

And again, paralleling with these, there are two words, “grace” and “truth,” – full of “grace” to redeem man, and full of “truth” to reveal God.

He is the God-Man... Revealer-Redeemer.

### **Conclusion:**

The prologue is more than just an introduction to the gospel – it itself embodies the gospel. Jesus reveals the Father and gives LIFE and LIGHT... a gift available to whoever receives Him.

**Week 1: Day 7 John 1: 19-34**

**Read John 1: 19-28**

Who does John the Baptist say he is?

What does John the Baptist say about Jesus?

**Read John 1:29-34**

There is a time reference given. What is it .....

With each passing day there is an unfolding of revelation.  
On the next day we are taken deeper into the revelation of who Jesus is.

He is

- The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world .....
- A man who has surpassed John the Baptist because He was before him.
- The one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit
- *the Son of God*

John says: *I came baptizing in water that He might be revealed to Israel*

His testimony is: *I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.*  
John the Baptist's claim is that this was in accord with what God had told him.  
John goes on to declare this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

Old Testament expectation was that the messianic era would be an age in which the Holy Spirit would renew the hearts and transform the lives of God's people. Ezekiel 36:26-27 & 37:14. John's testimony is that with Jesus that day has come.

***Personal Meditation:***

***Choose one of the 4 dot points above and think about what that truth about who Jesus is has significance for your life today?***

**Week 2: Day 1 John 1: 35 -51**

**This is now the next day!**

In the light of the revelation of who Jesus is (presented to us by John the gospel writer) we are now being challenged to make our response as John unfolds the story of the first disciples beginning their faith journeys.

**What titles are used here to talk about Jesus or address him?**

- Lamb of God
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**The invitation, *Come & See*, is repeated in the course of the narrative here.**

**Think about how that has played out in your own journey to faith and who you could invite to come and see**

***What is Jesus claiming in vs 51 as he takes Nathaniel deeper***

*You shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. (Read Genesis 28:10-17)*

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***Personal Meditation:***

***Give thought to the concept that through Jesus the heavens are open and that He is the gate that enables access between heaven and earth.***

## Week 2: Day 2

## John 2: 1-11

Jesus Christ fulfils what was foreshadowed and surpasses each of the elements of the old redemptive era:

The Book of SignsJesus and Jewish Institutions (2:1-4:54)

## Water To Wine

## The First Sign. John 2: 1-11

John's telling of the story has a few different levels:

- The surface meaning in the story as it is conveyed. ... What does the action and dialogue in the story tell us about Jesus
- The Hidden Meaning: the detail in the story points beyond itself to highlight the significance of Jesus :
  - in relation to Judaism
  - As it relates to *His Hour*
  - For John's Christian Community.

Think through the surface and hidden meaning and in these key words and phrases

- ***On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day***      **Why does John give us this detail?**

Note the setting: A wedding banquet – a symbol for the Kingdom Of God

(Isaiah 25:6 , Matthew 22:1-14 , Luke 14:15-24, Isaiah 54:4-8, Isaiah 62:45)

What other major event of deep significance for Christians happened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day in the story of Jesus?

- ***The Mother of Jesus was there.***
- ***They have no wine*** ... Surface Meaning ... a tragedy for the wedding couple (embarrassment). Jesus intervenes and provides abundantly for their need.

Hidden or symbolic Meaning

- highlights that the era of the Torah (Law) is at an end.
- It expresses the barrenness of the Jewish ceremonial law to release life (in Rabbinic Judaism wine was a symbol for the Torah....The books of the Law.)
- ***Woman why do you involve me?....*** Jesus points out that He has another obligation ... To His heavenly Father
- ***My time (Greek ...Hora ) has not yet come*** (Vs 4) Jesus has an HOUR OF DESTINY when he will give true wine for his people. ...THE POURING OUT OF HIS BLOOD.  
This concept of an appointed time is an ongoing theme in John's gospel.

The *hour* is actually in the Father's hands.

(John 4:21-23 , John 5: 25-28, John 7: 6-8, John 7: 30, John 12:23 – 27, John 12: 31, John 13: 21, John 16: 2, John 16: 32 , John 17:1)

- ***Do whatever he tells you.*** (vs 5)  
Mary leaves the problem in Jesus' hands – In doing so she is not requesting miraculous intervention or attempting to manipulate the situation. But Jesus does have social obligations as head of His family – what will he do?
- The MC of the Banquet privately says to the Bridegroom  
*"Everyone brings out the choice wine first.....but you have saved the best till now"* (vs 10)
- ***This is the first of His miraculous signs....He thus revealed His glory and His disciples put their faith in Him.***

The first sign throws light on all the other signs. .. like an interpretive filter.

**Comment:**

This is the beginning of the signs and so must be connected to what follows for a complete picture.

- **The Messianic era is now come.** Abundance of wine is a strong symbol of joy in the Old. Testament. (Amos 9:13-14, Hosea 14:7, Jeremiah 31:12)
- **His true nature as Word made Flesh tabernacling amongst us is revealed.**

All the Jewish institutions and feasts are but shadows pointing forwards to this glorious messianic era. John's primary emphasis in the record of this sign is that through the sign Jesus' glory is revealed and the disciples put their trust in Him.

In what way did Jesus' action cause His glory to shine forth?

The Cana story is related to what precedes by the reference to the disciples and their belief noted here - it is the culmination of what began in 1:37 and fulfils the promise of Ch1:50-51

***Personal Meditation:***

*Are there elements in your practice of your Faith ...church attendance / prayer / reading the bible / witnessing /serving others / giving where you feel it doesn't carry much life.*

*Talk with Jesus about this .... I have no wine*

***Spend some time listening for His response***

***In what ways have you tasted the new wine Jesus brings?***

***Celebrate this with a time of giving thanks in prayer.***

**Week 2: Day 3**

**John 2: 12-25**



**Cleansing the Temple**

**Which Feast is mentioned in the context.**

**The temple is a place of purification through sacrifices**

**Key Words and Phrases:**

- *How dare you turn My Father's house into a market* (Zechariah 14:21)
- *zeal for your house will consume me:* (vs 17) Psalm 69:9
- *fulfilment of scripture.*
- *What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"*
- *destroy this temple and I will raise it again in 3 days" (vs 19)*  
(a reference to his death and resurrection ... a new act of deliverance, with a new temple .. the place where man and God are reconciled and where God's glory dwells.
- *the temple He spoke of was His body*

The temple took 46 years to build after the commencement of the building in 20BC. Ezekiel had prophesied a new temple (Chapters 40-47) This would be built in the Messianic Era.

**Testimony:** Jesus did not need their witness to validate his mission. He is not dependent on human approval. He was unswayed by the passing enthusiasms of people. He knew people thoroughly.

***"Jesus calls people to trust Him for what He is, not because He passes the tests we set."*** ( Morris p 182)

**Comment:**

On the symbolic level we have another transformation / replacement story  
Jesus' body will serve the function of the temple (sacrifice that atones for sin ...the place where God's presence is encountered.)

The new covenant sealed at the cross will make the temple sacrifices obsolete.

In the other gospels the cleansing of the temple comes at the conclusion of Jesus' ministry, here it is at the beginning. Are we dealing with 2 incidents? or has John in his telling of the story reorganized the chronology for his theological purpose? Note there are significant differences between John's account here and those in the other gospels.

***Personal Application:***

***Take time to give thanks for the atoning sacrifice made by Jesus on your behalf.***

## Week 2: Day 4

## John 3: 1-15

## ❖ The Visit of Nicodemus. .... The New Birth.

Nicodemus is a member of the Sanhedrin (The Jewish Ruling Council)  
He is a Religious Leader *He comes at night* ... Why?

Is there anything in this expression that alerts us to reading on the symbolic level?

- Nicodemus addresses Jesus in vs 2 as .....
- He believes Jesus is teacher who comes from God
- He believes God has worked miraculous signs through Jesus

**Meditate on / consider** ...

- What does it mean to see the Kingdom of God? Can you see.
- What is this Kingdom of God? What signs point to its presence?

In verse 3 Jesus tells Nicodemus that to see the Kingdom of God, one must be born again.

The word translated "again" properly means "from above" / "from the beginning",

**Born anew - a new beginning / Born from above - ie born of the Spirit**

(Starting afresh ... a radical new beginning ... there is no intermediary phase.)

A new birth is necessary to gain a true conception of the Kingdom of God

Think about vs 5: To *enter* the Kingdom ...ie to participate in its life one first needs to see it

**Meditate on / consider** ... What does it mean to be *born of water and the Spirit* ?

- Water stands for .....
- Spirit points to.....

No one can predict the movements of the wind and in the same way people can't comprehend the Spirit, they don't understand how this happens.

Nicodemus is baffled by all of this, even though he is a leader in Israel. John is showing us that the revelation Jesus brings is far beyond the revelation and understanding of the Pharisees and Scribes.

Consider the Biblical illustration given here in vs 14 .... Numbers 21:4-9

What did the people of Moses time need to trust, if they were to be healed and live.

What do John's readers need to trust in in order to have eternal life?

**Personal Reflection:**

***Have you be born from above? .. a change, a new beginning worked in you by the Spirit. What has changed? Give thanks to God.***

**Week 2: Day 5**

**John 3: 16-21**

**REFLECTION on the New Birth.**

*God so loved the world that He gave ...*

In John's gospel the world (cosmos) are those who are opposed to Him; those hostile to Him; rebelling against Him; cut off from him. This is an incredible love ... A love that in spite of this gave at great cost ...not holding back

The benefits of God's love are for "whoever believes"

**For Thinking through ... Meditate ... Chew over**

Consider vs 16:

- What does **Believe in Him** actually mean? What is it that John's readers are being challenged to believe.
- Saved from what? vs17 -18

Many excuses are made for not believing in Christ. But there is really only one basic reason - what is it? ( vs19 & 20 )

***Personal Reflection:***

***Is there anything you are hiding in the darkness? ... are you prepared to bring this into the light?***

***On the basis of God's giving of Himself to you in love in Jesus Christ, what action will you take this week to live in the light.***

**Week 2: Day 6**

**John 3: 27-36**



**John's Testimony:**

**Context:** - Jesus is drawing the crowds more than John  
John responds with:

- ***A man can only receive what is given him from heaven***
- ***I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of Him.*** (his role is forerunner only)
- ***I am a friend attending the bridegroom*** - waiting and listening for him - I've heard the bridegroom's voice. My joy is now complete.
- ***He must become greater; I must become less***

**Reflection:** John provides a reflection on God sending His Son into the world.  
(John 3: 31 –36)

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath remains on him - wrath is God's settled opposition to sin. God is active in opposing wrong. There is no place for neutrality.*

Divine judgment (God's wrath) cannot do otherwise than to rest on the unrepentant sinner who stubbornly rejects the offer of mercy and life. We must either believe and obey God - thus finding eternal life or refuse and so suffer the destruction that OUR choice makes inevitable.

***Meditate and pray into this question:***

***In what ways is God calling you to become less so Christ is more clearly seen in you?***

## Week 2: Day 7

## John 4: 1- 42



## Jesus gives the water of Life

Nicodemus is an eminent member of orthodox Judaism, while the woman at the well stands for one thoroughly despised by the orthodox:

- A Samaritan
- A Woman
- A sexual Sinner

A feature of the story is the way the woman persistently attempts to dodge the issues Jesus raises.

**Notes on the narrative:**

- **The word for well** signifies a well fed by a spring.
- **The 6<sup>th</sup> hour** (noon) This is an unusual time for a woman to be drawing water. (sunset was the usual)
- **Living Water** - flowing water from a river / stream rather than still water in a pond or cistern. Jesus moves the conversation to a higher plane by speaking of God's gift and of seeking living water.
- In the Old Testament, God is called: *The Spring of Living Water* (Jer. 2:13, 17:13) & *The Fountain of Life*. (Ps. 36: 9) Consider also Isa 55:1, where there is an appeal to *come to the waters* or *the waters flowing from the temple* in Ezek. 47: 1-2 & Ps 46:4
- **Is Jesus greater than Jacob?** Behind this question is a deep reverence for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and perhaps for the well itself. She struggles to see Jesus on a par with such men of renown.
- The Living Water that Jesus gives is such that those who drink are permanently satisfied because it becomes in them *a vigorous stream* – **"leaping" up** (the same word as in Acts 3:8) - to produce **eternal life**. (vs. 13-14) This life is much more than entering into a new state called *salvation*. It is abundant life - life throbbing with creative energy - life that produces life.
- Like Nicodemus the woman misunderstands.
- Jesus now brings her sin into the open, in a simple request for her to go and get her husband This would seem to be an example of Jesus using a **Word of Knowledge** - note how Jesus brings it - she is left with the choice whether or not to disclose her background. (vs 16 – 18) The issue of her husband has no apparent connection with what has been spoke about in their conversation?
- The woman recognizes Him as a **Prophet**. (vs 19) The Samaritans acknowledged no Prophet after Moses, other than the one spoken of in Deuteronomy 18: 18 and they

regarded him as the Messiah. Hence the woman is moving towards the conclusion that Jesus is Messiah.

- The woman now raises a question regarding **the right and proper way \ place of worship** (Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim) (Deuteronomy 11: 29, 27: 44) . In doing so of course she is steering the conversation away from herself. This issue was the cause of an ancient and bitter controversy between Jews and Samaritans.

#### Jesus answers her:

- **A time is coming and now is...** Jesus proclaims that a new definition of worship will be necessary in the radically new era he is bringing. The new worship will flow out of relationship with Jesus and will be marked by deep sincerity and complete authenticity in our approach to God.
  - This worship is not about places or rituals but it flows out of the experience of living water.
  - People cannot dictate the “how” or “where” of worship. They must come only in the way that the Spirit of God opens for them (ie through Jesus Christ... centred on Him as Lord, centred on His sacrificial death with all that that means)
  - God's essential nature is Spirit. He is ceaselessly active as the life-giving Spirit and He must be worshipped in a manner befitting such a Spirit.

Jesus discloses He is the Messiah. Samaritans understood Messiah not so much as a King, but more a teacher like Moses - a Prophet/Priest - the restorer of true worship.

**The woman's witness :** *Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?* The people responded warmly to her testimony “ *We know that this man really is the Saviour of the World*” (vs 42)

**The Will of the Father** - *My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.* (vs 34) **Finish** - the verb is the same as in the expression “it is finished” (19: 30) There is a single minded devotion to finishing the work and a willingness to pay the price: whether that be no food ... or the cross.

**The Harvest is ready.** **A harvest** will not wait - it must be reaped or it will be ruined. **The others** could be identified as John the Baptist, the Patriarchs (Jacob), the woman

#### ❖ **Jesus returns to Galilee where He is welcomed. (vs 43 – 45)**

The Lord had not been received with due honour at Jerusalem. (*He came to His own and His own received Him not...*) His messianic claim had not been welcomed. He did not trust Himself to the Jews there. He finds greater reception in Samaria and now in Galilee - the home of His disciples.

#### **For Personal Reflection and Application:**

**What then does this worship (vs24) look like?... what are the new wineskins ?**

## Week 3: Day 1

## John 4: 46-54



## Healing the royal official's son

## The second sign.

The inclusion of the story here brings us back to where this section of John (Chapters 2-4) began - Cana in Galilee.

Jesus is welcomed back into Galilee after the people had seen what He did at Passover in Jerusalem. (The challenge to the temple authorities John 2: 12-25)

Jesus reply to the man would be unexpected. (vs 50) The official believes that Jesus can heal his son if only he can come quickly. Jesus challenges him to a deeper faith to which the man responded. His son though he was in another village was healed by a spoken word.

Even though the royal official and his household believes the key point is that *a prophet has no honour in his own country*. The people of Galilee don't welcome him as Messiah. They want to see Jesus prove himself with an act of power. ...They want to see the spectacular.

But to those who can see ... This is the second sign in Cana ...a sign where Jesus is unveiling who He is. But it is a sign not seen by those who are just wanting miracles.

***So he and his household believed.*** As a result of the sign their faith moved from a belief that Jesus could do the spectacular to a belief in something more - **trust in the One who gives life.**

***Personal Reflection:******Consider the 2 signs from Cana***

- ***Water to Wine on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.***
- ***Healing by a word from a distance of approx. 20 miles***

***What do they tell us about the One who comes from the Fathers side ...***

***What do they reveal about the Father.***

## Week 3: Day 2

## Read: John 5: 1- 30

## Overview to this new section of the Gospel

**JESUS AND JEWISH FESTIVALS. John. 5:1 – 10:42**

In this section, a Jewish festival is noted in the text and its primary symbols described. Jesus then, in Himself, replaces the symbol or demonstrates His authority over its meaning.

**This is the way in which John unpacks the concept of *grace in place of grace*.**

(Eg. ..At tabernacles, when the temple was performing water and light ceremonies, Jesus stands in the temple and announces that He is "living water" and "the light of the world.")

- |    |  |        |          |
|----|--|--------|----------|
| a. | Sabbath,   | 5:1-47 |          |
| b. | Passover,  | 6:1-71 |          |
| c. | Tabernacles (A festival of water and light),                   |        | 7:1-52   |
|    | ▪ A sermon on light,   |        | 8:12-30  |
|    | ▪ A conflict narrative on light and blindness,                 |        | 9:1-41   |
|    | ▪ Jesus, the Good Shepherd (a parable and it's interpretation) |        | 10:1-21  |
| d. | Dedication (Hannukah),   |        | 10:22-39 |
| e. | Return to the Baptist (close of the festival section),         |        | 10:40-42 |

**SABBATH**

**The Sign**

**Healing the man at the pool of Bethesda. (5:1-30)****The Healing :**

Jesus establishes relationship with the man and asks "*Do you want to get well.*" He has been an invalid for 38 years. Why would Jesus ask such a question? The Healing comes as a result of Jesus' initiative with a Word of command:

*"Get up – pick up your mat and walk."*

The healing leads to conflict with the `Jews` - The *Jews* do not represent here the ethnic group, but rather the leaders of organised religion. The conflict arises because of what they consider to be a breach of Sabbath regulations – `the man was carrying his mat`.. at the request of Jesus.

Work of all kind was prohibited to ensure the Sabbath was not profaned. (Jeremiah 17:21 ff & Nehemiah 13: 15) It was to be God's day – a holy day - a day to be kept from worldly pursuits.

Jesus finds the man at the temple (a deliberate searching him out) - **See, you are well again.** (perfect tense – indicating the man was completely and permanently healed)

**Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you** – This is a call to repentance and accompanying reconciliation with GOD.

The man on finding out Jesus' identity, reports this to the authorities. (vs. 15)

**was doing** suggests more than one isolated incident. Jesus seems to have regularly breached the Sabbath regulations and consequently came into conflict with the religious authorities. (vs. 16)

### Jesus' defence:

❖ **My Father is always working to this very day and I too, am working.**

- Without Him the whole of creation would cease to exist
- God is working .... Births and deaths occur on the Sabbath.

to which the Jews react with even more hostility – **Because He was... making himself equal with God.**

### Sermon

### The meaning of the Sign: Jesus gives Life

The Focus of this sermon is **Jesus' unity with the Father.**

The fact of the healing supports Jesus' claim that the Father is still working:

**The Son can do nothing of Himself, He can only do what He sees the Father doing.** (vs19)

- Jesus watches the Father continually – intimate relationship
- Jesus speaks of Himself as Son .. IN A UNIQUE SENSE.
- The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.

(Like a Son learning the carpenter's trade from His Father. "watch and do as I do")

Jesus is claiming his actions are governed by divine revelation in the context of a continuous intimate loving relationship – as this continues even greater works will be shown.

### The greater things – In giving life / In judging

Note vs. 21 **For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.** Eg. The lame man.

But Jesus moves on to talk about eternal life. He claims he has been given authority to judge like His Father. Jesus as Son of Man will exercise judgment. (Dan 7:14)  
He has LIFE in himself – not in independence but under the Father's delegated authority. His focus is to please the Father.

❖ **Jesus as Son of God gives life:**

*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned....He has crossed over from death to life. (vs 24)*

### Personal Reflection:

**Consider the Sabbath :** - What does it celebrate? What does it point to?

**What do you see the Father doing this week in your world?**

**In what ways can you invite Him to do His work through you as you rest in Him?**

**Week 3: Day 3 John 5: 31- 47**

**TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT THESE CLAIMS**

- 1) John the Baptist (vs. 33-35) Ps 132:17
- 2) I have testimony greater than that of John – MY WORKS testify that the Father has sent me. (vs.36- )  
These are not ordinary works but actions specifically given Him to do by the Father.

They are **what no one else does.** (15: 24) These works show that Jesus is not of human origin but rather have come from the Father. (includes both the miraculous healings and deeds flowing from His character)

- 3) The Father - has himself testified concerning me (vs 37-38)
- 4) the scriptures (vs. 39)
- 5) Moses (vs. 45-47)

Jesus challenges the authorities in vs 39

***You diligently study the scriptures because you think by them you possess eternal life. These are the scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.***

***Personal Reflection:***

*We can easily miss **the life** as we study scriptures ...attend church ... even pray. We find it easier to read for information, enjoy the experience of singing worship songs and meeting with friends and pray into our needs without drawing life from the One who is the Living Word.*

***Take time now to listen for Him ...enjoy Him .... Share with Him  
Drink in the Living Water ...***

**Week 3: Day 4**

**John 6: 1- 34**

**PASSOVER**

**JESUS – the Bread of Life.**

During Israel's time in the wilderness Moses' challenge was how to feed the Israelites. Here in the wilderness Jesus asks *"where shall we buy bread for these people to eat."* Philip answers: *8 months wages wouldn't be enough.* Andrew: *Here is a boy with 5 small loaves / 2 small fish but how far will they go..?*

Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated **as much as** they wanted.  
*Gather the pieces that are left over – let nothing be wasted.* 12 baskets full were gathered. Superabundant provision.

**What is the Sign and its' meaning?**

**Jesus is the bread of Life – the supplier of people's need.**

**Why do the crowd ask for a miraculous sign ... even after the miraculous feeding? (vs. 30-31)**

A popular Jewish expectation was that when the Messiah came he would renew the sending of manna.  
Jesus had fed the 5000 in a way that would not be seen as miraculous. They ate barley loaves and fish ...ordinary food.  
Moses had provided *bread from heaven* ...manna ( Exodus 16: & Num 11:7-9)  
Moses had provided water from the Rock: Num.20:13

The passage finishes with a staggering claim: **Jesus is the true bread from heaven** given by the Father to give life to the world (vs 32-33)

***Personal Reflection:***

***How many times do we miss the signs of the one who has come to bring life, because we are looking for something more spectacular?***

***Pray into your day asking the Father to open your eyes to the signs of the presence of the Bread of Life.***

***At the conclusion of the day note down these signs and give thanks to Him.***

## Week 3: Day 5

## John 6: 35-71

Jesus makes a powerful **I AM** Statement .... ***I am the Bread of Life.***

This statement from Jesus is the first of seven I AM statements on the lips of Jesus given in John's gospel ( 8:12; 9:5; 10:7,9; 10:11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5)

**God reveals himself to Moses as *I AM WHO I AM*** (Ex 3:14)

1) Whoever **comes to me** will:

- *Never go hungry, whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.* (vs. 35)
- *I will never drive away* (vs. 37)
- *I shall lose none of all the Father has given me – but raise them up at the last day* (vs. 39)

i. Everyone who **looks to the Son** and **believes in Him**

- *shall have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.* (vs. 40)

This is the Father's will – (God's sovereign determination)

ii. *If anyone **eats this bread** he will live forever.*

Notice the words that carry the idea of believing in JESUS. *comes to me...  
eats my flesh...  
looks to the Son...*

Consistently the gift He has is LIFE – eternal life .. ever expanding Life.

- Complete satisfaction in life
- Close relationship with Him.

Notice the repetition of the words – ***I tell you the truth.*** (vs. 26, 32, 47, 53)

Why does John include this over and over ?

### **Coming to Jesus ... Receiving ...Believing.**

***No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*** (vs 44)

*All the Father gives me will come to me & whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*

### **What implications do these 2 verses above have for evangelism?**

#### **Living Bread:**

Jesus says:

- *I am the living bread that **came down** from heaven.* (The Incarnation Jn 1:14)
- *If anyone **eats this bread**, he will live forever.* The act of receiving him (believing)
- *This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* (6: 51) - a giving of himself as a sacrifice. (The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.)

The Jews began to argue sharply among themselves: *How can this man give us His flesh to eat.* They do not understand ... a deeper spiritual truth is yet to be uncovered.

**Read through John 6:53-57 again**

These words were obviously difficult for Jesus' audience to understand and accept. They are graphic, shocking, puzzling and lead to many falling away. (vs 60,61 & 66)

Historically they have been interpreted in basically two ways:

- These words point to the Christian Eucharist. Note John does not record the institution of the Lords supper in the gospel.
- The language is symbolic, pointing to receiving ...taking into ourselves God's wisdom and revelation expressed in Jesus (The one who makes the Father known. (Jn1:18) The One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. (John 14:6)

Jesus asks the Twelve *"You do not want to leave too do you."* But notice Peter's response ***"You have the words of eternal life... We believe and know you are the Holy One of God."***

***Take time now to listen for Him ...enjoy Him .... Eat the Bread of Life. Drink in from Him.***

## Week 3: Day 6

## John 7:1- 53

## JESUS AND JEWISH FESTIVALS.

## TABERNACLES

## Jesus is the Water of Life

The Feast of Tabernacles celebrates the completion of the wheat harvest and commemorates God's provision for the people in the wilderness. There were 3 Key rituals associated with tabernacles. The first of these was a water libation ceremony.

## THE WATER LIBATION CEREMONY

"On the morning of each of the seven days a procession led by priests and singing Levites, accompanied by a crowd of people, went down to the Pool of Siloam to gather water in a golden container. Accompanied by the people and blasts of the *shofar* the procession returned to the Temple area through the Water Gate. On arrival at the Temple area, they processed around the altar, and sang Psalms 113-118 (the Hallel). The *Lulab*, a collection of twigs of myrtle, palm and willow, bound together along with a citron, were waved at the words of Ps 118:1: "O give thanks to the Lord for he is good," and again at v.25: "Save us, we beseech you O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success. On arrival at the altar the priest, whose turn of duty it was, poured the water from Siloam and wine into two vessels positioned on the altar, allowing the water and wine to flow out on to the altar. On the seventh day of the feast the procession round the altar was repeated seven times.

**Tabernacles** was associated with the gift of rain – giving thanks and praying for autumn rains. Zechariah 14 makes this link in conjunction with the end time. After the plague of the Lord, which will wipe out those who wage war on Jerusalem (14:12), all the surviving nations will go up to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles. If they do not go up, "there will be no rain upon them" There was also a close link between Tabernacles and Jewish Messianic expectation.

For example, a later Jewish writing says of the feast: *As the former redeemer made a well to rise, so will the latter redeemer bring up water, as it is stated, "And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim" (Eccl Rabbah 1:8) (see also Joel 3: 18) (As referenced in the Catholic University Online Course Theo 252 Module 8)*

The association of the end time and the appearance of the Messiah at Tabernacles plays a large part in the dialogue between Jesus and his various questioners in John 7:1 – 10:21."

## PROPHETIC ACTIONS OF JESUS at Tabernacles:

- He doesn't make a grand entrance at the beginning of the feast - He does not intend to fulfil public expectations of Messiah. He awaits the Father's timing.
- "I am not yet going up to this feast because for me the right time has not yet come: (vs 8)

Not till halfway through Tabernacles does He go up to the temple courts to teach.

## **IS JESUS THE CHRIST?**

**Opinions:** Some said: *He is a good man* Others: *No, He deceives the people* (7:12)

**Question:** *How did this man get such learning without having studied?* (7:15)

**Opinion:** the crowd say: *You are demonised* (7:20)

**Question:** *Have the authorities concluded He is the Christ? Aren't they trying to kill this man? Yet here He is teaching publicly, without a word being said.* (7: 26)

**Question:** *When the Christ comes no one will know where He is from - but we know where this man is from* (7: 27)                      *Where is that?*

**Question:** *When the Christ comes will He do more miraculous signs than this?* (7:31)

The Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest Him (7:32) They return (7:45) empty handed.

**Answer: A PROPHETIC PROCLAMATION: Jesus gives Living Water**

**On the Last day of the Feast ...** the climax of the Feast ... priests circling the Altar 7 times.  
**Jesus stood and said in a loud voice:**

*If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said – streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit...*

In the early Greek manuscripts there is no punctuation. In this verse we have one of the relatively few times that the punctuation makes a difference to the interpretation.

A question that arises when we look at vs 37 is to which scripture is Jesus referring. There is no clear answer in which streams of living water flow from believers.

While it is accurate to say that through the Christian...the love and life of the Spirit flow out to bless, there is another way to punctuate the verse other than the way chosen by the NIV above. What if the full stop was placed after *whoever believes in me* rather than after *drink*. This would mean the scripture about the streams of living water would refer to Christ rather than the believer. Christ as the new temple from whom living water flows as in Ezekiel 47.

**The Response of the people:**                      The people were divided

Some said.....*surely this is the prophet* ; Others.....*He is the Christ*

Still others.....*How can the Christ come from Galilee? Doesn't the scripture point to him coming from David's family – and from Bethlehem?*

Some wanted to seize Him - but no one laid a hand on Him.

### **Personal Reflection:**

Jesus is the one who gives living water ... the Holy Spirit ...whose outpouring will come once Jesus is glorified.(*crucified.*) **Ask Him to pour out His living water over you today.**

**Week 3: Day 7**

**John 8:1-11**

**The Woman caught in Adultery**

While the manuscript evidence for this story's inclusion in John's gospel is weak, the story itself bears all the hallmarks of authenticity. Clearly it breaks the flow of John's presentation. The early manuscripts of John, not only Greek but Syriac and Coptic and the commentary from the early Fathers have John 7:52 followed by the words of John 8:12

The woman had been caught in the act of adultery:

- This has all the hallmarks of a set up ...2 witnesses were required if an accusation was to be made. They would need to see the couple in bed together etc.
- Witnesses had a moral obligation to intervene to prevent the sin if they were aware of what was intended.
- Where was the man ... He too should have been brought for judgment
- The Pharisees interest seems to be to trap Jesus; either by **agreeing to the stoning**; (Only the Romans had the power to carry out the death sentence at this time. That is why Jesus needed to be brought before Pilate on a charge of sedition.) or by **extending mercy** ...in which case He would be going against the law of Moses, thus showing himself to be a false prophet.

Jesus writes in the dust. While we could speculate on what he might have written the text itself highlights the **Word of Wisdom** ... *If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.* (vs7)

After they have left ...why the oldest ones first? ... Jesus now alone with the woman, speaks words that bring release and invite into a new life ... a new relationship with the Father. ***Neither do I condemn you ...go now and leave your life of sin.***

**Personal Reflection:**

***Put yourself into the story today ... imagine yourself as***

- ***The woman ...***  
***Let Jesus speak into your heart his words of release ...***  
*Neither do I condemn you*  
***And His words of invitation to move forward .. Go and leave your life of sin***
- ***One of the crowd ...***
- ***As a Scribe or Pharisee ...***

***Is there someone in your circle of family, friends, acquaintances you are being challenged to release from your condemnation today.***

## Week 4: Day 1

## John 8:12-41

## Setting: TABERNACLES

## Jesus is the Light of the World

**Background related to the Feast of Tabernacles.**

We have already considered the Water Libation Ceremony with respect to John 7:1-53  
Now we consider another ceremony that was significant

**THE CEREMONY OF LIGHT**

"Four menorahs were set up in the centre of the court of the women. The men of piety and good works celebrating the feast, danced under the lights, while the Levites sang Psalms 120-134. This celebration lasted most of the night for each of the seven days of the feast."

This celebration of Tabernacles was marked by debate and conflict over Jesus' Messianic Status (7:27-29,31,37-38, 41-42) His claim to be the Good Shepherd who lays down His Life for His sheep (10: 14-18) tells how He exercises His Messianic Role.

"Note Zechariah 14 : 6-8, *On that day there shall not be either cold or frost. And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the Lord), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter.*"

(As referenced in the Catholic University Online Course Theo 252 Module 8)

**PROPHETIC PROCLAMATION:**

*I am the Light of the World - whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life (vs 12)*

His authority is challenged. He answers that He has two witnesses to validate His claim: Himself and the Father who sent Him.

- *If you do not believe that I am the One I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.*
- ***When you have lifted up the Son of Man then you will know that I am the One I claim to be & that I do nothing on my own, but speak just as the Father has taught me (28)***
- ***The One who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone for I always do what pleases Him (vs 29)***

**On DISCIPLESHIP:**

- *If you hold to my teaching you are really my disciples - then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free (vss 31-32)*
- *I tell you the truth everyone who sins is a slave to sin....so if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (vss 34-36)*

**Personal Reflection:**

- **What does Jesus mean ...will have the light of life?**
- **Is there any darkness in your world ...either internally or externally where you need His light today. Ask? *If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed***

**Week 4: Day 2**

**John 8: 42 - 59**

**Setting: TABERNACLES**

**Jesus is the Light of the World**

**Background related to the Feast of Tabernacles.**

We have already considered the Water Libation Ceremony and the Ceremony of Light. Now we consider another ceremony that was significant

**THE RITE OF FACING THE TEMPLE**

"At cockcrow on each of the seven days the priests proceeded to the East gate of the Temple area and looked away from the temple toward the east. At the moment of sunrise they turned their backs upon the sun and faced the Sanctuary of the Temple reciting: *"Our fathers when they were in this place turned with their backs toward the Temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east (see Ezekiel 8:16); but as for us, our eyes are turned toward the Lord"* (Sukkah 5:4).

YHWH was recognized as the one true God to whom all praise and allegiance was due."  
(As referenced in the Catholic University Online Course Theo 252 Module 8)

In the context of this ceremony Jesus makes a proclamation that has at its heart  
***Allegiance to the One true God.***

***"You belong to your father the devil and you want to carry out your father's desire ."***  
(vs 44)

Jesus confronts the Jews with their determination to kill him - evidence that their allegiance is not to the one true God for if it were they would not reject Him.

Note the challenge - *Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? (Vs 46)*

*"The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God"* (vs 47)

- *If anyone keeps my Word he will not see death* (vs 51)

The Jews are staggered .. Now we know you are demon possessed. Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that *If anyone keeps my Word he will not see death*. Are you greater than our Father Abraham ..... Who do you think you are?

Jesus answers with a powerful claim: *Before Abraham was born I AM.*

They did not miss the implication ... This is blasphemy ... He is claiming to be the I AM  
At this they picked up stones.....But He slipped away - **His time had not yet come.**

***Personal Reflection:***

***The key point, in the rejection of Jesus by the Jews here, is their difficulty in accepting that He has been sent by God. He doesn't fit their criteria or expectations. Is there anyone or a group that claim to be from Jesus that you have trouble accepting. Take a fresh look at your why? Is it really valid? Listen for God in this.***

## Week 4: Day 3

## John 9:1- 41

## TABERNACLES

## PROPHETIC ACTION : HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

By healing the man born blind, Jesus validates his claim to be:

- The giver of Living Water
- Light of the World
- The one sent from God - rejecting Him equates to rejecting God.

The man was sent for his healing to wash in the Pool of Siloam. Siloam means *Sent*.

**Jesus is the Sent One - the pool of living water where healing takes place.**

Consider the way faith develops in the man born blind and the contrasting movement into darkness on the part of the Pharisees.

Note also the response of the man born blind ....

- He went ..... He washed .....He came back seeing

It is not the waters of Siloam that brings the cure, but contact with the SENT ONE.

**The question:** *"How then were your eyes opened?"*

**The Answer:** *"The man they called Jesus...so I went and washed and then I could see*

**The Debate:** *This man is not from God for **he does not keep the Sabbath**  
**How can a sinner do such miraculous signs**.....*

As they interrogate the blind man again - he testifies - **"He is a Prophet"**

Because they still didn't believe he had been born blind, his parents were called. Then the Pharisees called the blind man again: *Give glory to God, we know this man is a sinner*

**The Blind Man:** *Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know.*

*One thing I do know, I was blind but now I see! (vs 25)*

**Pharisees:** *"How did he open your eyes?"....."We are disciples of Moses but as for this fellow we don't even know where he comes from" (vs. 29)*

**The Blind Man:** *Now that is remarkable!.....We know that God doesn't listen to sinners  
.if this man were not from God he could do nothing (vs 30-33)*

The man is then thrown out of the synagogue.

Jesus **found** him & asked: *Do you believe in the Son of Man?*

The man answers: *Lord I believe* and he worshipped Him (**he has now come to full faith**)

**WHY HAS JESUS COME?**

*For judgment I have come into this world so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind. The Pharisees, thinking they can see, do not realize they are in darkness.*

**Personal Reflection:**

*Jesus is the Sent One - the pool of living water where healing takes place.*

*Is there an area in your life where you need to come to the Sent One for light or healing?*

## Week 4: Day 4

## John 10:1- 21

**PROPHETIC PROCLAMATION :**            *I am the Good Shepherd*  
 (John 10:1-21 & Ezekiel 34:11-31)

*I have come that they may have life and have it to the full* (vs. 10)

Explore the parable of the sheepfold -

- *"I am the gate - whoever enters through me will be saved"*
- The one who does not enter by the gate is a thief and a robber.
- The watchman prepares the way for the shepherd.

**Jesus is the model Shepherd .... I AM the good shepherd (vs11)**

- Willing to die for His sheep
- Who knows His sheep intimately ...in the same way as He knows the Father.

**Jesus says: I AM the Gate .....** The access point between Heaven & earth. ( John 1:51)

- By which the shepherd approaches the flock (false shepherds try to avoid the gate)
- *Whoever enters through me will be saved ...* He is a gate for the sheep through which they find:
  - freedom
  - security      John 10:4 ...
  - supply of all needs (abundance)

**Key points:**

- He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out
- He brings out His own ...*literally* (*drives them out*)
- He goes on ahead of them
- His sheep follow because they know His voice
- They will never follow a stranger because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.
- The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep
- There are other sheep of this fold – (not of Israel) they too will listen to My voice - they shall be one flock and one shepherd.

**Jesus death is a voluntary act of laying down His life for the sheep - and a deliberate taking it up again. This is the command of the Father.**

**Responses**

- *He is demonised and raving mad - these are not the sayings of a demonised man* (vs. 21) His **teaching** is judged to be false.
- But others say *can a demon open blind eyes* - His **actions** point to its validity.

**Personal Reflection: Meditate on the picture below**

***Through Him, as sheep, we come in and go out and find pasture.***

## Week 4: Day 5

## John 10: 22-39

## JESUS AND JEWISH FESTIVALS.

## HANUKKAH

## Dedication.

This festival commemorated the dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 BC. The temple had been defiled under orders from Antiochus Epiphanes IV. He was a Hellenistic king (Greek) of the Seleucid Empire who ruled over Judea. He attempted to impose Greek culture on the Jewish people outlawing circumcision, burning scripture scrolls and erected a pagan idol in the temple.

*Epiphanes* was a title he proclaimed for himself. It means manifestation of God.

During the period of the Maccabeus the push to adopt Greek culture was aided by the complicity of corrupt priests..... shepherds who had proved false ...hirelings

One of the features of Hannukah was lighting the menorah each of the 8 days of the festival. This was a Festival of lights in which the altar and temple were rededicated to God.

Hannukah became a time of recalling a difficult time in Jewish history in which questions relating to false shepherds were asked... *how could Israel's leaders have so compromised themselves under the pressure to conform to Greek culture?*

**The Jews now alert to the issue of false leaders call on Jesus to tell them plainly if He is the Christ.**

Jesus answers:

- *the works that I do in my Father's name speak for me (vs 25)...*
- *my sheep listen to my voice and I know them (intimacy) & they follow me. I give them eternal life. They shall never perish. (vss 27-28)*
- ***I and the Father are One***

The Jews responded by picking up stones to stone him.

*I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone Me (vs 32)*

*We are not stoning you for any of these" replied the Jews but for blaspheming because you, a mere man, claim to be God.....(just as Antiochus Epiphanes had done)*

*I am God's Son..... (vs. 36-38)*

**THE RESPONSE OF REJECTION (Vs 39)**

Again they tried to seize Him but He escaped their grasp - **His time had not yet come.**

This whole section from Ch 5- 10:-39 now concludes back at the Jordan where John had been baptizing - His testimony about Jesus was true and many believed in that place.

**Personal Reflection:**

**Consider vss 27-29. Write notes on what these verses mean for you personally.**

**Week 4: Day 6 John 11:1- 37**

**FORESHADOWING OF JESUS DEATH & RESURRECTION.**

- a. Lazarus: A sign of death being conquered, 11: 1-57
- b. Jesus, anointed for death, enters Jerusalem to die, 12:1-50

**a) The Seventh Sign: The Raising of Lazarus John 11: 1-57**

This is a pivotal event in the Gospel of John, bringing to a close the Book of Signs and introducing the determination of the religious leaders to kill Jesus.

The Sign itself is incredibly dramatic ....Raising a dead man to life..( one - dead for 4 days, ie. past the point of no return in the thinking of that culture, where soul & body were believed to be separated at 3 days.)

**Read through the incident of the raising of Lazarus and answer the following:**

- Consider Jesus' delay in going to Lazarus. Why doesn't he respond immediately?
- **Lazarus is dead**, is so abrupt, so final, it stresses futility .. it's so hopeless ..but for Jesus this is not so (vs14-16) What is Thomas afraid of ... in what way is his fear justified?
- Identify the scriptural verse that puts forward the Meaning of the Sign:
- Mary and the mourners are wailing in a customary public display of grief. Jesus, it is clear, intends to raise Lazarus from the dead. Why then does He weep? (vs.32-35)
- Martha's faith is not vague .. it is strong and specific ... but it is only partial. Identify from the text, what Martha's believes about Jesus
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**Consider the response to the sign (vs. 45-57):** What responses are found here?:

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Caiphas was High Priest from 18 - 36 AD What significance is there in Caiphas' words (vs. 49-50) What is it that Caiphas fears?

Martha says lord if you had been here my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask?

However when faced with rolling away the stone, Martha has no faith, whatsoever ..

***Personal Application: What about you?***

***What happens for us when Jesus fails to meet our expectations and time frames in the crises of life.***

**As you come out of the cave as it were into the light are there any grave clothes that still limit your freedom? What are they?**

**Do you need to share with some friends to assist in untying these clothes of death?**

**Week 4: Day 7**

**John 12: 1-8**

**The Anointing at Bethany: A Prophetic sign.** Jesus anointed for death.

This is an extraordinary graphic display of devotion, unusual in the culture in a number of ways.

- Mary pours a large amount of expensive fragrant perfume on Jesus feet. ...though Mark tells us also on his head. (Mark 14:3)
- It was worth a year's wages (of a day labourer) Nard was rare and precious spice imported from northern India. This is not a diluted version ...this is pure Nard....the most expensive.
- The entire house is filled with it's fragrance .... This is indeed an extravagant act.
- She uses her hair to wipe his feet ...a respectable woman would not normally unbind her hair in public. The feel is that she is so in the moment of devotion .. (aware of the tensions rising as the opposition was becoming more aggressive)...that she is lost to the issue of what others around might think.
- This act (focused on the feet) was one where Mary is taking the lowest place ..a heart of utter humility, serving to the uttermost.

Jesus has now been prepared for burial (figuratively) ... what is about to unfolds is the story of His arrest and crucifixion ... His glorification.

***Personal Application:***

**Picture this scene. Watch from the viewpoint of Judas**  
***This is going too far ...***

**What were the other disciples thinking I wonder?**

**Have you ever thought the action of another disciple in devotion to Jesus was over the top? Why?**

**Watch from the point of view of Lazarus, Mary's brother.**  
**What do you see?**

**How can you express your devotion to Jesus today?**

**Week 5: Day 1**

**John 12: 12 - 36**

**The Triumphal Entry.**

**Jesus enters Jerusalem as King.**

John quotes a two Old Testament passages to highlight that what is happening as the crowd goes out to meet Jesus is the fulfilment of prophecy. Note Psalm 118:25-26 & Zechariah 9:9

Consider the consternation of the Pharisees here (vs 19) They believe Jesus is a false Prophet ...a Sabbath breaker who is claiming himself to be equal with God ... A false prophet who is leading the people astray .... Stirring up a possible revolt which will end very badly under the iron fist of Rome.

**Jesus Predicts His Death: The Coming of the Greeks ... John 12: 20 – 36**

What significance is there in the coming of the Greeks ... how does this mark a turning point in the John's presentation of his gospel?

Consider John 1: 11

Where else in the gospel do we find Andrew and Philip in the action of bringing someone to Jesus?

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**Jesus proclaims Victory in the Cross.... John 12: 27-36**

1. Jesus prayer is: **Father glorify your name!**

There is a voice from Heaven in response ....

How does the Father answer this prayer now in the experience Jesus now goes through?

2. WHAT IS THE HOUR Jesus speaks of...

***Personal Reflection:***

**Write out verses 31-32 and then think about their significance.**

**Week 5: Day 2      John 12: 37-50****How will we respond to these signs**

Through the signs and the reflections on their meanings (Chapters 2-12) it has been made perfectly clear:

- Who Jesus is
  - Where He is from
  - Why He has come
- } The signs and teaching bear witness to these things.  
Jesus has not been operating in secret.
- To believe in Jesus is to believe in the One Who sent Him
  - Seeing Jesus is to see the One Who stands behind His words and actions

**The Light**

1. **Shines in the darkness**
  2. **Reveals God**
  3. **Exposes the darkness**
  4. **Shows things the way they really are**
  5. **Guides the way**
- } Christ came as light  
to deliver us from darkness

**If** on catching the revelation we fail to observe its demands then we are dealing with the rejection not just of a prophetic teacher but the commands of God Himself.

As such, the one failing to keep the words is not judged by Christ, but rather stands in the darkness where he is already isolated from the Source of Life. In his rejection of Christ he has rejected the only possibility of salvation. The moment of his rejection is thus the moment of his judgment - By rejecting life, he has chosen death.

The reason Jesus' message has the power of life / judgment is that it comes from God - each action, each word, springs from the Father and has the force of the prophetic "Thus says the Lord"

In Deuteronomy 8:3 "*Man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*" The commandment is the principle of life for the people (Deut. 32: 46-47)

Here God promises punishment for those who fail to hear and obey the words of his messenger (Deut. 18: 18-19)

Now it's not simply the Torah which sets out the covenant obligations for the people of God but the Word in Jesus. By this Word men now receive life or judgment (vs. 5:39)

**Personal Application:**

***Pause and think over the Book of Signs ... In response to what you have begun to see more clearly, give praise to God for the One who is Revealer.***

## Week 5: Day 3      THE BOOK OF GLORY

### The Preparation of the Disciples of the Son of God Meditations on Jesus going away. (Chapters 13-17)

Jesus comes to Israel as their Saviour and Messiah ; however His own rejected Him. He now turns His attention away from them and focuses on preparing the disciples for the task ahead of them when He is gone.

**The Extent of Jesus' Love .. The Path of Humility.    (John 13: 1- 35)**

#### The Foot Washing    John 13:1-17

This action of voluntary humility in cleansing His disciples foreshadows the cross and illustrates the path of discipleship.

**This happens during the meal** - not on arrival as custom would dictate.

On their arrival, no one had lowered themselves to attend to washing the dust from everyone's feet ...not even the feet of Jesus.

**This is a parable in action...** Notice the care John takes to describe in detail the actions of Jesus:

**Jesus:**

.....**rises** from the table  
 ..... **laying aside** the upper robes  
 .....**taking** the towel  
 .....**wrapping it** around His waist  
 .....**pouring water** into a basin  
 .....**began to wash** the feet  
 .....**drying them** with the towel

John doesn't want us to miss the deliberate action of humility by the One who had all authority.

**He**

.....knew that His time had come...(the hour)  
 .....was about to lay down His life for His friends  
 .....was facing betrayal (vs 2)  
 ..... was in a position of absolute authority.  
 ..... knew that no treachery - no failure of support could rob Him of His victory - He had come from God and He was returning to God.

**Jesus was secure in His identity and His sense of purpose. He knew He was sent by God. He knew that His destiny was always to be with the Father and He knew the range of His authority.**

He was therefore free to serve without worrying about what others would think or the whole range of ideas and thoughts that hinder our freedom to serve because of our insecurity.

Note Jesus' reply to Peter (vs 8) - *Unless I wash you, you have no part in Me.*  
Our only path to fellowship with Christ is by receiving His cleansing brought through His voluntary act of self sacrifice in humility at the cross.

Peter impetuously and enthusiastically now wants to go all the way - but he must accept the first condition of discipleship - **surrender of self will.**

Jesus applies the parable to challenge the disciples to take up the path of servant-hood as a way of life. Nothing was more menial than the washing of feet - **no service should be beneath us.**

*I tell you the truth* ( NIV has .. Most assuredly, I say to you..) ...(.vs 16) He is bringing out the importance of this way of life for the disciple. Disciples are: - Slaves - Sent ones  
We are not to stand on our dignity / status nor to think too highly of ourselves.

*I tell you the truth - whoever accepts anyone I send, accepts Me and whoever accepts Me, accepts the One who sent Me.* vs 20

To serve Jesus is to live the way of the cross - It will involve lowly service but it is not to be lightly esteemed. It has holy dignity. We are people with a mission originating and empowered by God himself.

### ***Personal Reflection:***

***What would be a modern day parallel to Jesus washing the disciples' feet?***

***Think about the places where you live out your life***

- ***Home***
- ***Workplace***
- ***Club***

***Is there an area of service that the Father is calling you into in this season?***

**Week 5: Day 4**

**John 13: 18 - 38**

**The passing of the soaked bread John 13: 18 - 30**

**Reclining at Table:**

Usually there would be a series of couches arranged in a U shape around the table. The guests reclined with their heads towards the table and their feet stretched out away from it. They leaned on the left elbow leaving the right hand free to eat. The host reclined in the centre on a couch for three, with the place of honour to the left of and thus slightly behind the principal person - the second place was to his right. This person would have his head close to the breast of the host.

- Was Judas in the place of honour? (see Matthew 26: 25)
- Is the giving of the bread another action of honour - a final appeal as it were?

The die is cast - Satan enters into Judas - the final chapter begins. The disciples were unaware that this betrayal was to be a deliberate act nor that it was at hand. (vs 28)

Note vs 30 *As soon as Judas had taken the bread he went out **and it was night!***

**John 13: 31-38 .... Prediction of Peter's denial**

***Now is the Son of man glorified*** -- The hour has come. The glorification of Christ will be found in the utter humiliation of crucifixion.

- God is glorified in the cross - **it reveals the heart of God** (vs 31)
- **God will glorify the Son** in Himself - (future tense)  
**The resurrection and exaltation** will follow the crucifixion and this will be the Father's vindication of the Son.

***A new command I give to you ...John 13:34 -35***

Peter is confused ...unsure of where Jesus is going and why He can't follow. He passionately wants to be with his friend and master. ***I will lay down my life for you!***

***Personal Reflection:***

Put yourself into the story (as Simon Peter.) Lord ... I will lay down my life for you  
Feel the force of the questioning response from Jesus ... ***Will you really lay down your life for me?( vs38)***

***What about you? ...Are you prepared to love your brothers and sisters in Christ as Jesus loves you. Will you lay down your life (your need for recognition, your need to win the argument, your rights, your life) for the sake of your brothers and sisters ...his body?***

**Week 5: Day 5**

**John 14:1-16: 33**

**Jesus comforts His Disciples.**

John now shares with us the words of encouragement Jesus has for His disciples as He takes up the cross. This section gives us practical insight into living as a disciple in the era after the resurrection of Jesus. It also provides us with a sense of the distress and confusion experienced by the disciples on this final night.

***Devotional Exercise:***

***Today, read through these 3 chapters and note down anything that particularly grabs your attention.***

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***Is there anything you find puzzling?***

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***Is there anything you find challenging?***

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***Dialogue with the Father about these.***

**Week 5: Day 6      John 14: 1- 4 & 14: 27 -31 & 16:33**

To enable a closer study we will divide the chapters 14-16 thematically.

**Jesus comforts His Disciples.**1. **His Peace:**      **John 14: 1- 5 & 14: 27 -31 & 16:33*****Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.***

This encouragement is given in the light of the prophecies of betrayal and of Peter's denial. He calls them to continue to trust Him.....now.... in this present moment. It's not out of control. His going away has purpose ...purpose that will be to their benefit. He is going to prepare a place for them. The intimacy and friendship they have known with Him is not going to end. He will come back for them.

***In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.***

The Greek word (*monai*) is translated as *rooms* here by the NIV. In the KJV it is translated as *mansions*. In 17<sup>th</sup> Century English this word had the meaning of modest dwellings. The point is Jesus is preparing a place of residence for them with the Father in the heavenly realm. (Burge p 391) His promise is that death will not cut off the intimacy they have experienced with Him.

*I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

***Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*** John 14:27

Jesus is the source of this peace ...a confidence in the love of the Father, the certainty of His promise and the experience of ongoing fellowship with Him. This is an inner rest of spirit in fellowship with God. This is what Jesus imparts. ... The world cannot impart such peace ...the best it can offer is the hope of external cessation of hostility.

Notice in John 14:30 Jesus says, *I will not speak with you much longer, for the Prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and I do exactly as my Father commanded me.*

Satan, the prince of this world had no power over Jesus ...Shame, fear, guilt, sin had no place in Jesus' life ...there was nowhere where Satan could control ...nowhere where He could successfully manipulate or push buttons to rob and destroy.

The death of Jesus on the cross, while plotted and schemed by Satan, only is possible because Jesus has put his trust in His Father and is following His command. In the coming arrest, trial and crucifixion Jesus is the one who lays His life down, it is not taken from Him.

At the conclusion of this farewell discourse, having outlined His ongoing promises Jesus encourages the disciples with the following:

***I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.***" John 16: 33

**Personal Reflection:**

***Is there any area of your life where the prince of this world has a hold over you at present?***

***Open that out to the Prince of Peace and listen for His word to you.***

*There is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus for the law of the Spirit of Life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)*

*If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)*

*For as many who received him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to be the children of God. (John 1:12)*

*How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called the children of God (1 John 3:1)*

**Week 5: Day 7**

**John 14: 5 - 11**

**Jesus the Way to the Father**

***I AM the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.***

This is another ***I AM*** claim.

He not only shows the way - **He is the Way !** (He redeems us ... He enables us)  
He is the one and only way, the true way into relationship with the Father, for He alone brings the true revelation of what God is like and how we can live in relationship with Him.  
He is the Gate of the sheep.

His revelation about the Father; life; is the truth - **He Himself is the Truth !**  
He is the Light of the World. He represents the reality of God's love, mercy and judgment.)

Jesus is the source of life to believers **but is Himself LIFE** - the self existent one.  
He is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the Bread of Life. He gives Living water...the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Philip asks - ***Show us the Father.*** Like Philip we want to know what God is like.

The response Jesus gives pushes us back to think again over what He has done and taught in John's presentation. It is as if He is a window through which we see what God is like. Jesus points to the special intimacy between Himself and the Father. The Father's life and character have been displayed in the Son, in His words (teaching) and His works.

***Personal Reflection:***

***In thinking over how Jesus has revealed what the Father is like, what particularly has touched your heart and given you insight, strength or comfort since you began this study of John***

- ***In His teaching.***
  
- ***In His works***

**Week 6: Day 1      John 14: 12-14, 15: 7-8,16 & John 16: 23-28****The Promise of Answered Prayer****John 14: 12-14**

*I tell you the truth, **anyone who has faith in me** will do what I have been doing. He will do **even greater things** than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>**And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.** You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it.*

**What are these greater things?**

Once Jesus has been crucified and raised from the dead, the two promises here will be operational.

1. Great works will be done by anyone who has faith in Jesus as the sent One.
2. Their prayers will be answered.

Jesus has revealed the Father through works of power ... signs ... that point to what God is like. He has also revealed the Father in acts of humility, service and obedience.

*These works were done by the One who is the Word made flesh. Greater works will be done as **ordinary** people now filled with His Spirit obediently follow the Father's word and reveal who He is and what He is like. The focus of all this is to bring glory to the Father.*

Prayer in the name of Jesus is not a prayer tagging with In Jesus' name Amen! (used as some magic formula.) It is prayer consistent with the character and heart of Jesus.

- His compassion.
- His utter trust in and dependence on the Father.
- His desire to see the Father glorified.

**This promise of answered prayer is repeated again in John 15:7-8 & 16**

*If you remain in me, and my words remain in you; ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

The promise has conditions:

- We are to remain in Him (there is a closeness in our relationship)
- His words must shape our actions and our requests.

The purpose is the bearing of much fruit ... actions where

- The Father is seen and lifted up
- We are seen to be disciples of Jesus.

In our call to represent the Jesus in the midst of life, He will back us up in answered prayer.

**Again the promise is repeated in John 16:23b-24**

This feature of discipleship is of the utmost value. This is key to the greater works.

***Personal Reflection:***

***Take hold of the prayer promise today. Praise the Father for the promise and in the company of the risen Christ***

***Write out a list of 3 things you want to ask that would bring glory to the Father.***

***Make one of these something for today***

***Another something for this season in your life***

***Another for someone you carry a burden for.***

**Continue to press in for these over the next weeks until they have been answered.**

## Week 6: Day 2

## John 14: 15-26 &amp; John 15: 26- 16:15

Jesus promises the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

*If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever – The Spirit of Truth. (14:15-17)*

*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. (14:14:18)*

*If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (14:23)*

*But the Counsellor, The Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you. (14: 26)*

### The Promise of the Holy Spirit for the Believer: **An Advocate.**

*I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counsellor** to be **with** you forever*

The Greek word translated here as *Counsellor* is a legal term: It is used only by John in the New Testament. It is the word *parakletos*.

❖ **Parakletos** meaning: Counsellor, Helper - Advocate..... Our Representative

He is the one called to the side of another

- to counsel and to guide; to encourage
- to plead our cause before both the Father & our adversary (Rom 8:26-27)
- to help us to speak (Mark 13:11) (called in as our witness)
- to teach and instruct; to help us to keep the commandments.

He provides assistance to deliver in a tough situation.

*The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives **with** you and will be **in** you. (14:17)*

In John 14:16-17, three different prepositions are used to describe the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer.

- *He will be **with** them forever (meta)* – in the sense of among them, in their midst, as a companion.
- *He remains with them (para)* - by the side of
  - a team together
  - they are not alone
- *and He will be in them (en)* - the very breath of God will be living in them.

This Advocate will bring for the believer **a sense of union with Christ** and of intimacy with the Father.

*On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you* (14:20)

- **He will teach you all things** & *will remind you of everything I have said to you.* (14:26)
- **He bears witness to Christ. (John 15:26 -27)** *And you must testify also ...in spite of the world's rejection, hatred and persecution.*
- *Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.* The gift of the Spirit comes only as a result of Christ's atoning work on the cross. (16:7)
- *But when he, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, **he will guide you into all truth.*** (16:13)
- **He will not speak on his own;** *he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*
- **He will bring glory to me** *by taking from what is mine & making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine.* (16:14). He does not draw attention to Himself, but rather exalts Jesus.

## **The Holy Spirit in the World.**

*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:* (John 16: 8-11)

- *in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;*
  - *in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father..*
  - *in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*
- 1) Our basic sin is to put self at the centre of our lives, dreams, decision making etc. In doing so we live independent of and fail to put our trust in our Creator and Heavenly Father. Self -serving attitudes and motivations of the Religious Leaders & Pilate put Jesus on the cross branding Him a Sinner. ...As we examine the story of the cross we see political expediency, jealousy and fear all play a role. These are our sins ...we all have blood on our hands.
  - 2) Tolerance is seen as a civilised value (Pluralism). The claim that there are absolutes when it comes to morality is offensive to the world. In the cut and thrust of life, the Spirit shows that the World falls short (through futility in life experience) ... He secures a guilty verdict and brings home to sinners conviction of conscience.
  - 3) The Spirit shows people ( and no one else can do this ) that righteousness before God is not the acquiring of merit that we think it is ... not our own efforts .... but rather it is dependent upon Christ's atoning death on the cross. Jesus' resurrection and ascension prove Him to be right.

4) Justice is done in the overthrow of Satan through the cross...in the natural, Jesus death marked the end ... Evil appears to triumph ... but not so! At the cross Jesus' glory is to be seen!! .. The Father remains in control.

In the world the disciples will face persecution, but their Advocate will be **like a prosecutor** in the Law courts in the face of this opposition. ... **bringing the world under conviction.**

**To sum up then:** What Jesus is saying to the disciples is .....

*I am setting you a very challenging and difficult task .. a task that will bring rejection and persecution but you will not be left alone.*

*I am sending **another** Parakletos who will guide you, encourage you and who will give you the power to actually do it.*

*Another "Parakletos" just like Jesus.*

**Personal Reflection:**

**Think through in what ways the Holy Spirit has been a paraclete to you.**

**Give praise for the gift of the Spirit.**

**Is there something more you would ask of Him today?**

**Week 6: Day 3 John 15: 18-25 & 16: 1-4, 33,**

**Jesus warns of Persecution and trouble.**

so the disciples won't go astray....

- *They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.... (16:2-3)*

He warns that the world will hate the Disciples and treat them harshly **because:**

- **it hated Jesus** ... and rejected his teaching. (15:18)
- **you do not belong to the world**, but I have chosen you out of the world (15:19)
- **of my name**, for they do not know the One who sent me. (15:21).

Jesus provides this warning so the disciples are prepared for the opposition, which will surely come. Jesus reassures them so that in Him they may have peace.

*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16: 33*

**Personal Reflection:**

***Are you experiencing persecution in any way in these days***

- ***in your family***
- ***in the workplace***
- ***with your friends***
- ***in your neighbourhood***
- ***in your community engagement ... eg volunteering / sports etc***

***Identify and then explore how Jesus' victory on the cross and his warning that there would be persecution might bring you His peace.***

***Is there a strategy the Holy Spirit is giving you to enable you to walk through your persecution in peace.***

**Week 6: Day 4**

**John 15: 1-17**

**Jesus is the True Vine ...**

In the Old Testament, Israel is pictured as the vine of God's planting and tending.

- Isaiah 5:1-7 is a lament over the vineyard that has proved unfruitful in spite of God's care.
- Psalm 80:8-17 pleads with the Lord to revive the vine. ( i.e. Israel )
- The vine was used as a symbol of Israel on Maccabean coins. (post 165 BC)
- The vine was featured in temple symbolism
- In the New Testament see: Matthew 21: 33 – 46; Luke 20: 9 – 19; Mark 12:1 – 12.

**Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of all that the vine (Israel) in its planting was meant to be.** Faithless Israel, in rejecting him, was found barren and fruitless. He, who suffered God's judgment of being cut down and thrown away is the one, who by his death, finally enables the vine to produce fruit. He is the true Israel.

The picture of the vine brings out the organic union between Christ and the believer along with other believers ... in a similar way to the metaphor of the Body does for Paul.

**The central thrust of the passage is the unity of life with Christ, expressed in obedience and love, leading to fruitfulness and the glory of the Father.**

**Key verses:**

**1 The Father is the Vinedresser.**

- He cuts off the dead wood
- He prunes (cares for and cleanses) the fruit producing branches. Everything is removed which may divert the life-giving nutrients from producing fruit.

**2 Abide in Me** - remain in close and settled union with Christ. - An act of the will.

This is what we are being called on to do as an expression of our obedience and discipleship. With the Holy Spirit's help we have the capacity to do this.

The vine cannot produce fruit without the branches and a branch cannot bear fruit unless it draws its life from the vine. The fruit is the fruit of the Vine. The branches are all bound together as part of the one vine.

Jesus Christ is the living Word, the one through whom all things were created and established – apart from Him – without His creative life force the disciple is just dead wood.

**How can this union with Christ be maintained?**

- **We are to remain in His love** ...allowing the wonder of His love expressed fully in the cross to shape our lives. This love will express itself in obedience...it cannot do otherwise. He is the source of love and He is our great example.

**Love and obedience are mutually dependent.** (vs. 9 – 13 )

*“Love one another as I have loved you”*

This love will enable us to love one another as He has loved us. This is the command that calls for our obedience. The forgiveness, the humility and the love demonstrated in the foot-washing and shortly in the cross will be the essential example and provides the standard.

**What is the fruit** - justice & righteousness. (Isaiah 5: 7)  
- faithful to God & obedient (Jeremiah 2: 21)  
The fruit is summed up by *agape* - love (John15: 9 –17)

**The branch does not work at producing fruit ..it simply has to be in the vine, receiving it's nutrients; fruit will be the natural outcome.**

The Father is glorified through the disciples in the same way that Jesus of Nazareth glorified the Father - in his obedience – his life and sacrificial death. (vs. 7 – 8 )

**The joy** of Jesus springs out of His obedience to His Father and his unity with Him in love. The disciple is promised this joy ...a joy that is grounded in the unshakeable love of Christ.

The disciple rejoicing in Jesus' resurrection and exaltation and living in unity with the Father and the Son will bring forth the fruit of a life of obedience and love filled with joy.

**The Privilege of Discipleship: The Disciples are His Friends.**

As disciples our relationship with Christ is not one founded on duty or service but one based on friendship and love.

Jesus - Chooses  
Calls  
Appoints } His disciples.

We have been chosen to bear fruit ...fruit that flows from the vine ... Fruit that will stand the test of pressure through persecution and time.

**Personal Reflection:**

**Consider the wonder of His choosing.**

**Take time to give thanks and enjoy the wonder of His love.**

**What is the Gardener pruning in your life in this season? ...**

**What is the Holy Spirit speaking into your heart regarding abiding in Christ ...**

## Week 6: Day 5

## John 17:1-26

## THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

3 Sections -	Prayer of Consecration	(17: 1-5)
	Prayer for the Disciples	(17:6-19)
	Prayer for those who will believe	(17:20-26)

Common to all 3 sections is Jesus' desire that the Father's glory be displayed and His purpose made KNOWN. This prayer gives insight into the nature of Christ's continuing intercession for us.

### 1. Prayer of Consecration: (John 17: 1-5)

*Father, the **time** has come (hour). **Glorify your Son** that your Son may glorify you.*

- This prayer is set in the shadow of the cross. It is a prayer that Jesus might be able to display the heart / character of God in the trial to follow. A prayer that the cross will not be the final chapter but rather just the beginning of eternal life for many.
- Jesus has completed the task given him to do – in the doing, He has consistently shown GOD'S character and has thus brought glory to the Father.
- This part of the prayer (vs.1 - 5) closes with an appeal for the Father to gather Jesus to himself in the glory that he shared with the Father before creation. (John 13:1, 3)

**Eternal life is to KNOW GOD** (i.e. an ever-deepening knowledge and intimacy.) To know Him transforms us and brings a different quality of living. The only way to know God is through the revelation He has given – in His Son. It is not possible for us to dictate the way we will define, approach or be in relationship with God. We must know him – i.e. discover his character and his ways in the **One whom he sent** – Jesus Christ.

### 2. Prayer for the Disciples. (John 17: 6-19)

Jesus has revealed God. (literally *your name*) This revelation flows from Jesus' utter dependence upon the Father in everything. '*The name*' represents the essential character of GOD.

The disciples were those given to Jesus by the Father....out of the world.

- ***I pray for them*** ... *for they are yours. ... glory has come to me through them.*  
... *they are still in the world* (vulnerable)

While the world might write off the disciples as insignificant or irrelevant they actually bring glory to Christ – he delights in them.

**Holy Father** - a unique expression combining 2 vital concepts in the character of God.

- **Holy** - captures the concept of God's sovereignty, majesty and absolute purity and righteousness. He is just and true in all his ways.
- **Father** - captures the concept of God's nurturing, steadfast love; faithfulness and tender care.

Taken together these 2 terms capture the essence of Christ's revelation – the name he has revealed.

Jesus prays for **protection for the disciples** in their mission in a world hostile to them.

- **protect them.** (keep them) **by the power of your name.** 'Holy-Father' (ie. In the power of his sovereignty, righteousness, justice and the power of his steadfast love, faithfulness and care.) **so that they may be one as we are one.**

Consider the level of unity, relationally and in terms of heart and purpose that marks the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Jesus prays that his disciples will be one like this. (One in heart and purpose)(ie. their will is submitted to the Father and their purpose is in line with his purpose)

The outcome of this unity is that many will come to believe in Him. The world will be able to see the power of reconciling love at work in a visible, tangible way as they look at his disciples. This requires their protection in the NAME.

- *May they have the full measure of my joy within them* (John 10:10)
- *My prayer is not that you take them out of this world but that you protect them from the evil one. (they are not of the world even as I am not of it.)*

**What does it mean: *protect them from the evil one?***

- *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

Sanctify means to set apart, to make holy. The disciple is not to be conformed to the character of the world, but rather to be shaped by the truth of the word – Jesus' revelation of God. This word in them will enable holiness in life.

- *As you sent me into the world so I send them into the world.*
  - As light
  - To reveal what God is like
  - As servants – no task too menial
  - As the Word made flesh - to embody the message.
- Jesus consecrates himself for the cross opening the way for his disciples to be truly sanctified. (vs. 19)

**3) Prayer for those who believe. (vs. 20-26)**

- ***That all of them may be one*** (the quality of this unity is of the same character as the unity of Father and Son – a unity made possible because of the disciples' fellowship with God.  
The impact of such fellowship, such unity is such that the world will believe that the Son has been sent by the Father.)
- Jesus' final petition is for them ***to be with Him***, caught up in the splendour and majesty of God. (vs. 24) (see Philippians 2: 5-11)
- ***Righteous Father*** – another unique expression. The last words of this priestly prayer refer to Christ's continuing presence in his followers. Whatever the future holds he will be in them building within them the incredible bond of love that flows from the Father to the Son that is the essence of God's glory.

***Personal Reflection:***

***There is a lot in this prayer of Jesus ...significant as to its setting as His last prayer for the disciples.***

***As Jesus continues to make intercession for us ...surely this is part of his intercession.***

***In Ephesians 4: 1-5 Paul challenges the Ephesians to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.***

***Conscious of the support of the ongoing intercession of Jesus, in what practical ways is the Holy Spirit prompting you to make that effort?***

**Week 6: Day 6 THE BOOK OF GLORY**

**The Hour has come ... Jesus arrest, trial and crucifixion.**

The reading of this gospel narrative has been relentlessly directing us to this moment. Throughout the Gospel there are many references to 'this hour': (John 2:4; 4:21,23; 5:25; 5:28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 27; 13:1; 16:25, 32; 17:1.)

In John's passion account, Jesus is not a passive victim of the plotting and hostility of *the Jews* or of Roman expediency. **His hour is the culmination and completion of his mission to do the 'work' of the Father.** It is the hour of the glorification of the Son of Man

**Jesus arrest in the garden. 18:1-11**

Jesus resolutely yet in peace confronts his enemies who are powerless before him. Twice Jesus identifies himself with the formula – **I AM**. The NIV text is I am *He* in both verses 5 & 8 ...While this is a legitimate translation of the Greek ..the literal Greek is simply *I AM* ( with the *He* understood.) The Greek is **egô eimi, .. I AM**

In response the soldiers fall to the ground under the power of God when Jesus reveals himself as the I AM... (18:6)

Throughout His arrest, Jesus takes the initiative. He is in absolute control. He is not taken unawares ... As Judas and the soldiers approach – *Jesus knowing all that was going to happen to him went out and asked them....*(18:4) The forces of chaos have not surprised Him. Further He prevents harm coming to his disciples.

***Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me.***

**Surely the death of Jesus fulfils the Father's purpose.**

- *What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!* (John 12:27-28)
- Caiaphas' prophecy: (*John 11:50*)
- Jesus in obedience to the Father's command lays down his life. (John 10:17-18)
- Jesus says to Pilate – *you would have no power over me, if it was not given you from above.* (19:11)
- When he had received the drink Jesus said **IT IS FINISHED**. With that he lowered his head and gave up his spirit. – (a voluntary act of sacrifice)

***Personal Reflection:***

***Ponder the willingness of Jesus to drink the cup the Father had given Him.***

***What is the cup the Father has given you? .....***

**Week 6: Day 7 The Trial of Jesus.**

**1. Jesus before Annas. John 18:13-27**

Jesus' trial before the Jewish authorities is brief. There is no mockery, no witnesses are called, no false testimony. Jesus challenges Annas— *I spoke openly to the world. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? ... if I said something wrong testify to what is wrong...*

**Annas makes no response ...The point is that Jesus is innocent. (18:23)**

**2. Peter's Denial: John 18: 15-18 & 25-27**

**3. Jesus' trial before Pilate. John 18:28 - 19:16**

The trial before Pilate is given far greater place in John than in the other gospels. Here Jesus and the Jewish authorities argue their case before the Roman governor.

What catches your attention in John's account.

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**The trial before Pilate is presented as a public manifestation of Jesus' royal status.**

- With Pilate Jesus discusses the nature of his Kingdom and royal authority (18:33-38)
- **He is clothed in purple. He is crowned and hailed as King** (19:1-3)
- Pilate's final judgment is '**Behold your King**' (19:14)
- Pilate tries to release Barabbas. This name means '*son of the Father*'  
Jesus – 'Son of the Father' – dies in his place.
- The writing on the cross. **Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.**

In this hour, Jesus finally lays claim to His Kingship, which earlier the people had tried to force upon him. – His Kingdom however is not of this world. The authorities reject his claims and demand his death.

**On what charges was Jesus arrested?**

At this time, Israel was under Roman rule and the death penalty could only be carried out if the Romans could be convinced that Jesus represented a threat of rebellion against them; (19:29-33) hence the irony in the release of Barabbas – a convicted terrorist.

The *Jews* don't specify a charge when Pilate asks them. (18:29 -31) They had no charge that would stand up in a Roman court. In 19:7 they insist: *We have a law and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.*

**Pilate declares Jesus not guilty in 18:38, 19:4,19:6**

However, note the pressure from the *Jews* – "*if you let this man go you are no friend of Caesars. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.*"

Pilate already is out of favour with Caesar ...as we see by his posting to Judea in the first place. The last thing he needs is a negative report finding its way back to Rome. For the sake of political expediency he caves in to their demand.

Pilate surrenders. *"Here is your King."* – *"Shall I crucify your King."*

The Jews cry out *"We have no King but Caesar!"* (19:15)

**Who is it that is on Trial?**

Jesus says to Pilate – *you would have no power over me, if it was not given you from above.* (19:11) What does he mean by this ...why is the one who handed Jesus over to Pilate be guilty of a greater sin?

***Personal Reflection:***

Peter's denial and Pilate's capitulation even the plotting and scheming of Annas and Caiphas have a similar root. Self- preservation enacted out of fear. It has a common taste ...one with which we are all too familiar.

***Are there spheres in your life at present where fear and self-preservation are shaping your responses and actions?***

***Think about the stance of Jesus during his trial.***

***What strikes you about His "defence"***

**Week 7: Day 1**

**John 19:17-37**

**The crucifixion.**

In this powerful presentation of the Passion there are a number of details unique to John that point to John's particular perspective on the Crucifixion of Jesus and its significance.

Read through the account noting down significant points in John's telling of the story.

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**Jesus dies as the LAMB of GOD**

- He dies at exactly the same time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed (Day of Preparation - John 19:14, 31)
- **He is without blemish.** Pilate says 3 times – I find no basis for a charge against him. Vs. 18:38,19:4,19:6 and then John records in 19:12. *“From then on Pilate tried to set Jesus free but the Jews kept shouting..... Shall I crucify your King? (19:15) Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. (19:16)*
- The Jews insisted –*we have a law & according to that law he must die (Lev. 24:16.)*

**Personal Reflection:**

***Think about what significance there is in understanding Jesus as the Passover Lamb.***

***What implications does this have for your life and your struggles with sin?***

**Week 7: Day 2**

**John 19: 38 - 42**

**Jesus buried in the garden.**

The Passion story closes with the burial in the garden tomb. This almost seems to be a royal internment. (Note the extraordinary amount of spices .. 75 lbs ..30kg).

The scene in the Garden contrasts with the beginning of the Passion story, where Jesus first confronted his enemies; now he is among friends; Joseph of Arimathea who had been a secret disciple and Nicodemus. They go to the authorities to claim Jesus' body. Note Deuteronomy 21:22-23

Where Jesus began his passion deserted by his followers, through his being lifted-up on the cross, the new temple of his body (those who believe) is already being raised up.

**Reflections on the Cross**

- 1. Jesus Death.** Jesus' actual death on the cross is described in a very telling way. Consider the picture behind 19:30 ... The cross becomes the resting place for his head... the Greek here is the same as that in Luke 9:58 .. *the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.*
  - Notice also the phrase .. *HE gave up His Spirit* .. a voluntary submission to death according to the will of the Father

**2. Building the Temple:**

These notes are adapted from the Australian Catholic University online course notes ..*Theo 252.*

The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" (1:14). In Israel's history, the Tabernacle and then the Temple, were sacred sites seen as God's dwelling place. Where once God's glory filled the Tabernacle (Ex 40:34) and the Temple (1 Kings 8:10-11), **now God's glory dwells with us in the person of Jesus.**

Jesus as the presence of God in history, can truly be spoken of as a living temple (John 2:21). What was once a building has now become a person. When Jesus is crucified, His words about the Jews destroying the temple were enacted. (ie the temple of his body). But the second part of Jesus' words, *that he would raise it up* has not yet taken place. Could it be that this is more than just a reference to the resurrection? Could it also point towards the raising up of His Body, the Church.

*Consider now the transformations that have taken place within the Gospel :*

- *Tabernacle – applied to the person of Jesus 1:14*
- *The Temple called my Father's house 2:16*
- *Jesus' body in its death and resurrection called the temple 2:19-22*
- *Father's house / household has many dwellings 14:2*
- *Father, Jesus and Spirit will come to dwell in believers 14:17, 23*

*The Gospel has transformed the meaning of Israel's cultic places giving them a personal sense, firstly in the person of Jesus and then, in some future time achieved through Jesus' going to the Father, in the persons of believers.*

### 3. The new household of God

From the cross Jesus speaks specifically to his mother and to the Beloved Disciple creating a new set of relationships between them. *"Woman behold your son.... Behold your mother"* (vv. 26-27)

***The interaction between Jesus, his mother and the disciple, is the high point of the hour. In this moment, the fullness of God's love is revealed as humanity is drawn into the new family or household of God.***

*As Jesus temple / body is destroyed in death, a new temple / household of God is raised up. Just as Jesus could be called the Temple because of the mutual indwelling of the Father and Spirit, so now the believers can be the new Temple because of the indwelling presence of Father, Son and Spirit achieved in the hour when Jesus returns to the Father. (Notice that following this scene, the Father of Jesus is called 'my Father and your Father' (20:17)."*

### 2. The flow of blood and water

The piercing of Jesus' side brings home the stark reality of His death. What captures John's interest is not the fact of His death, but the flow of blood and water. Why?

The Catholic online course notes suggest an eucharistic interest:

*The reality is that .. Christian readers no longer have access to the body of Jesus as the first disciples did. Jesus is no longer physically present in our midst. Are we always going to be just readers and observers of these events or is there a way that generations of believers can be participants? Looking back over the Gospel there have been many references to water:*

- *The Baptist baptises with water (1:26, 31, 33; 3:23)*
- *Jesus changes water to wine (2:6, 7, 9; 4:36)*
- *New birth comes through water (3:5)*
- *Jesus offers living water (4:10, 11, 14, 15; 7:38)*
- *In chapter 6 there are references to Jesus' blood as a means of eternal life (6:53, 54, 55, 56).*

*These Gospel references to water and blood speak to two post-Easter rituals of the Christian community, namely Baptism and Eucharist. In the absence of Jesus' physical presence, the disciples continue to experience his presence and participate in his life-giving activity through the physical reality of sacramental rituals. The Gospel affirms that Jesus' life is not a past event but remains accessible in every present moment when a Spirit-endowed community gather in the celebration of Christian sacraments.*

*A sacramental interpretation is thoroughly consistent with the theology of this Gospel. Throughout the section called 'the Feasts of the Jews' we explored how Christians could still*

*celebrate the great saving activities of God in Israel's history even though they no longer had access to Temple or Synagogue.*

*In the Last Discourse we saw the way Jesus prepared his disciples for his coming departure and absence. Now in the hour of Jesus the future generations of believers are promised that they too will have access to Jesus through his on going presence within a sacramental community. Through this means we too may believe and have life (19:35; 20:31)*

What do you think?                      Certainly Real Life is released through Christ's death!

### **Conclusion:**

The 'hour' is completed. Jesus has been lifted up in death and in glory. The Spirit has been promised and an embryonic Christian community has been formed. In some sense the John's story of Jesus is complete, but the story of the community is just beginning. While Jesus' story can truly be called 'good news', will this good news continue into the story of the community?

The community's gospel begins in Chapter 20 '*on the first day...*' (20:1).

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### **Personal Reflection:**

***In addition to the thought that Jesus is present in the sacramental rituals of the church how else might his presence be experienced when the community of believers gather together?***

***In what ways might you experience his presence outside the walls of the church?***

## Week 7: Day 3

## John 20:1-11

## THE RESURRECTION &amp; THE DISCIPLES' PATHWAY TO FAITH.

Remembering that John can be read on a number of levels consider the following:

Is there any significance in the phrase... *while it was still dark*?

(see John 1:5; 3:2; 6:17; 9:4; 8:12; 11:10; 12:35, 46; 13:30; 19:39).

- Mary Magdalene sees that the stone has been removed from the tomb. The use of the passive verb "*has been removed*" hints at the action of God. Mary however cannot see. Her thinking is governed by the belief that Jesus was dead and the fear that his body had been stolen.
- **In the darkness, Mary runs away from the tomb** to Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved.
- Her claim is that Jesus' body has been taken away. For her there is no suggestion of the possibility of resurrection.
- In the darkness the group of 3 disciples stand in confusion and unbelief. In the opening 2 verses here, the point of view of the unbeliever is stated and it is as unbelievers that the Peter & John now turn toward the tomb in v. 3.

### The visit to the Tomb. ( John 20:3-9)

The 2 disciples move from a position of unbelief towards the place where God has been at work; the empty tomb (vv. 3-4). Simon Peter leads the way.

- In moving to the tomb to investigate Mary's claim, they place themselves in a position where God's intervention can be unveiled.
- Once at the tomb the other disciple stoops to look in, and sees the linen cloths. He does not enter the tomb, but waits for Peter.
- Peter arrives and enters the tomb. He not only sees the linen cloths, but the burial cloth used to wrap around Jesus' head. It is lying separate, carefully folded and placed to one side. God has indeed entered the story. (John 20: 6-7)

Lazarus came out of his tomb still wrapped in the cloths of death; his face still covered with the head cloth. (John 11: 44). **Here, not only is the tomb empty, but the trappings of death are also empty.** This is a different kind of event .. a resurrection, death has been conquered!!!

- Simon Peter enters the tomb and sees the evidence. Nothing is said of his response.
- This silence draws the reader into the climax of v. 8. The other disciple sees the signs that death has been conquered: **He sees and believes.**

Here, the model of discipleship in John, ( ie the beloved disciple) has moved from no faith (vv. 1-2), through partial faith (vv. 4-5), into the fullness of resurrection faith by seeing that God had overcome the death of Jesus (vv. 7-8).

This is similar to the experience of *several* characters in the Cana section, who moved from no faith, through partial faith, to full faith (2:1-4:54)

***Personal Reflection:***

***Does this account of Peter and John's experience of the empty tomb address your own experience of faith? How?***

## Week 7: Day 4      John 20:11-18

### The Faith Journey of Mary Magdalene

John now reintroduces Mary Magdalene into the story. **She is standing outside the tomb weeping.... in the darkness of unbelief.** The faithless "wailing" featured in the death of Lazarus (11:31, 33) is recalled.

- Mary now stoops and peers into the tomb for the first time (v. 11b).
- There is no mention of the cloths and the head covering.
- Rather two angels in white, one seated at the head and the other at the feet, in the place where Jesus had been laid (v. 11). The angels are further evidence that God has entered the story. His viewpoint is reflected in the angels' question: "*Woman, why are you weeping?*" (v. 13a).
- She answers with almost the same words she used to tell the disciples of the open tomb: "they" have taken away the body of Jesus, whom she calls her "Lord.", and "*I don't know where they put him.*"
- The depth of her unbelief is highlighted as she turns to see Jesus standing in front of her, but she does not recognize him. Jesus repeats the question asked by the angels, but adds: "*Whom do you seek?*" (v.15a). Ironically, this is the one whom she seeks, but her lack of faith is clear... she cannot see ... she mistakenly identifies Jesus as the gardener.
- With deepening irony, Jesus, the supposed gardener, is asked where he, taken as a representative of the violent "they" who crucified Jesus, has laid his body!

Mary persists in her belief that the body has been "*taken away.*" "Tell me where you have laid him, and *I will take him away*" (v.15b). There is no belief in resurrection, and there is no recognition of the risen one.

- **With tenderness, Jesus now reveals Himself to Mary ...."Marian."...He knows his sheep by name** ( Jn 10:3 )
- **She responds, *Rabbouni*:** "my master" (v.17. & 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8).

Like Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman, who illustrate the development of faith earlier in John, **Mary has had a partial faith, a belief in the Jesus who can meet her present hopes and needs.**

What is behind Mary's holding on to Jesus and His instruction not to hold on to Him?

- The Hour is still in process ... it is not yet complete.
- In and through the cross, Jesus has revealed the Father and has completed the task given to him (see 4:34; 5:36; 17:4; 19:30). However, the disciples are yet to experience the fruits of Jesus' glorification, **but the days of being associated with the historical Jesus are over.**

An entirely new situation is being established through the hour which is in progress.

Through the earlier chapters of the gospel, only Jesus is spoken of as "*the Son of God.*" Although we have been told that those who believe in Jesus have the power to become children of God (1:12), God has not been spoken of as **your Father** ..till now.

Now the promise of 1:12 is realised. Mary is to inform the disciples, now called Jesus' brethren (v. 17b), that he is ascending *to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God* (v. 17c). The *hour* of Jesus is about to culminate in Jesus' ascension to the Father. This creates a new situation where the God and Father of Jesus is now also the God and Father of Jesus' brethren.

### **Summary:**

This account began with a tearful Mary, standing outside the tomb, still in the darkness of unbelief. It closes as she goes from the tomb. She is now in Faith. From darkness, she has passed through the partial faith, which led her to recognize Jesus as her Rabbi (vv. 16-17a).

She now announces that she has seen the risen Lord. As this scene began, Mary could not grasp the words of the heavenly **messengers** (vs. 12-13), but as it closes she becomes **the messenger** of the resurrection. **"I have seen the Lord"** (v. 18b).

### **Personal Reflection:**

***Does this account of Mary Magdalene's experience at the tomb reflect in any way your own experience of faith?***

***In what ways?***

## Week 7: Day 5

## John 20:19-23

**The Risen Jesus appears to His Disciples.**

Despite Mary's message from the risen Lord (v.18), the disciples are locked in a room, "for fear of the Jews" (v.19a). **The story of the post resurrection gathering of the disciples reflects the experience of all disciples:** the proclamation of the message of resurrection does not dispel our fear of *the world* in which there will be tribulation (hatred, insult, persecution, even death.)

- Jesus comes into this situation proclaiming "**Peace be with you**". Grace is released. The empowering presence of Jesus makes the difference. The disciples now take heart (see 16:33); The Risen Christ imparts His Spirit ... the message will be proclaimed...a new courage released.
- Jesus had prayed: "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (17:18). He has given himself to make God known (see 17:19), and now he sends them out to continue his mission. They are sent out In the way of Incarnation;
  - a becoming one with
  - as a servant
  - in the power of the Spirit
  - totally dependent on the Father.

They are to be to the world what Jesus has been to the world (see 13:20; 17:18).

Reflect over the work of the Spirit from earlier in this study:

- The Spirit is *with* the community and *in* the community, and will remain *with* the community forever (14:16-17).
- The Spirit will bear witness to Jesus in his absence, so that the disciples, who have been with him from the beginning, might also be witnesses (15: 26-27).
- The disciples are to bring the peace and joy, received on the evening of that first resurrection day (v.19), to later generations of frightened disciples (15:18-16:3).
- The gift of the Spirit will render present the risen Jesus within the worshipping community (14:18-21), so that the world might know and believe that Jesus is the sent one of the Father (17:21-23).
- The Spirit's ongoing revelation will lay bare sin, righteousness & judgment (16:7-11).
- The disciples, empowered by the Spirit, in the midst of their fear and joy, will be the agents for the future sanctification of generations of believers.
- The mission of the disciples renders present the holiness of the risen Jesus.(17:17-19). They will bring God's forgiveness for all sin that is to be forgiven, and lay bare all sinfulness (v. 23)

They stand at the beginning of a future generation of believers. We, the 21<sup>st</sup> century readers of the Gospel have come to believe in the resurrection of Jesus through the Scripture, including this Gospel (v. 9), and through the holiness, peace, joy, and judgment, made possible by the Lord's gift of the Spirit into the Christian community.

**Personal Reflection: Meditate particularly on John20: 21-22**  
**Drink in the peace of the Lord and his gift of the Holy Spirit.**  
**He is sending you out today ...**

**Week 7: Day 6**

**John 20:24-30**

**The Risen Jesus and Thomas (vs. 24-29)**

*"Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came" (v. 24.)*

- Thomas like those mentioned earlier is in the darkness of unbelief. (v. 24). His fellow disciples attempt to communicate their Easter faith with him, repeating Mary's confession: *"We have seen the Lord"*.
- His response to the other disciples marks a second stage in his journey of faith. **He is only prepared to lay aside his unbelief if the risen Jesus meets his criteria.**
- Just as Mary wished to hold on to the body of Jesus, Thomas demands that he experience the risen body of Jesus by seeing the nail-marks and placing his finger into the wounds, and by placing his hand in his side.

Of the three journeys of faith told in this chapter, this is the most dramatic. Thomas does not deny the possibility of resurrection. However, he insists that the risen body of Jesus fulfil his requirements for belief in the resurrection.

**A week later:** The doors were still locked .. *Jesus came again and stood in their midst.*

- Jesus offers to fulfil Thomas' conditions (v. 27 ), but he also draws Thomas beyond his conditional faith. If Thomas wishes to have physical proof, he can have it, but there is more at stake: **stop doubting and believe** (v. 27c). There is no indication in the text that Thomas actually touches Jesus. Thomas responds: **"My Lord and my God!"**
- Thomas has now come to full faith.

**Conclusion to the Gospel (vv. 30-31)**

The faith journeys of the Disciples look beyond the characters *in the story* to the readers of the story. We, the readers, believe on the basis of Scripture, including the word of the Gospel itself, that Jesus is risen (see v. 9). **For us**, the physical Jesus is *absent*. How are we to come to faith?

**We are to regard our experience as equally privileged to that of the foundational disciples whose dependence upon *the physical presence of Jesus* is evident in Mary's wish to hold on to Jesus and Thomas' demand to touch his wounds and place his hand in the pierced side.**

Jesus says: *"You have believed because you saw me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe"* (v. 29). **The risen Jesus led the disciples through their hesitation into authentic belief.**

As vs.30-31 shows, John's major concern is not the story of the *past* disciples, important though they are, but rather the *faith of the readers*. We are blessed indeed, in our faith without seeing.

The Jesus, proclaimed in the Prologue, has lived, been crucified, and has risen. But John has written not just a recollection of these events, but a proclamation into the present. The first disciples were challenged to reach beyond their unbelief and their partial faith into genuine belief. So too are the Christian readers of this gospel who are called upon to believe without seeing.

Such belief must accept that:

- Jesus is the long-awaited Christ, but only in so far as he has come from God and returns to God, the Son of God, the Sent One of the Father, the one who has made God known.
- Eternal life is possible only for those who come to know God through Jesus Christ, the one whom God has sent (17:3).

***Personal Reflection:***

The gospel of John's power and inspiration is experienced only if the reader rising from the story has become part of it.

***Have you entered more deeply into belief in Jesus and all he has made known about God?***

***Have you a deeper experience of Life in His name as a result of the reading experience (v. 31)?***

***Are you able identify yourself in this process of coming to faith without seeing?***

**Week 7: Day 7 John 21:1-25**

John 21:1-25 unfolds in three sections.

**The Miracle and the Meal (John 21:1-14)**

- The Disciples go fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (vv. 2-3).
- The risen Jesus appears to them, & guides them to a large catch of fish (vv. 4-6).
- At the miracle, the figure on the shore is recognised as Jesus by the Beloved Disciple, who tells Simon Peter: "It is the Lord" (v. 7).

The main theme here, centres on the Christian community, the disciples, and their mission as the sent ones of Jesus. Like in Luke 5 they fish all night without catching anything, but as Jesus guides them they pull in 153 fish. Fishers of men will need His guidance if we are to bring in a catch.

We are not told of Simon Peter's faith, but of his actions.

- He leaps into the sea, as the other disciples come to the shore in the boat, dragging the heavy catch (vv. 7-8).
- On arrival, they find a charcoal fire already lit, fish lying upon it, and bread (v. 9).
- On Jesus' command to "them" that some of the freshly caught fish be brought, it is again Simon Peter who acts, hauling the net ashore, containing 153 fish. The issue is not the number but the fact that despite the great number of fish, **the net is not torn** (vs. 10-11).

The Church is a boat under the direction of the Lord, "gathering" large numbers. The Lord and his disciples share a meal. The one who shared meals with them during his ministry, is still with them at the table (vs. 12-13). The identity and the mission of the Christian community, is founded on the *presence* of the risen Jesus who has now appeared to his disciples three times (v. 14). He gives no indication of leaving them.

**Simon Peter as Shepherd, the Beloved Disciple as Witness (vs.15-24)**

**If Peter is the leader, what of his earlier failures?** Peter's 3 fold denial (18:15-18, 25-27) is overcome by his threefold profession of love (21:15-17). On the basis of his love for Jesus he is entrusted with the mission of shepherding the sheep. He must be to the community what Jesus was - a good shepherd. (10:14-18). Jesus tells Peter that he will, like Jesus, lay down his life for his sheep (vs.18-19)

**But what of the Beloved Disciple?** Peter asks the question: *Lord, what about him?* (v.21) At the cross the Beloved Disciple was singled out by Jesus as one of the foundational figures for the new family of Jesus.(19:27). Peter may be the shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep, but the Beloved Disciple is the authority behind this community's story of Jesus: "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things" (v. 24). Peter is the appointed shepherd of the flock of Jesus (vs. 15-17), but the Beloved Disciple is the bearer of the Jesus tradition. He is witness, author and guarantor of this GOSPEL (v. 24).

**Conclusion:** (expressed in words from the Catholic University Theo 252 Course below:)

***"In the beginning was the word ..."***

*From the opening verse the Fourth Gospel presents a striking version of the Jesus story. From the perspective of thirty to sixty years after the event, the evangelist tells the familiar story from Baptism to Resurrection in some surprisingly unfamiliar ways. We hear little of the Kingdom, no exorcisms, there are few miracles and seemingly no parables. The narrative remains focussed on the person of Jesus.*

*The words spoken, the 'works' done, have value only in being the words and 'works' of the Son. Only in being Son, can Jesus claim to be the unique revealer of the Father and the one who accomplishes the work the Father sent him to do – to reveal a God of love and draw believers into a filial intimacy with God. This narrative also affirms that the experience of the first disciples is still accessible to later believers.*

*You have now completed this reading journey through the Fourth Gospel. Like the first century readers for whom this text was written, you have no direct experience of the physical Jesus. The time of his bodily presence is past. Like the Johannine community you live in the 'in-between' time -between the past experience of the cross/ resurrection and the future return of Christ in glory. And like the Johannine community you now have access to Christ through the sacramental rituals of the community, the Scriptures (particularly this Gospel) and the Holy Spirit.*

*You have heard the story of men and women, within and beyond Judaism, who move through their own journey to full faith in Jesus. You have read the affirmation that all of Israel's history and rituals are now celebrated in their perfection in and through Jesus. You have read the story of a final meal when Jesus prepares disciples for the time of his absence and promises that they will not be desolate because of this for they will have a new Paraclete to guide them. Finally you have been told this Gospel's understanding of Jesus' hour of glory when he most fully reveals the Father's love, and draws disciples into that love as children, empowered by the Spirit.*

The reading process now concludes with Jesus' final words of blessing –  
*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed..*

**It is time to rise up and share the good news!**

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***Personal Application:***

***Where is Jesus directing you to fish?***

***What is He saying to you in restoration after failures in the past?***

## Exercises for the week leading into Easter

### Exercise 1

- Jot down from memory the events of Jesus' Passion – what happens, who is involved, where, any words spoken?
- Now read again John 18 and 19 and highlight on your notes those things that are in the Fourth Gospel. Are there any surprises?

### Exercise 2:

- In what way is the Passion of Jesus in John a narrative for and about Christian discipleship?
- How would this narrative offer hope and consolation to the first Christian community? To communities of our own time?

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**APPENDIX.****A note on signs and works.**

John uses 2 words to speak of Jesus' miracles-

1. a sign }
 - 2. a work }

They reveal HIS GLORY

He never uses the word '*dunamis*' which is the word favoured in other gospels.

**SIGNS** these signs are not ends in themselves but rather point people beyond themselves to the deeper revelation that Jesus brings. – eg. Blindness - Jesus is the LIGHT  
Lazarus - Jesus is LIFE

These signs originate in GOD and point people to a particular truth and result in faith (see 2:11, 3:23, 20:31-32)

They expose our human inadequacy and Jesus' all sufficiency in the light of human need. (eg. The feeding of the 5000)

**Each miracle is *sign...ificant*. – *meaningful***

These signs represent a challenge and a call to faith.

**WORKS** But Jesus has more to show us – hence the use of the word '*works*' – this is used of the deeds of people whether good or evil.

Jesus' works are 'works that no one else did' (15:24)

They are distinctive.

They are works of the Father – they originate in GOD

They testify on his behalf

They reveal / teach.

Works is a fuller term than signs. The whole of Jesus' life is a work whether the natural or the supernatural, no distinction is being made between them.

All of this is simply the normal mode of operation for The One who is LIGHT and LIFE.