

time, space, Jesus

John's gospel in daily parts for Lent 2023
with time and space for meditation
and encounter with Jesus

Adapted by Bern Leckie for spoken clarity
from the public domain World English Bible, British Edition



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Day 1 – God is revealed

Ash Wednesday, 22 February 2023

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was there, in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him, nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came as a witness, to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but was sent to testify about the light. The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and although the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him. But to those who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become God's children: born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh or man, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and lived amongst us. We saw his glory, the glory belonging to the only born Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about him, crying out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me, for he was before me.'" From his fullness we all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth were realised through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only born Son, who is in the closest intimacy with the Father, has revealed him.

For reflection

What does it mean to you that God has been revealed?

Day 2 – Look, here comes hope

Thursday, 23 February 2023

John 1:19-34

This is John's testimony, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and declared, "I am not the Christ."

They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not."

"Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."

So they said to him, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

The ones who had been sent were from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then do you baptise if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?"

John answered them, "I baptise in water, but amongst you stands one you don't know. He is the one who comes after me, who is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to loosen." These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising.

The next day, John saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'After me comes a man who is preferred before me, because he was before me.' I didn't know him, but this is why I came baptising in water, so that he would be revealed to Israel."

John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on him. I didn't recognise him, but the one who sent me to baptise in water said to me, 'You will see the Spirit descending and remaining on the one who baptises in the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

For reflection

Imagine hope is not just an idea in your head, but a person you can see – and you have just recognised them for the first time. How do you feel, and what do you do?

Day 3 – Come and see

Friday, 24 February 2023

John 1:35-50

Again, the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus walking, and said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, “What are you looking for?”

They said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”
He said to them, “Come and see.”

They came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about 4pm. One of the two who heard John and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew found Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah!” (which means Christ). Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter, or rock).

On the next day, Jesus decided to go out into Galilee, and he found Philip. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the same city as Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, “We have found the one that Moses in the law and the prophets wrote about: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”
Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said about him, “Look, here is a true Israelite, with no deceit in him!” Nathanael said to Jesus, “How do you know me?”

Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are King of Israel!”
Jesus answered him, “Because I told you, ‘I saw you underneath the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these!” Then Jesus said, “Most certainly, I tell you all, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

For reflection

What first excited you about Jesus? What makes you want to know him better today?

Day 4 – Miracles and warning signs

Saturday, 25 February 2023

John 2

On the third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My time has not yet come."

His mother said to the servants, "Whatever he says to you, do it."

Now there were six stone water pots there, for Jewish ceremonial washing, that could hold twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the water pots with water." So they filled them up to the brim. Then Jesus said, "Now draw some out, and take it to the head waiter." So they took it.

When the head waiter tasted the water which had turned into wine, and didn't know where it came from (only the servants who had drawn the water knew), the head waiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have had a skinful, they serve the not-so-good wine. But you have kept the good wine until now!"

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee, was the first of his signs revealing his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

After this, Jesus went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they stayed there a few days.

The Jewish Passover was getting near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple, he found the people who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers sitting at their tables. He made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and he scattered the money changers' coins and overturned their tables. To those who sold the doves, he said, "Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

So the Jews responded, "What sign can you show us? What's your authority to do these things?"

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The Jews said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple! You are going to raise it up in three days?" But Jesus spoke about the temple of his body. So when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this, and they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had said.

Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name after seeing his signs. But Jesus didn't entrust himself to them because he knew what people are like, and because he didn't need anyone to testify about human nature; Jesus already knew what is in each human heart.

For reflection

What would it be like to see Jesus perform a miracle in person?

Day 5 – You must be born again

Sunday, 26 February 2023

John 3:1-21

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler among the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered him, “Most certainly I tell you, unless someone is born again, they will never see God’s Kingdom.”

Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he re-enter his mother’s womb to be born?”

Jesus answered, “Most certainly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter God’s Kingdom. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh. Whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Don’t be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but don’t know where it comes from and where it is going. It’s the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus answered him, “How can these things be?”

Jesus answered him, “You are the teacher of Israel, and you don’t understand these things? Most certainly I tell you, we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, and you don’t accept our testimony. If you didn’t believe when I told you earthly things, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ever gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God didn’t send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not judged. Whoever does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed and trusted in the name of the one and only Son of God. This is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and doesn’t come to the light, for fear that their works would be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes to the light, so that their works may be revealed as being accomplished in God.”

For reflection

What does it mean to you to have new life because of Jesus?

Day 6 – Whoever believes has life

Monday, 27 February 2023

John 3:22-36

After these things, Jesus came with his disciples into the land of Judea. He stayed there with them and baptised. John also was baptising in Enon near Salim because there was much water there. People came and were baptised; for John had not yet been thrown into prison. A dispute arose between John's disciples and a certain Jew about purification. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan – the one you have testified about - look, he is baptising, and everyone is coming to him."

John answered, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves witnessed that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So my joy is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.

"The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks of the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies about what he has seen and heard; and yet no one accepts his testimony. Whoever does accept his testimony has signed up to this, that God is true. For the one God has sent speaks the words of God; for God gives the Spirit without limits. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life – instead, the wrath of God waits over him."

For reflection

From your perspective, what difference does it make that God gives from heaven?

Day 7 – Life revealed by living water

Tuesday, 28 February 2023

John 4:1-26

When Jesus learned that the Pharisees had been told that he was making and baptising more disciples than John (although Jesus himself didn't baptise, his disciples did this), Jesus left Judea and went back to Galilee. He needed to pass through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone off into the city to buy food.

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew about God's gift, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. So where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it, him and his children and his livestock?"

Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks the water that I will give them will never thirst again; the water that I will give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I won't get thirsty, or have to keep coming all the way here to draw."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."

The woman answered, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You were right to say, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands; and the man you have now is not your husband. You have spoken truthfully."

The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You don't know what you worship. We do know what we worship; for salvation is from the Jews. But a time is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks

such people to be his worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming, the Christ, the anointed one. When he has come, he will tell us everything.”

Jesus said to her, “That’s who I am, speaking to you.”

For reflection

Is Jesus is starting a conversation with you?

Day 8 – One sows, another reaps

Wednesday, 1 March 2023

John 4:27-42

Just then, his disciples came. They were amazed that he was speaking with a woman; yet no one said, “What are you looking for?” or, “Why do you speak with her?” So the woman left her water pot, went away into the city, and said to the people, “Come, see a man who has told me everything I’ve ever done. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the city, and came to him.

Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.”

But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”

So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?”

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you say, ‘There are still four months until the harvest?’ Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, they are white for harvest already. Whoever reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true, ‘One sows, and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap what you haven’t worked for. Others have worked, and you have reaped the results of their work.”

Many of the Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, “He told me everything I’ve ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you said; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

For reflection

How much are you trying to get done by your own initiative at the moment? How much could God be guiding you to be part of something bigger than you can do alone?

Day 9 – Healed from miles away

Thursday, 2 March 2023

John 4:43-54

After two days, Jesus left there and went into Galilee. For Jesus himself declared that a prophet has no honour in his own country. So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him - they had seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast, because they were there too. So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee, where he had made the water into wine.

There was a certain royal official whose son was sick in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come back from Judea to Galilee, the official went to Jesus and begged him to come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death. Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe a thing."

The official pleaded with him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Jesus said to him, "Go on your way. Your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him, and he went on his way. While he was on his journey, his servants met him and reported, "Your boy lives!" So he asked them the time when his son began to get better. They told him, "Yesterday at 1pm, the fever left him." Then the father realised that this was the time when Jesus said to him, "Your son will live." So he and his whole household believed.

This was the second sign that Jesus performed, after coming from Judea into Galilee.

For reflection

How has Jesus ever surprised you with what he can do? How would you want him to?

Day 10 – Mending and breaking with authority

Friday, 3 March 2023

John 5:1-30

Later on, there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the sheep gate, there is a pool, which is called in Hebrew, “Bethesda”, and has five porches. In these lay a great number of people who were sick, blind, lame, or paralysed, waiting for the water to move, because an angel went down into the pool and stirred up the water at times. Whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease they had. A man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been sick for a long time, Jesus asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I’m coming, someone else steps down ahead of me.”

Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.”

Immediately, the man was healed, and he picked up his mat and walked.

Now that day was a Sabbath. So the Jews kept saying to the man who was healed, “It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry the mat.”

He answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” Then they asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your mat and walk’?” But the man who was healed didn’t know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into crowd there.

Later, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “Look, you are healed. Stop sinning, so that nothing worse happens to you.”

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason, the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him, because he did these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, so I am working, too.”

This made the Jews even more determined to kill Jesus, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

So Jesus answered them, “Most certainly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing that comes from himself, only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does the same way. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him everything he does. And the Father will show him greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, the Son also gives life to whoever he wants. For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgement to the Son, so that everyone will honour the

Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

“Truly, truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, they now have eternal life, and do not come into judgement, but they have passed over from death into life. Truly, truly I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the Son of God’s voice; and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, he also gave to the Son to have life in himself. And the Father gave the Son authority to judge, because he is a son of man. Don’t be surprised about this, for the time is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and they will come out; those who have done good, to a resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to a resurrection of judgement.

“I can do nothing by my own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and my judgement is correct, because I don’t seek my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me.”

For reflection

Who has the most authority in your life? Whose word or lead do you trust most to deal with conflicting ideas or judgements you have to make?

Day 11 – Where will you find life?

Saturday, 4 March 2023

John 5:31-47

“If I testify about myself, my witness is not valid. It is another who testifies about me. I know that his testimony about me is true. You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. It’s not that I am taking human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. John was the lamp that kept burning and shining, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than John’s; for the works which the Father gave me to finish, the very works that I do, testify about me, that the Father has sent me. The Father himself, who sent me, has testified about me. You have never heard his voice or seen his form. You don’t have his word living in you, because you don’t believe the one he sent.

“You keep on examining the Scriptures, because you think you have eternal life in them; and those Scriptures do testify about me. But you still won’t come to me to have life. I don’t take glory from men. But I know you, and you don’t have God’s love in you.

“I have come in my Father’s name, and you don’t receive me. If someone else comes in their own name, you will receive them. How can you believe, when you are giving and taking glory from each other, and you aren’t seeking the glory that comes from the only God?

“Don’t think that I will accuse you to the Father. Your accuser is your source of hope - Moses. If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. But if you don’t believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

For reflection

What does it mean to go to Jesus for life, and not just the Scriptures, church leaders or your favourite authors?

Day 12 – There’s more than enough for everyone

Sunday, 5 March 2023

John 6:1-15

After this, Jesus went to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd followed him because they saw his signs and miracles healing the sick. Jesus went up the mountainside, and he sat there with his disciples.

Now the Jewish Passover festival was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming to him, he said to Philip, “Where are we going to buy bread, so these can eat?” Jesus said this to test Philip, because Jesus knew what he would do.

Philip answered him, “Two hundred days’ wages wouldn’t get enough bread for everyone just to have a little bite.”

One of Jesus’ disciples, Simon Peter’s brother Andrew, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these between so many people?”

Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was lots of grass there. So the people sat down – just counting the men, there were five thousand. Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he gave them out to the disciples, and the disciples gave them out to the people who were sitting down. They did the same with the fish – everyone had as much as they wanted. When people were full up, Jesus said to his disciples, “Gather up the broken leftover pieces, so that nothing will be lost.” So they gathered them up, and filled twelve big baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.

When the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus had done, they said, “This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world.” Knowing that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

For reflection

Imagine being hungry and part of the crowd, close enough to see what was going on here – would you have expected nothing, a bite of food, or a feast? How would you feel by the end of the meal?

Day 13 – Weird ways to cross the water

Monday, 6 March 2023

John 6:16-24

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea. They got into the boat and were going over the sea to Capernaum. It was dark now, and Jesus had not come to them. The sea was getting rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat, and they were afraid.

But he said to them, “It is me, I’m here, I am. Don’t be afraid.” So they willingly took him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were going.

The next day, the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea realised that there had only been one boat there, and that Jesus hadn’t entered the boat with his disciples, but his disciples had gone away alone. But then, other boats from Tiberias came near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. When the crowd saw that Jesus and his disciples were not there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

For reflection

Imagine you’re at sea right now – that might be how you are feeling about something difficult. What would it be like for Jesus to get into your boat?

Day 14 – The bread of life

Tuesday, 7 March 2023

John 6:25-51

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Jesus answered them, “Most certainly I tell you, you seek me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Don’t work for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts and leads to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For God the Father has put his seal on him.”

So they said to him, “What must we do, so we can be doing the works of God?”

Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe and trust in the one he has sent.”

So they said to him, “What are you doing as a sign, so we can see and believe you? What work will you do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. As it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.’”

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, it wasn’t Moses who gave you the bread out of heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is the one who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.”

So they said to him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not go hungry, and whoever believes and trusts in me will never be thirsty. But I told you that you have seen me, and yet you don’t believe.

“Everyone the Father gives me will come to me. Whoever comes to me I will never, ever reject. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all he has given to me I should lose nothing, but should raise it all up at the last day. This is the will of the one who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes and trusts in him should have eternal life; and I will raise them up at the last day.”

This made the Jews whisper and grumble about Jesus, because he said, “I am the bread which came down out of heaven.” They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then does he say, ‘I have come down out of heaven?’”

So Jesus answered them, “Don’t grumble amongst yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them; and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who hears from the Father and has learnt, comes to me.

“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the one who is from God. He has seen the Father. Most certainly, I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, they will live forever. And the bread which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the bread of life?

Day 15 – Who can take this in?

Wednesday, 8 March 2023

John 6:52-71

This made the Jews argue and dispute with each other, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you don’t have life in yourselves. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in them. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me will also live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven - not like the manna our fathers ate - they died. Whoever eats this bread will live forever.” He said these things in the synagogue while he taught in Capernaum.

When they heard, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard idea! Who can take it in?”

But, knowing that his disciples were complaining about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this grab you as offensive? Then what if you would see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit who gives life. The flesh counts for nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and life. But there are some of you who don’t believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who didn’t believe and trust him, and who would betray him. He said, “This is why I have said to you that no one can come to me, unless they are enabled by my Father.”

After that, many of his disciples went back and no longer walked with him. Jesus said to the twelve, “You don’t want to leave too, do you?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus answered them, “Didn’t I choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?” Now he was speaking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, one of the twelve but about to betray him.

For reflection

Jesus said that you don’t have life without eating and drinking him in – how do you feel about this?

Day 16 – How is he a teacher?

Thursday, 9 March 2023

John 7:1-24

After this, Jesus was walking in Galilee. He wouldn't walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near. So Jesus' brothers said to him, "Move on from here and go into Judea, so your disciples there can see the works you do. No one keeps things secret when they are looking to go public. If you do these things, reveal yourself to the world." For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

So Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world can't hate you, but it hates me, because I testify about it, that its works are evil. You go up to the Festival. I am not going to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come."

Having said these things to them, he stayed in Galilee. But when his brothers had gone to the Festival, then Jesus went too, not in public, but in secret. The Jews were looking for Jesus at the feast, saying, "Where is he?" There was much murmuring among the masses about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others said, "No, he misleads the mobs." Yet no one spoke openly of him for fear of the Jewish leaders. But halfway through the festival, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. The Jews were amazed, saying, "How does this man know the scriptures without an education?"

So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not my own, but from the one who sent me. If anyone is willing to do his will, he'll know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am just speaking for myself. Whoever speaks for themselves seeks their own glory, but whoever seeks the glory of the one who sent them is true, and there is no unrighteousness in them. Did Moses not give you the law? And yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking to kill me?"

The people answered, "You have a demon! Who is looking to kill you?"

Jesus answered them, "I did one work and you are all wondering. You circumcise someone on the Sabbath because Moses gave you circumcision (not that it came from Moses, but the fathers). Now if someone can get circumcised on the Sabbath, to avoid breaking Moses' law, why are you angry with me because I healed someone's whole body on the Sabbath? Don't judge by appearances, but make the right judgement."

For reflection

Who do you think Jesus is? Has putting Jesus' teaching into practice shaped your view?

Day 17 – Could he be the Christ?

Friday, 10 March 2023

John 7:25-52

Then some people from Jerusalem said, “Isn’t this the man they want to kill? Look, he is speaking openly, and they say nothing to him. Could the leaders have judged that this really is the Christ? No, we know where this man comes from, but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he comes from.”

So Jesus schooled them in the temple, crying out, “You do know me, and you know where I am from, and I have not sent myself. But the one who sent me is true, and you don’t know him. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.”

At that, they tried to arrest Jesus; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. But many from the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Christ comes, will he do any more miracles than this man?” The Pharisees heard the masses murmuring these things about Jesus, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.

Then Jesus said, “I will be with you a little while longer, then I depart to the one who sent me. You will seek me and won’t find me. Where I am, you cannot come.”

So the Jews said amongst themselves, “Where will this man go that we won’t find him? Will he go to our people scattered amongst the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this word he said, ‘You will seek me, and won’t find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?”

Now on the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink! Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from their bellies will flow rivers of living water.” He said this about the Holy Spirit, which believers were about to receive. But the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When they heard these words, many of the crowd said, “This is truly the prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “What, does the Christ come out of Galilee? Hasn’t the Scripture said that the Christ comes from David’s descendants, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” So the people were divided because of Jesus. Some would have arrested him, but no one laid hands on him. So the officers went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!”

The Pharisees answered back, “You haven’t been taken in too, have you? Have any of the rulers or any of the Pharisees believed in him? No, but this mob that doesn’t know the law is cursed.”

Nicodemus, the one of them who went to Jesus at night, said to them, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and finding out what he has done?”

They answered him, "Are you from Galilee too? Look into it and you will see that no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

For reflection

Imagine you are full of food and drink at the end of a festival – how do you react to Jesus offering more? Are there things you still need and want from him?

Day 18 – Can anyone condemn you?

Saturday, 11 March 2023

John 7:53 – 8:11

Everyone was going home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

At dawn, he went back into the temple, and all the people came to him. He sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. They stood her in the middle, and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What then do you say about her?” They said this to test him, so that they might have grounds to accuse him.

But Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with his finger. When they kept on asking him, he looked up and said to them, “The one who is perfectly blameless among you, let them throw the first stone at her.” Again, he stooped down and carried on writing on the ground.

One by one, starting with the elders, the people who heard this went away, everyone, from first to last. Jesus was left alone with the woman where she was, in the middle. Jesus looked up to her and said, “Woman, where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?”

She said, “No one, Lord.”

Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, no more sinning.”

For reflection

How has following Jesus freed you, changed you, or changed some of the rules in your life?

Day 19 – Know the son, know the father

Sunday, 12 March 2023

John 8:12-30

Again, Jesus spoke to the people, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not valid.”

Jesus answered them, “Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know where I came from, and where I’m going; but you don’t know where I’m from, or where I’m going. You judge by human standards. I judge no one. But even if I do judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone, but with the Father who sent me. And it is written in your law that the testimony of two people is valid. I am one who testifies about myself, and my other witness is the Father who sent me.”

So they said to him, “Where is your Father?”

Jesus answered, “You don’t know me or my Father. If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” Jesus said these things in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. Yet no one arrested him, because his time had not yet come. Then Jesus said again to them, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sins. Where I am going, you cannot come.”

The Jews said, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”

He said to them, “You are from below. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. So I said to you that you will die in your sins, because unless you believe that I am who I am, you will die in your sins.”

So they said to him, “Who are you?”

Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you. But the one who sent me is trustworthy; and it’s the things which I heard from him that I say to the world.”

They didn’t understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am who I am, and I do nothing on my own, but I say these things just as my Father taught me. The one who sent me is with me. The Father hasn’t left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”

As he said these things, many believed in him.

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the light of the world?

Day 20 – Do you know your real dad?

Monday, 13 March 2023

John 8:31-47

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you remain in my word, then you really are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

They answered him, “We are the descendants of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be set free?’”

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave doesn’t belong in the household forever. A son belongs forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will truly be free. I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you want to kill me, because my word finds nowhere to belong in you. I am saying what I have seen from my Father, while you are doing what you have heard from your father.”

They answered him, “Our father is Abraham.”

Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did. But now you want to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham didn’t do this. You are doing the works of your own father.”

They said to him, “We are not illegitimate children. We have one Father, God.”

So Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God to be here. It wasn’t just my own idea to come, but he sent me. Why don’t you get what I am saying? Because you can’t listen to my word. You come from your father the devil, and you want to do what your father is longing to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn’t stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks his truth, it’s lies, for he is a liar, and the father of lies. But because I tell the real truth, you don’t believe me. Which one of you shows that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? The one who is of God listens to the words of God. This is why you don’t listen, because you are not of God.”

For reflection

What does it mean to you that God is your father?

Day 21 – Before he was, I am

Tuesday, 14 March 2023

John 8:48-59

The Jews answered Jesus, “Aren’t we right to say that you are a Samaritan, and you have a demon?”

Jesus answered, “I don’t have a demon, but I honour my Father and you dishonour me. I am not seeking my own glory. But there is one who demands it and decides. Truly, truly, I tell you, if anyone keeps my word, they will never see death.”

Then the Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, they will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died. Who do you think you are?”

Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, the one you say, “He is our God.” You haven’t even known him, but I know him. If I said, ‘I don’t know him,’ I would be like you, a liar. But I know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and greeted it with joy.”

Then the Jews said to him, “You are not even fifty years old! And you have seen Abraham?”

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and came out from the temple.

For reflection

What can it mean to be in the presence of Jesus who claims “Before Abraham was, I AM”?

Day 22 – Made better than ever

Wednesday, 15 March 2023

John 9:1-23

As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?”

Jesus answered, “This man didn’t sin, nor did his parents; it’s so that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of the one who sent me while it is daytime. Night-time is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, anointed the blind man’s eyes with the mud, and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means “Sent with a mission”). Then the blind man went away, washed, and came back seeing.

So the neighbours and the people who knew him as a beggar before said, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is.” Others were saying, “No, it just looks like him.”

He answered them, saying, “I am.”

So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

He answered, “A man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went away and washed, and I received sight.”

Then they asked him, “Where is this man?”

He said, “I don’t know.”

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. The Pharisees asked him again how he received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see.”

So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.”

But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such miraculous signs?” So there was division among them, and they asked the blind man again, “What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?”

The man answered, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews then didn’t believe that this man had been blind and had received his sight, until they called for his parents and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he see now?”

His parents answered them, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he sees now, we don’t know; or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself.” His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had already agreed that if anyone declares Jesus as the Christ, they would be expelled from the synagogue. That is why the parents said, “He is of age. Ask him.”

For reflection

How do you, or people you know well, struggle to believe in God sometimes? What questions would you ask someone who claims to have changed because of Jesus?

Day 23 – Who can see God?

Thursday, 16 March 2023

John 9:24-41

So the Pharisees called the man who had been blind a second time, and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man Jesus is a sinner.”

He answered, “I don’t know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that I was blind, but now I see.”

They said to him again, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

He answered them, “I told you already, and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don’t want to become his disciples as well, do you?”

They railed at him, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we don’t know where he comes from.”

The man answered them, “How amazing! You don’t know where he comes from; even so, he opened my eyes. We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, he listens to them. Since the world began it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

They answered him, “You were born in sin completely, and you are lecturing us?” Then they threw him out.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, then he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

He answered, “Who is he, sir, so I might believe in him?”

Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and he is speaking with you now.”

He said, “Lord, I believe!” and worshiped him.

Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, that those who don’t see may see; and that those who see may become blind.”

The Pharisees who were there with him heard this, and said to him, “We are not blind, are we?”

Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see,’ your sin and guilt remain.”

For reflection

When someone asks why you believe in God, it might be hard to answer in depth, but what can you say you do know, from what you have experienced?

Day 24 – The good shepherd

Friday, 17 March 2023

John 10:1-21

“Truly, truly, I tell you, one who doesn’t enter the sheep fold by the gate, but climbs up some other way, is a thief and a robber. But the one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Whenever he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but will flee from them; for they don’t know the stranger’s voice.” Jesus told them this parable, but they didn’t understand what he was telling them.

So Jesus said again, “Truly, truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the gate. If anyone enters in through me, they will be saved, and will go in and go out and will find pasture. The thief only comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they may have life, and may have it beyond all expectations.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Someone who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who doesn’t own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees away. The wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. The hired hand flees because they are a hired hand and they don’t care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me; just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must bring them too, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, so I may receive it again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to receive it again. I received this command from my Father.”

A division arose again among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon and is insane! Why do you listen to him?” Others said, “These are not the sayings of someone possessed by a demon. A demon can’t open the eyes of the blind, can they?”

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the gate, and the good shepherd?

Day 25 – Believe God at work

Saturday, 18 March 2023

John 10:22-42

The time came for the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's Porch. The Jews surrounded Jesus and said to him, "How long will you hold us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you don't believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me. But you don't believe, because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Again, the Jews picked up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of those works do you stone me?"

The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy, because you, a man, make yourself out to be God."

Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture can't be set aside), why do you say, 'You blaspheme!' to the one the Father set apart, made holy and sent into the world, because I said, 'I am the Son of God?' If I don't do the works of my Father, don't believe me. But if I do them, even if you don't believe me, believe the works, so you may know and truly understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

Again, they sought to seize him, but he got out of their hands. Again, he went away, beyond the Jordan into the place where John first baptised, and he stayed there. Many came to him. They said, "John did no miracles, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many people there believed and trusted in Jesus.

For reflection

What about Jesus makes you trust that he is who he claims to be?

Day 26 – The greatest challenge yet

Sunday, 19 March 2023

John 11:1-16

Now a man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister, Martha. It was this Mary who had anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, “Lord, look, your friend is sick.”

But when he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness won’t end in death, but it is for the glory of God, that God’s Son may be glorified by it.” Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, Jesus stayed where he was for two days, then said to the disciples, “Let’s go into Judea again.”

The disciples said, “Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you – you are going there again?”

Jesus answered, “Aren’t there twelve hours of daylight? If anyone walks in the day, they don’t stumble, because they see by the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, they stumble, because the light isn’t in them.” He said these things, and then said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going on a journey to wake him up.”

The disciples answered, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will get better.”

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he was talking about normal sleep. So Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But anyway, let’s go to him.”

Then Thomas, who was also called Didymus, the twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go too, so that we may die with him.”

For reflection

Do you notice anything strange about Jesus’ movements in response to the death of Lazarus? What do you think John is communicating through this story?

Day 27 – Coming back from death

Monday, 20 March 2023

John 11:17-44

So when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to see Martha and Mary, to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. But even now, I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.”

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will still live, even if they die. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

She said to him, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, God’s Son, the one who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, “The Teacher is here and he’s calling you.” When she heard this, Mary got up quickly and went to him.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary getting up quickly and going out, they followed her, thinking she was going to the tomb to weep there.

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled in himself, and said, “Where have you laid him?” They told him, “Lord, come and see.”

Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, “Look how much he loved him!” Some of them said, “Couldn’t this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have also kept this man from dying?”

Deeply moved again, Jesus came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him, “Lord, by now he stinks, for he has been dead for four days.”

Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?"

So they took away the stone. Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I say this because of the crowd standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

The man who was dead came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face with a burial cloth.

Jesus said to them, "Untie him, and let him go."

For reflection

Think about what people expected and wanted from Jesus before he arrived, and how he brought life beyond all expectations here. How do you feel about this?

Day 28 – What’s the worst that could happen?

Tuesday, 21 March 2023

John 11:45-57

Because of these things, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, “What are we doing? This man does many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You don’t know nothing! Don’t you think that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, and not let the whole nation perish?”

Now he didn’t just say this as his own opinion, but as high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not just for the nation, but also for God’s children who had been scattered so that they would be gathered together as one.

So from that day, they plotted to kill him. Because of this, Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went away into the region near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim. He stayed there with his disciples.

Now the Jewish Passover was getting near. Many went up from that region to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. So they looked for Jesus and spoke with one another as they stood in the temple courts, “What do you think—will he not come to the Festival at all?” The chief priests and the Pharisees had commanded that anyone who knew where Jesus was should report it, so that they could arrest him.

For reflection

Consider the tension among the Jewish leaders as they thought about what was best for their people. How do conflicting desires in you make Jesus hard to approach sometimes?

Day 29 – The strange procession of the king

Wednesday, 22 March 2023

John 12:1-19

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, the one Jesus raised from the dead. So they made a dinner for him there. Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who reclined at the table with him. Then Mary took a pint of perfume, pure nard, very precious, and anointed Jesus's feet and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Then Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, one of his disciples, who was about to betray him, said, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money – a year's wages - given to poor people?" Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief; he had the money box, and used to take what was put into it.

But Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so she can keep this for the day of my burial. For you will always have poor people among you, but you won't always have me."

A large crowd of the Jews learned that he was there; and they came, not just because of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests conspired to kill Lazarus as well; because of him, many were leaving the Jewish leaders and believing in Jesus.

The next day, a large crowd that had come for the Passover festival and heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!"

Jesus had found a young donkey and he sat on it, as it is written, "Don't be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your King is coming, sitting on the colt of a donkey." His disciples didn't understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and done to him. The crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead kept telling people about what they had seen. This made the crowd go out to meet him, because they heard that he had performed this miraculous sign. So the Pharisees said among themselves, "You see how your efforts are getting nothing. Look, the whole world has gone after him."

For reflection

How surprising would it be to see a royal procession with the King on a little donkey? What do you think this means about Jesus?

Day 30 – The voice from the sky

Thursday, 23 March 2023

John 12:20-36

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and made a request, saying, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn, Andrew came with Philip, and they told Jesus.

Jesus answered them, “The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you most truly, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single seed. But if it dies, it will bring much fruit. Whoever loves their life will lose it. Whoever downgrades their life in this world will keep their eternal life. If anyone serves me, they should follow me, and then where I am, my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour them.

“Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this time?’ But I came to this time for this cause. Father, glorify your name!”

Then a voice came out of the sky, saying, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”

The crowd who stood by and heard this said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

Jesus answered, “This voice hasn’t come for my sake, but for your sakes. Now is the crisis, the judgment of this world. Now the ruling power of this world will be thrown out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.” Saying this, he made known what kind of death he was about to die.

The crowd answered him, “We have from the law that the Christ will remain forever. How do you mean, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up?’ Who is this Son of Man?”

Jesus said to them, “The light is with you just a little while more. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness doesn’t overtake you. Whoever walks in the darkness doesn’t know where they are going. While you have the light, believe and trust in the light, so you may become children of light.” Jesus said these things, then he went away and was hidden from them.

For reflection

How do you feel about Jesus overcoming every other power and drawing all to himself?

Day 31 – Not judging but saving

Friday, 24 March 2023

John 12:37-50

Even though Jesus had done so many miraculous signs before them, they didn't believe in him. This fulfilled the word of Isaiah the prophet, who said:

*“Lord, who has believed our news?
To whom has the strong arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

Because of this, they couldn't believe, for Isaiah said again:

*“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
so they won't see with their eyes,
or understand with their hearts,
or change their direction;
or else I would heal them.”*

Isaiah said these things because he saw Christ's glory, and spoke about him. Nevertheless, many, even among the rulers, believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they didn't declare it in public, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue - for they loved the honour of people more than the honour of God.

But Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not only in me, but in the one who sent me. Whoever sees me sees the one who sent me. I have come as a light into the world, so that whoever believes in me will not remain in the darkness. If anyone listens to my words and does not keep them, I don't judge them. For I didn't come to judge the world, but to save the world. Whoever rejects me, and doesn't receive my words, does have a judge. The message that I spoke will judge them on the last day. For I have not spoken by my own authority, but the Father who sent me gave me orders about what I should speak out and say. I know that his order is eternal life. So what I say is what the Father has told me to say.”

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus came to save and not judge, and yet his message can still produce judgement or change in us?

Day 32 – Washing feet

Saturday, 25 March 2023

John 13:1-17

Now it was just before the Passover festival. Jesus knew that his time had come to depart from this world to go to the Father. Having selfless love for his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. Supper was taking place, and the devil had already put betrayal of Jesus into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he came from God and was going to God, so he got up from supper, laid aside his robes and wrapped on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the apron that was wrapped around him. Then he came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, you are going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered him, "You don't know what I am doing now, but you will understand later."

Peter said to him, "No, you will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with me."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not just my feet then, but my hands and my head!"

Jesus said to him, "Someone who has bathed their body only needs to have their feet washed to be completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you." For he knew who was going to betray him; this is why he said, "You are not all clean." So when he had washed their feet, put his robes back on, and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, because that is who I am. Now if I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, so that you should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, good for you if you do them."

For reflection

How do you feel about Jesus washing feet like a servant? And how do you react to his call to do the same for others?

Day 33 – Secrets revealed

Sunday, 26 March 2023

John 13:18-38

I am not speaking about all of you. I know who I have chosen, but this Scripture will be fulfilled: 'The one eating bread with me has lifted up his heel to trick and trip me.' From now on, I am telling you before it happens, so when it happens, you may believe and trust that I am who I am. Truly, truly I tell you, whoever receives someone I send, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives the one who sent me."

When Jesus had said this, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly I tell you that one of you will betray me."

The disciples started looked at one another, at a loss to know who he was talking about. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at the table right next to Jesus. Simon Peter motioned to him to ask who Jesus was talking about.

Leaning into Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus answered, "It is the one I will give this piece of bread to when I have dipped it." When he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. After he took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him.

Then Jesus said to him, "What you are about to do, do quickly."

Now nobody else at the table knew why he said this to him. Judas had the money box, so some thought that Jesus told him to buy what they needed for the feast or give something to the poor. After receiving that piece of bread, Judas went out immediately. It was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will glorify him immediately. Little children, I will be with you a little while longer. You will seek me, and as I said to the Jews, I tell you now, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have selfless, unconditional love for one another."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you can't follow now, but you will follow afterwards."

Peter said to him, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly I tell you, the rooster will not crow before you have disowned me three times."

For reflection

We can't always tell from appearances what is going on inside people, but lots of hidden things get revealed in this passage. Consider how Jesus tells his disciples how people can know who they really are.

Day 34 – You know the way

Monday, 27 March 2023

John 14:1-14

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father’s household there are many places to live. If that were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and will take you with me, so that where I am, you may also be. You know the way to where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. If you have known me, you have known my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you such a long time, and you haven’t come to know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I tell you are not me speaking for myself; but the Father who lives in me doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me; or else believe me because of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and they will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you will ask in my name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life?

Day 35 – Help is coming

Tuesday, 28 March 2023

John 14:15-31

“If you love me, keep my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot get, because it doesn’t see him or know him. You know him, for he stays beside you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. In a little while, the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will also live. On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be shown my Father’s love, and I will show my love and myself to them.”

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you are going to show yourself to us, and not to the world?”

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, they will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Someone who doesn’t love me doesn’t keep my words. And the word which you hear is not mine, but belongs to the Father who sent me.

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will remind you of all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, I really give to you. Don’t let your hearts be troubled, and don’t be afraid. You heard that I told you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced that I am going to my Father, for the Father is greater than I.

“Now I have told you before it happens so that when it happens, you may believe and trust. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has nothing on me, but is coming so the world may know that I love the Father, and I do just what the Father has commanded of me. Come on, let’s go from here.”

For reflection

Jesus asks a lot from followers here, but also offers a lot. What do you need from what he is offering today?

Day 36 – What God will do through you

Wednesday, 29 March 2023

John 15:1-25

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn’t bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, so it can bear more fruit. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. As the branch can’t bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit, unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in them will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, they are like a branch that is withered and thrown out; branches like this are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you.

“In this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and emerge as my disciples. Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be overflowing.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another selflessly, just as I have loved you. No one has greater selfless love than this, that they lay down their life for their friends. You are my friends if you do what I command, not servants any more, for a servant doesn’t know what their master is doing. But I have called you friends, for I have made sure you know everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not elect me, but I elected and appointed you, so that you should go and keep bearing fruit that will last, and so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

“This is what I command you, that you selflessly love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But as you are not of the world, since I elected you out of the world, this is why the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they have harassed me, they will also harass you. If they have kept my word, they will also keep yours. But they will do all these things to you for my name’s sake, because they don’t know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me also hates my Father. If I had not done works among them which no one else has done, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and disregarded, even hated, both me and my Father. But this happened so that the word may be fulfilled which was written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’”

For reflection

What does it mean to you to have fruitful life as a branch in Jesus’ vine?

Day 37 – Why is he going?

Thursday, 30 March 2023

John 15:26 – 16:15

“When the helper has come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will bear witness about me. You will also bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I have said these things to you so that you won’t stumble or fall away. They will put you out of the synagogues, and the time is coming that if someone kills you they will think that they are offering service to God. They will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me. But I have told you these things so that when the time comes, you will remember that I told you about them. I didn’t tell you this from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to the one who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your hearts. Still, I tell you the truth: It is good for you that I am going away; for if I don’t go away, the helper won’t come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he has come, he will prove the world wrong about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment; about sin, because they don’t believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to my Father, and you won’t see me any more; and about judgment, because the ruling power of this world has been judged.

“I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. But, when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak from himself; but whatever he hears, he will speak. He will bring word to you of things that are coming. He will glorify me, for he will take from what is mine and will make it known to you. All things that the Father has are mine; this is why I said that he will take from what is mine and will make it known to you.”

For reflection

What is your experience of having the Holy Spirit as a helper, connecting you with Jesus?
What experience would you like to have?

Day 38 – Ask and receive

Friday, 31 March 2023

John 16:16-33

“In a little bit, you will not see me. On the other hand, in a little bit, you will see me.”

Some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘In a little bit, you will not see me. On the other hand, in a little bit, you will see me.,’ and, ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” They kept asking, “What does he mean, ‘A little bit’? We don’t know what he is saying.”

Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, and he said to them, “Are you asking about this among yourselves, that I said, ‘In a little bit, you will not see me. On the other hand, in a little bit, you will see me.’ Truly, truly I tell you that you will weep and wail, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief and pain will turn into joy. A woman has pain when she gives birth because her time has come. But when she has delivered the child, she doesn’t remember the anguish any more, for joy that a human being is born into the world. So for you, you now have grief and pain, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

“In that day you won’t ask anything from me. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, and your joy may be fulfilled completely.

“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. But the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in parables and metaphors, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name; and I don’t say to you that I will pray to the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you dearly, because you have loved me dearly, and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

His disciples said to him, “Look, now you are speaking plainly, and not using figures of speech. Now we know that you know all things, and don’t need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God.”

Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Look, the time is coming, yes, and has now come, that you will be scattered, each to their own personal space, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace and wholeness. In the world you have trouble; but take courage! I have overcome the world.”

For reflection

How much do you ask of God in Jesus’ name? What would you like to ask today?

Day 39 – How he prayed for you

Saturday, 1 April 2023

John 17

When Jesus had said these things, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, so that your Son may also glorify you. Just as you gave him authority over all of humanity, so he will give eternal life to all that you have given him. This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one you sent, Jesus Christ. I have glorified you on the earth, accomplishing the work you have given me to do. Now, Father, glorify me with yourself with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

“I revealed your name to the people you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me. They have kept your word. Now they know that all you have given me is from you, for the words you have given me I have given to them, they received them, and knew for sure that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I don’t pray for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep and look after them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one, just as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. I have kept those you have given me. None of them is lost except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

But now I am coming to you, and I say these things while I am in the world so that they may have my source of joy to fill themselves completely. I have given them your word, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I am not asking for you to take them from the world, but for you to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

“I am not praying just for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me. The glory which you have given me, I have given to them, so that they may be one, just as we are one, I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in oneness, so the world may know that you sent me and loved them, just as you loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so they may see my glory which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have always known you; and these now know that you sent me. I made your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the perfect love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I may be in them.”

For reflection

From what Jesus prayed for you and the church, what do you think we need and should keep asking for most urgently? What difference would it make for us to receive this, and how might God need to change something in you to help make this happen?

Day 40 – You knew they were coming

Palm Sunday, 2 April 2023

John 18:1-18

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So after procuring a body of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, Judas went in with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to him, went out and said to them, “Who are you looking for?”

They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth?”

Jesus said to them, “I am.”

Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

So again he asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

They said, “Jesus of Nazareth?”

Jesus answered, “I told you - I am. So if you are looking for me, let these ones go.” This was to fulfil the word he had spoken, “Of those you have given me, I have lost none.”

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, “Put the sword away. Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?”

So the body of soldiers, the commanding officer, and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him, and led him first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it would be good for one man to die for the people.

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard, but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, “Are you also one of this man’s disciples?”

He said, “I am not.”

Now the servants and the officers had made a coal fire, for it was cold, and they stood there warming themselves. Peter was now with them, standing and warming himself.

For reflection

How important is the difference between Jesus' "I am" and Peter's "I am not"? When someone asks if you identify as someone defined by Jesus, how do you answer, and how does pressure sometimes shape what you say?

Day 41 – What has he done?

Monday, 3 April 2023

John 18:19-40

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. Look, they know what I said."

When he had said this, one of the officers present slapped Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, make a statement about what was wrong; but if I have spoken correctly, why did you strike me?"

Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You aren't also one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it and said, "I am not."

One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

Peter denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, the Roman Governor's palace. It was early, and they didn't enter the Praetorium themselves, to avoid becoming ceremonially unclean – they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What charge are you bringing against this man?"

They answered him, "If this man weren't an evildoer, we wouldn't have delivered him to you."

So Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law."

The Jews said to him, "It is illegal for us to put anyone to death," This fulfilled the word of Jesus, which he spoke, signifying the kind of death he was about to die.

So Pilate went back into the Praetorium, called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered him, "Do you say this by yourself, or did others tell you about me?"

Pilate answered, "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, that I wouldn't be delivered to the Jews. But now my Kingdom is from a different place."

So Pilate said to him, "You are a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. I was born for this, and came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

After saying this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

Then they all shouted back, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was an insurrectionist.

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus is a leader whose purpose is to bear witness to the truth?

Day 42 – What will you do with your king?

Tuesday, 4 April 2023

John 19:1-16a

So then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. The soldiers twisted thorns into a crown and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple garment. They kept saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they kept slapping him in the face.

Then Pilate went out again, and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no basis for a charge against him."

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard these words, he grew fearful. He went into the Praetorium again, and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, "Are you not speaking to me? Don't you know that I have the power to release you and I have the power to crucify you?"

Jesus answered, "You would have no power at all against me, unless it were given to you from above. So the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

At this, Pilate was seeking to release him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar! Every self-made king rebels against Caesar!"

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat on the throne of judgment at a place called "The Spread of Stones", in Hebrew, "Gabbatha." Now it was the Day of Preparation for the Passover, at about midday. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!"

They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!"

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

So then he handed him to them to be crucified.

For reflection

Who did the Jewish leaders really want to be their ultimate authority? What about you?
What happens if that authority clashes with something you really want, though?

Day 43 – The place of the skull

Wednesday, 5 April 2023

John 19:16b-27

So they took Jesus and led him away. He went out, bearing his own cross, to what is called “The place of the skull”, or in Hebrew, “Golgotha”, where they crucified him, with two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also wrote a sign and put it on the cross. It was inscribed, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘he said, “I am the King of the Jews.””

Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven through completely from the top. Then they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide whose it will be.” This fulfilled the Scripture which says,

*“They divided my clothes among them.
They cast lots for my clothing.”*

So this is what the soldiers did.

But standing by Jesus’ cross were his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, “Woman, this is your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother!” And from that time, the disciple took her into his own home.

For reflection

What does it mean to you that Jesus submitted to this, despite being a king?

Day 44 – It is finished

Maundy Thursday, 6 April 2023

John 19:28-42

After this, knowing that everything was now finished and done, Jesus fulfilled Scripture by saying, “I am so thirsty.” Now a jar full of sour wine was there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop stalk, and brought it to his lips. When Jesus got this, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

As it was the Preparation Day for the Sabbath, and the next day was a special Sabbath, the Jewish leaders did not want bodies remaining on crosses, so they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and the other who was crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they didn’t break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. The man who saw this has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, so that you too may believe. For these things happened to fulfil the Scripture, “No bone of his will be broken.” And as another Scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”

After these things, Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate for permission to take away Jesus’ body. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jewish leaders. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took the body away. Nicodemus, the one who at first came to Jesus by night, also brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing a talent, about thirty kilograms. So they took Jesus’ body, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden. In the garden was a new tomb in which no-one had ever been laid. So, because it was the Jewish Preparation Day, and the tomb was near, they laid Jesus there.

For reflection

What has Jesus done here? How many reasons for Jesus’ death have you encountered, and how are they meaningful to you?

Day 45 – Why are you crying?

Good Friday, 7 April 2023

John 20:1-18

Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

So Peter and the other disciple went out to go to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and got to the tomb first. Stooping down and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn’t go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and entered the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. So then the other disciple who had got to the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed. They had not yet understood from Scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples went back to their own homes. But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she cried, she stooped down and looked into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where they have put him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she didn’t know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?”

Thinking that he must be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” which means, “Teacher!”

Jesus said to her, “Don’t hold onto me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples bringing the news, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them what he had said to her.

For reflection

Imagine Jesus appearing to you. How do you feel?

Day 46 – See and believe

Holy Saturday, 8 April 2023

John 20:19-30

When it was evening that same day, the first day of the week, and where the disciples were together behind closed doors, for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am also sending you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit! If you forgive and release anyone’s sins, they are forgiven and released from them. If you retain any, they are retained.”

But Thomas, one of the twelve, the one called Didymus, “the twin”, wasn’t with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples kept telling him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail stamps in his hands, and put my finger in where they made their marks, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

After eight days, his disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Bring your finger here, and see my hands. And bring your hand here, and put it into my side. Don’t be an unbeliever, but a believer.”

Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and still believed.”

Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing and trusting, you may have life in his name.

For reflection

When you haven’t been certain about faith in Jesus, what have you asked for in reassurance? Have you ever received any you can thank him for, or do you need to ask again today?

Day 47 – Restoration

Easter Sunday, 9 April 2023

John 21

Afterwards, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself like this. Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus, “the twin”), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, “I’m going fishing.”

They said to him, “We’ll come with you.” They went out and got into the boat. That night, they caught nothing. But as daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore; although the disciples didn’t know that it was Jesus. So Jesus said to them, “Hey kids, have you got any fish?”

They answered him, “No.”

He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”

So they cast it, and now they weren’t able to haul it in because of the huge numbers of fish. Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!”

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his coat (for he only had his underwear on), and launched himself straight into the sea. But as they weren’t too far from land, about 100 metres away, the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. So when they got out onto the land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish cooking on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”

Simon Peter went up, and hauled the net in to land, full of one hundred fifty-three great fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast!”

None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” knowing that it was the Lord.

Then Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to his disciples after he had risen from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me selflessly, more than these?”

He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you like a friend.”

He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He asked him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me selflessly?”

He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you like a friend.”

He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He asked him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me like a friend?”

Peter was grieved because he asked him the third time, "Do you love me like a friend?" He said to him, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you like a friend."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself, tied your belt and walked wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will tie your belt and carry you where you don't want to go."

Now he said this to show by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. After saying this, Jesus said to him, "Follow me."

Then Peter, turning around, saw a disciple following. It was the one Jesus loved, the one who had also leaned into Jesus at the supper and asked, "Lord, who is going to betray you?" Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"

Jesus said to him, "If I want him to stay until I come, what is that to you? You follow me." So word spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus didn't say to him that he would not die, but, "If I want him to stay until I come, what is that to you?"

This is the disciple who testifies about these things, and wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. There are also many other things Jesus did which, if they were all written down, I suppose that not even the whole world or the universe itself would have space for the books to be written.

For reflection

How does it feel to be with Jesus today? What do you hope he can do with you?

What have we made here, and why?

Our aim has been to help you take time and make space with Jesus for an encounter with him through his story and your engagement with it. His Spirit can meet with yours as you process thoughts and prayers in a meditative way, or simply make room to notice how it grabs your attention and connects with what is important to you.

We've made a ten-minute piece of daily audio which includes a chunk of John's gospel as well as time and space for your own re-reading, prayer or reflection. Every day, the audio fades into what might be silence or the noise of your everyday life, where we hope you will continue seeing God at work in and around you.

You can find the audio and more info at severnvineyard.org/time-space-jesus, or look for "time, space, Jesus" on Spotify and podcast apps.

Why make a new translation of John's gospel, and how?

We didn't want copyright issues to get in the way of making and sharing this experience, so Bern Leckie used the public domain World English Bible as a basis for this translation. It required some revision to make it feel natural for modern speech, so Bern used public domain Greek texts sourced and indexed by the Berean Bible project to guide revisions and compared results with several other translations.

Guiding principles for this translation included:

1. Producing a balance of word-for-word and meaning-for-meaning translations as found in the Bibles currently used in most UK churches today.
2. Avoiding overly literal translation where it loses meaning and can be misleading in English.
3. Avoiding too much paraphrase, but a making translation which sticks closely to the original wording. This includes leaving in ambiguity where it seems deliberate and meaningful, but removing it where English readers expect more precision (e.g. occasionally swapping out pronouns for names when the pronouns could confuse.)
4. Making language gender-inclusive where appropriate to reflect contemporary English usage and avoid a misleading sense of something applying only to males.
5. Occasional variation or amplification of the way a Greek word is rendered into English where this would produce a more complete and appropriate understanding of the word for today's readers. If anything has stood out as particularly surprising in this translation, it may be because of this guiding principle, so for example:

πίστις (pistis) is often translated as "faith" or, in verb form, to "believe". In a 21st century English context, this can be understood as a private, individual religious commitment or intellectual agreement, but the original sense involves relationship and trust. Its root is a word which means "persuasion". In this translation, it often appears as "believe and trust".

ἀγαπῶ (agapo) is usually translated as "love" but refers to the ultimate qualities of God's love and can be amplified as "selfless love" or "selfless, unconditional love". Jesus often uses this word to describe the quality of his and the Father's love, and the love he commands his followers to practise.

φίλω (philo) is also usually translated as "love" but refers to a different, friendly and affectionate love. In chapter 21, Peter responds to Jesus' question about ἀγαπῶ love using φίλω, and this is clarified by translating as "I love you like a friend."

6. Optimising for listening rather than reading – this makes it essential to clarify words in the reading itself rather than using footnotes, for example.
7. This written and spoken translation is for enjoying now, not for storage as a study text for the ages. Some phrases might stand out as meaningful in our culture today, but might be avoided if printed for a book that has to stay on shelves for 20+ years. For example, chapter 8 verse 44 includes Jesus describing the Devil with the phrase “ὅταν [\(Whenever\)](#) λαλή [\(he might speak\)](#) τὸ [\(-\)](#) ψεῦδος [\(falsehood\)](#), ἐκ [\(from\)](#) τῶν [\(the\)](#) ἰδίων [\(own\)](#) λαλεῖ [\(he speaks\)](#)” (*word-for-word translation from the Berean Interlinear Bible*).

“ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων” can be translated “from his own distinct essence”, which isn’t natural English, or “from himself” or “by himself”, which both imply more isolation in our culture than would have been understood at the time. The Amplified Bible translates this sentence part as “*When he lies, he speaks what is natural to him...*” and the NIV as “*When he lies, he speaks his native language...*” Both are accurate but maybe lack the emotional resonance of the highly personal word “ἰδίων”, the root of the English “idiosyncrasy” and linked to the Greek word “ἴδια” which is used to denote things which belong to and differentiate a person from others. A “native language” is widely shared, but in our culture in 2023 we often hear people talk in terms of personal truths, held from their own unique perspectives. So the translation used here makes use of this – “*When he speaks his truth, it’s lies...*” The topic of personal truths is contentious, which is part of its emotional resonance here, and a committee might not be expected to approve a translation like this if it needs to be certain of preserving its meaning for the long life cycle of a printed book. But this translation is intended to make sense and have impact now rather than need to last forever. If we do need to make changes, we’ll publish updates to this document with a changelog.

Can this translation or audio be shared, adapted or built upon?

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If you would like to use the translation, spoken words or music for a new production of your own, this still may be negotiable with the author’s written consent – contact bern@bernleckie.com

*Bern Leckie,
April 2023*