



# KNOWING GOD

JOHN 15-21



# JOHN 16-21

Term 1	Passage	Preaching date
Week 1	John 15:26-16:15 Jesus sends the Spirit	11 February
Week 2	John 16:16-33 Sorrow Turned to Joy	18 February
Week 3	John 17:1-19 The Glory of the Son	25 February
Week 4	John 17:20-26 May They Be One	3 March
Week 5	John 18:1-27 Drinking the Cup	10 March
Week 6	John 18:28-19:16a Behold Your King!	17 March
Week 7	John 19:16b-37 It is Finished!	24 March
Week 8	John 19:38-20:8 The Empty Tomb	31 March
Week 9	John 20:19-31 My Lord and My God	7 April
Week 10	John 21:1-25 Feed my Lambs	14 April

## The Bible in a Year

Week	Passage 1	Passage 2	Passage 3
1	John 15:26-16:15	John 14:15-31	Proverbs 10
2	John 16:16-33	Psalm 46	Proverbs 11
3	John 17:1-19	Psalm 19	Proverbs 12
4	John 17:20-26	Isaiah 11	Proverbs 13
5	John 18:1-27	Jeremiah 25:15-38	Proverbs 14
6	John 18:28-19:16a	John 17:6-19	Proverbs 15
7	John 19:16b-37	Zechariah 12:8-13:1	Proverbs 16
8	John 19:38-20:8	Luke 24:9-35	Proverbs 17
9	John 20:19-31	1 Corinthians 15:35-58	Proverbs 18
10	John 21:1-25	Acts 20:17-31	Proverbs 19

# TERM 1 2024

## What is the goal of these notes?

The goal is to grow your ability to read the bible. Bible reading is essential to Christian growth and survival but it's a skill that only develops with practice. Indeed because of the spiritual apathy that's part of our fallen nature the desire to read only grows with practice! The bible is an extraordinary book. It has changed people, nations and the flow of history. That's unsurprising since it's God's book and contains God's wisdom for life. Yet, bible reading in some ways is no different to reading any other book. These notes will assist you in developing skills which will increasingly enable you to feed yourself from the bible and help others do the same.

## Three ways to use these notes

### 1. Personal reading

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day, and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His word.

### 2. Growth Groups

- Use the section at the end of each week to prepare for your Growth Group
- Take this guide with you to your Growth Group each week so you can write down prayer points from your discussion and from the members of your group.
- Let your group know who you are on mission to.

### 3. Church

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.

# JOHN 16-21

## John's Gospel

John is the last of the four gospels to be written. It is unique among the four gospels in its structure, content and style. Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels because they share a similar structure and content to each other but much of the content of John is unique.

John records very little of Jesus' ministry in the north, in Galilee, but focuses on the south, particularly around Jerusalem. John's style is also very different, making much more of the spiritual significance or symbolism surrounding events, such as the symbolism of light and dark as seen in events involving Nicodemus and Judas (3:19, 20; 13:30).

While the other gospels record the miracles of Jesus and only occasionally make their significance explicit, John takes us far deeper, viewing many of these events in the light of the Old Testament to draw out a far more profound theology of Jesus and who He is.

Some have said of his gospel that it is like a pool, shallow enough for a child to play but deep enough for an elephant to swim. Prayerfully reflecting on John's gospel will deepen your faith and enable you to appreciate more fully the implications of the truth about Jesus so you experience in fuller measure the life of the kingdom and the certainty of the age to come.

## 3-1-1 Prayer

We all care for friends and family who don't know Jesus and this should be reflected in our prayers. List below the names of 3 such people that you can be praying for once a week for one minute.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# JESUS SENDS THE SPIRIT

We pick up the action in John's gospel, where we left off last year. This is the evening on which Jesus was betrayed and arrested and in preparation for that he undertakes to prepare his disciples for the mission that lies before them. We are beginning part-way through an extended speech which will continue to feature news about the coming Holy Spirit. Who is he and what does He do? With names variously translated as the "advocate", the "comforter", the "helper" or even the "paraclete", we need to consider how he helped the first disciples and how He might help us.

## Week 1: Day 1

READ JOHN 15:26-16:15

1. What can you find out about the disciples; their present circumstances and their immediate future?

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2. The disciples will be faced with mysterious opponents represented by the words, "they" (v 2, 3), "their" (v 4) and "them" (v 4). Who do you imagine these opponents are?

3. Try to break the passage into 3 or 4 smaller units.

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**PRAY:** The Holy Spirit is the subject of much discussion and confusion in our day but His work is also essential to our life in Christ. Ask God to deepen your insight into who the Spirit is and how we are indebted to both the Father and Son for sending Him to us.

# WEEK 1: JOHN 15:26-16:15

## Day 2

### READ JOHN 15:26,27

In this “last supper discourse”, we were first introduced to the Spirit in John 14:16,17. This verse suggests that the Spirit came to continue some aspect of Jesus’ work and indeed (16:14,15) to shed further light on Jesus and His work. He is described in 14:16 as “another advocate”. The implication is that Jesus Himself is and was an “advocate”.

1. What can you find out about the Spirit in these verses? Consider also John 14:16-17 & 25-26

2. Google the word “advocate”. In what sense are both Jesus and the Holy Spirit “advocates”?

Throughout history and especially during times of revival there have been many occasions when people have wondered if a particular movement has been “from the Spirit or not”.

3. What can you find out about the Spirit’s testimony in these verses? What clues might this give about the signs that indicate when the Spirit is truly at work ?

**PRAY:** We’re encouraged in the scriptures (1 John 4:1) to correctly discern the Spirit’s work. As you read Jesus’ words about the Spirit, ask God to help you grow in discernment.

# JESUS SENDS THE SPIRIT

## Day 3

READ JOHN 16:1-7

The gift of the Spirit in these verses comes in the context of the persecution which the disciples will soon face in the wake of Jesus' arrest, death, crucifixion and ascension. Jesus last spoke of this in John 15:18-25. It will help you to re-read these verses today.

1. Jesus was speaking in v 1 of the Jewish religious authorities. What might Jesus' goal have been in warning His disciples about this coming persecution?

2. Jesus' says in v 4 that "their time" is coming. From the context what is "their time" and what does it imply about God's sovereignty in suffering?

*Jesus did not tell His disciples about "this" from the beginning because "I was with you." (v 4) The implication is that in the past He protected them and now the Spirit will take over that role.*

3. Do you expect persecution in Christian life? Is it possible that you take measures to avoid it? How might the Spirit protect us in the midst of it?

**PRAY:** Ask God for the help of the Holy Spirit to stand firm during persecution so that you will not falter in your courage and so that you can offer a good testimony to Jesus.

# WEEK 1: JOHN 15:26-16:15

## Day 4

### READ JOHN 16:7-11

Jesus says unless he goes the advocate will not come. This is not because Jesus is the advocate. This would be a form of the heresy called 'modalism' whereby it is thought that God exists sometimes as Father, sometimes as Son and sometimes as Spirit. Jesus has already referred to the Father and Spirit as persons distinct from himself (eg. 15.25). Instead, this is about what He as the Son is yet to accomplish before the Spirit can come.

1. Jesus (along with the Father 14:26 ) sends the Spirit (v 7). What light do the following verses shed on what Jesus must accomplish BEFORE He could send the Spirit? (John 18:11; John 19:28-30)

2. In verses 8-11, what would be the work of the Spirit in the disciples' mission and by extension, in ours?

3. Look very carefully at the Spirit's ministry in verses 8-11. in what ways is the world wrong about:

- Sin - note that the answer has to do with Jesus (John 3:36)
- Righteousness - or lack there of exposed by Jesus (John 13:35)
- Judgement - a deceived world always judges Jesus falsely (7:24)

4. In what way(s) is it to the advantage of a world-wide church that the Spirit has come to replace Jesus as our advocate?

**PRAY:** It is common for people to think it would be so much easier to live as Christians if Jesus was still physically with us. Jesus Himself denies this. Give thanks to God for sending the Spirit and pray for Him to be at work in the lives of your 3:1:1 contacts.



# JESUS SENDS THE SPIRIT

## Day 5

READ JOHN 16:12-15

It is common in our age to think that the Holy Spirit requires more exposure. If this means that we need to teach more carefully concerning His role, then this is certainly true. If it means that He needs more attention, consider what you read today.

1. What do you learn about the various facets of the Spirit's ministry here?

Jesus Himself is the truth (John 14:6) and the Spirit, like Jesus (John 12:49; John 14:10) He speaks only the truth he has been given or heard from the Father and the Son (v's 13-15).

2. Considering the thoughts above, what is the "truth" into which the Spirit would guide the first disciples? How might He have accomplished this work? (1 Corinthians 2;12-14)

3. These verses no doubt have application to us but their immediate application was to the disciples. Why did they of all people need clarity about what Jesus had said and what was yet to come? (hint: consider their role Ephesians 2:20)

**PRAY:** The Spirit's goal is to glorify Jesus by shining the spotlight on Him and not on Himself. He is as J.I. Packer called Him, the "shy sovereign". Praise God for this extravagant foretaste of heaven and ask Him to grant you the Spirit's help in illuminating your understanding of all the good you've received in Jesus.

# WEEK 1: JOHN 15:26-16:15

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. What can you find out about the disciples; their present circumstances and their immediate future? (Day 1 Q 1)

2. In verses 8-11, what would be the work of the Spirit in the disciples' mission and by extension, in ours? (Day 4 Q2)

3. In what way(s) it to the advantage of a world-wide church that the Spirit has come to replace Jesus as our advocate? (Day 5 Q 4)

# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# WEEK 2: JOHN 16:16-33

Jesus' words in this passage no doubt strike us as being unnecessarily cryptic. We want to ask, "Why doesn't he speak plainly?" But we find it hard to grasp the situation of the first disciples. They had no concept for understanding a Messiah who would die, who'd leave his people in the care of 'another advocate' and who'd rise again in the middle of history. They understood a general resurrection of all the faithful at the end of history but not this. What would follow was a profound reordering of their universe. It's not that this wasn't revealed in the Old Testament but more that we are like those watching a detective mystery for the second time. We already know the ending!

## Week 2: Day 1

READ JOHN 16:16-33

1. List the observations in this passage which suggest that the disciples are still very much in the dark.

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2. Knowing what you now know, how would you express v 16 so as to make the point crystal clear to someone else?

3. Although some disagree, I'd suggest that the references to "a little while" (v's 16,18, 19) refer to Jesus' death and resurrection. In the passage, what changes will occur as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection?

**PRAY:** The disciples were very unclear. They were timid like many of us who grew to become the courageous witnesses of a gospel message that swept the Roman empire. Praise God for this and pray for a similar revival in our own desperate days!

# SORROW TURNED TO JOY

## Day 2

READ JOHN 16:19-22

The world and the believer will have two different initial reactions to the death of Jesus and each will change upon hearing the news of His resurrection.

1. What are the reactions of the world and the disciples and why are they so different?

2. The unbelieving world was joyful at the death of Jesus. How do you see this joy at the expense of Jesus playing out today?

3. There are times of sadness for the Christian yet there is a joy that is not taken away (v 22). Is there a secret to obtaining this joy? Is it true of you?

**PRAY:** Give thanks for the joy we have in knowing God as our Father with the promise of a fullness of joy at Jesus' return. Pray that those you know, who are currently opposed to Jesus, will find their joy in him.

# WEEK 2: JOHN 16:16-33

## Day 3

READ JOHN 16:23-28

One of the big changes that will result from Jesus' death and resurrection is the right of prayer for all who know Him.

1. What pattern for prayer did Jesus give in these verses and what clues about answered prayer are given in John 14:13,14 & John 15:7?

2. In v's 26 & 27, what change has made prayer to the Father possible for the disciples?

3. Often the notion of praying "in Jesus' name" can seem like a "tack on" to our prayers but what does it mean and why is it to our advantage?

**PRAY:** Thank God that we can come to him as our Father because of Jesus. Ask that his Spirit would help us to know what will glorify Jesus in our lives and to prayerfully seek these things.



# WEEK 2: JOHN 16:16-33

## Day 5

READ JOHN 16:16-33

1. Having reread this week's passage, try to decide on the central idea and describe it below.

2. What blessings did Jesus offer for the suffering and anguish of His disciples?

3. With these in mind try to sketch a diagram showing how the various ideas in the passage relate to the central theme.

**PRAY:** Jesus has overcome the world, sin and death. Praise God for this wonderful assurance and ask God to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. (Romans 15:13)



# SORROW TURNED TO JOY

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. What blessings did Jesus offer for the suffering and anguish of His disciples? (Day 5 Q 2)

2. The unbelieving world was joyful at the death of Jesus. How do you see this joy at the expense of Jesus playing out today? (Day 2 Q 2)

3. Jesus is gracious to the disciples despite His awareness that they will fail Him badly. In what circumstances is this knowledge of Jesus' character a comfort to you? (Day 4 Q 3)

# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# THE GLORY OF THE SON

No greater insight can we have of a person's understanding of God than in hearing them pray. And this is preeminently the case with Jesus. The gospels inform us that He was a man of frequent prayer but the prayer in John 17 gives us perhaps the deepest glimpse into the eternal relations of the Father and the Son. Indeed it also models for us those matters which were so important to Jesus that He committed them to prayer. What an incredibly rich part of the scriptures on which to reflect together!

## Week 3: Day 1

READ JOHN 17:1-19

1. Pick the 4 or 5 words or ideas that are most frequently repeated in this first part of Jesus' prayer?
2. In what ways will God be glorified through the things for which Jesus prays in verses 6-19?
3. If this is a model for your own prayers, what things impress you most as lessons to learn?

**PRAY:** There is perhaps no greater test of our Christian convictions than our readiness to turn to prayer. Ask God to so deepen your knowledge of both yourself and Him so that you are driven more frequently to prioritise prayer.

# WEEK 3: JOHN 17:1-19

## Day 2

### READ JOHN 17:1-5

If we are to understand the way God has established our world, the theme of “glory” is important to grasp since it shows us what is of ultimate worth. The opening of Jesus’ prayer is just such a place to see this.

1. Glory is the key theme of this opening paragraph. Draw a diagram or make a list to represent this theme in some kind of logical sequence.

2. Until now the “hour” (v 1) in John’s gospel has always been future but now at last it had come. What can you find out about the “hour” and how it determined Jesus’ actions from the following verses? (John 2:4; 7:8; 8:20; 12:27-33)

3. The glory of the Father and His own glory are the highest priority for Jesus, but not naturally for us. What are some of the implications of this?

**PRAY:** That Jesus is worthy of glory alongside the Father is of supreme importance. Pray that these truths about glory will shape the priorities you give to the different parts of your life.

# THE GLORY OF THE SON

## Day 3

READ JOHN 17:6-12

1. Which statements here suggest that our conversion is in the first instance the choice of God?

2. List the requests that Jesus makes of the Father for us? (Include v's 13-19 in this)

*Jesus' prayer in v 11 is that, with Him now leaving, the disciples might be protected by God's power so that they may be one. We will return to this request next week. But it is noteworthy that this protection. It doesn't come so much "by" the name, as it is protection that keeps them "in" the name. That is, they are made one by being kept in loyal allegiance to Jesus as the Christ.*

3. In 1 Peter 1:5 we are shielded by God's power "through our faith". What might God do for disciples today to shield them by faith? (Matt 8:23; Mark 4:39, 40; Mark 8:33-35; Luke 24:25) What responsibilities do we have for our own protection?

**PRAY:** Considering your answers to Q's 2 & 3 how might you pray for yourself and your family? Are there friends who are drifting from oneness in Christ? Pray for them too.

# WEEK 3: JOHN 17:1-19

## Day 4

READ JOHN 17:13-19

The goal of this part of Jesus' prayer is not that disciples be taken out of the world but that they be "sanctified" (set apart) while being protected by God in the world. We often think of sanctification as the process of being made more like Jesus in character but that is not quite the meaning here.

1. For what goal was Jesus "set apart" or sanctified? (John 3:16,17; John 12:27-32)

2. Considering v's 15-19, for what goal are the disciples of Jesus "set apart" or sanctified?

3. Verse 17 contains an essential clue for our mission. How do you think Jesus' word "sanctifies" us for mission? How might you put this truth into practice?

**PRAY:** We need God's protection from the evil one if we are to carry on Jesus' mission in the world. Ask God for this help for you and your church family.

# THE GLORY OF THE SON

## Day 5

READ JOHN 17:1-19

This week's reading began with the glory of the Father and the Son and ends with God's protection so that we can carry on His mission in the world.

1. What is one key truth to take away from this week concerning your own prayers?

2. As you did last week, try to distil the overarching goal of Jesus' prayer to this point. Placing it in the centre, draw a diagram or flow-chart or simply jot down points to show how everything else relates to this.

**PRAY:** Jesus died to save a broken world but commissioned us to bear this news on His behalf. Remember your 3:1:1 friends? Pray for them now.

# WEEK 3: JOHN 17:1-19

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. Pick the 4 or 5 words or ideas that are most frequently repeated in this part of Jesus' prayer? (Day 1 Q 1)

2. In what ways will God be glorified through the things for which Jesus prays in verses 6-19?

3. How do you think the word "sanctifies" us (or sets us apart) for mission? How might you put this truth into practice? (Day 4 Q 3)



# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# WEEK 4: JOHN 17:20-26

Our prayers are always a reflection of our spiritual maturity and discernment. In this respect, meditation on Jesus' great high priestly prayer is of enormous value to us in identifying those things uppermost in His mind at this crucial point in his earthly life. We can do no better than to conform our thinking to His.

## Week 4: Day 1

READ JOHN 17:1-26

To identify the flow of thought in someone's mind is important in any conversation, but especially so in bible reading. While we have read Jesus' prayer across two weeks it will be important to see it in overview and to identify the flow of thought. Note particularly how it begins and ends with the importance to Jesus of the theme of "glory".

1. With the clue above in mind, try to break this prayer down into four or five parts, giving each a title.

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2. Jesus wants all believers to see His "glory". What can you find out about the glory which Jesus has in mind?

3. How might it be to our good that we see Jesus' glory (v 24)?

**PRAY:** Jesus' prayers for us are always for our good. Pray that as we continue to read the scriptures this year you will see Jesus' glory with ever increasing clarity.

# MAY THEY BE ONE

## Day 2

### READ JOHN 17:20-23

Jesus' prayer now turns from the original disciples to people like us in the centuries to come. Given the tiny beginnings of the church and the nature of the men to whom it was entrusted, it is significant that Jesus foresaw the entire history of the gospel into eternity.

1. Try to identify from His prayer in v's 20-26 what Jesus wants for all believers?

*This prayer for "oneness" first appeared in v 11. Although we often think otherwise, this is not a request for the end of denominations unless we think Jesus' prayer was rejected. This is a oneness also shared by the Father & Son but from which Judas was excluded.*

2. What is the "oneness" that Christians are called to? (hint: consider John 13:34,35; John 15:5-7 and Day 3 last week)

3. What things challenge the "oneness" to which we are called? Is there anything you can be doing this week to help preserve it?

**PRAY:** Ask God to help you "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace".



# MAY THEY BE ONE

## Day 4

READ JOHN 17:25,26

1. Jesus would “continue” to make the Father known but how, since He was about to go to the cross? (Romans 3:25,26; Romans 5:8; John 16:12-15)

*Christians in our era can grow impatient with what they consider to be too much “thinking” about the things of God and not enough “experience”, yet Jesus says (17:3) that eternal life is “knowing God”.*

2. In Christian life, how do you believe:

a. The place of “thinking” and “experience” relate to one another?

b. the ministry of the “word” and the “Spirit” relate to one another?

3. In v 26 Jesus points out an important connection between knowledge of God and love of God. How can you deepen your love for God?

**PRAY:** A genuine love for God which springs from an awareness of His love for us, is so central to the Christian life. Ask God to help you grow in this.

# WEEK 4: JOHN 17:20-26

## Day 5

READ JOHN 17:1-26

One important skill in bible reading is to be able to briefly summarise what a passage is about. Naturally, a summary will leave out some details in order to crystallise a key idea but that's OK. Let's try this to conclude the week.

1. Are you happy with your structure from day 1 or do you want to rethink it below?

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2. For each of your subunits try to write a one sentence summary in the space above. You needn't include all details.

**PRAY:** Jesus' compelling prayer is about the mission He received from the Father and how it is fulfilled through us. Pray that God will energise you (Colossians 1:29) you in the work of His mission.

# MAY THEY BE ONE

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. Try to identify from His prayer in v's 20-26 what Jesus wants for all believers? (Day 2 Q 1)

2. Unless we think Jesus' prayer was unanswered it was not about denominational unity. What is the "oneness" that Christians are called to? (Day 2 Q 2)

3. In v 26 Jesus points out an important connection between knowledge of God and love of God. How can you deepen your love for God? (Day 5 Q 3)

# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES



# DRINKING THE CUP

It is likely that John had read one or two of the other gospels yet decided to write his own, bringing his unique perspective. Unlike the synoptic gospels, the Romans are more involved in the action (18:3); there is no agonising prayer in Gethsemane; no kiss of betrayal by Judas (18:4); an additional conversation with Annas (18:12-14) and overall it appears that John's gospel emphasises that while the "whole world" is opposed to Jesus yet He remains in complete control.

## Week 5: Day 1

READ JOHN 18:1-14

1. What attributes of Jesus' character do you see in this episode?

It is remarkable in v 6 that when Jesus identified Himself, the delegation, including Roman soldiers drew back! It may be that, having heard so much about Him they felt that he might prove to be beyond their power to arrest. But there is another possibility.

2. What previous experiences with Jesus might explain this reaction by the Jewish members of the contingent? (See John 7:45,46 and John 8:24,58; John 13:19)

3. Jesus had already promised to lose none of all that had been given to Him? This of course includes us. What a comfort! Where do you find this promise? (use your memory, your cross references or try googling it!)

**PRAY:** Praise God for His goodness and for His faithfulness to His promises. Our eternal security is in His hands.

# WEEK 5: JOHN 18:1-27

## Day 2

### READ JOHN 18:10-14

John rarely includes details without good reason. The addition of the name of Malchus is striking. Was he a later disciple? So too is the meeting with Annas who had been high priest until he was deposed by the Romans in 15 A.D. No doubt this aggravated the Jews who still accorded him great authority. However, the important detail here is the 'cup'.

1. The ultimate reason for Jesus' death appears in v 11. What is it?

2. When Jesus speaks of the "cup" He no doubt has the old testament in mind. Use the following references to explain "the cup". (Isaiah 51:17-20; Jeremiah 25:15ff)

3. God is never angry with His children since Jesus drank the cup for them. What does this mean therefore, about God's discipline Hebrews 12:8)?

**PRAY:** Thank God that Jesus drank the cup for us so we can know peace with God. Ask that that knowledge will deepen our love and gratitude without leading to complacency.

# DRINKING THE CUP

## Day 3

### READ JOHN 18:15-27

Given Peter's status as one of the "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem, it is telling that all four gospels record his stunning failure. Jesus predicted this event of course (13:38) and it was no doubt with Peter's full permission that his colleague, Mark first recorded it.

1. Peter's first final two denials bracket Jesus' own testimony. What is the impact of this arrangement?

It is most traditionally suggested that the "other disciple" in v 15 is John, yet it is illuminating that he was well known to the high priest. We commonly think the disciples were common fishermen but among other evidence, (Mark 1:19,20) this suggests that they were likely business owners.

2. How would it help the church (and you) to know of Peter's failure? What does his willingness to have this news published say about Peter's character?

3. Peter had been a proud man but knowing Jesus had transformed his sense of identity. How do you think the gospel achieves this?

**PRAY:** Ask God to give His people such a large view of Jesus and his goodness and such a deep affection for Him that we'd endure anything out of love for him.

# WEEK 5: JOHN 18:1-27

## Day 4

### READ JOHN 18:19-24

1. The high priest questioned Jesus about two matters but He answered regarding only one. How might you explain this?

For the high priest to question Jesus directly was most likely a breach of legal protocol even before the trial had begun. In his response to the face slap, Jesus was asking for a fair trial

2. In light of Jesus' mission as a sacrifice for sins, why should His integrity matter to us?

3. The way John has written his story invites us to compare Peter & Jesus. What impresses you about Jesus' character? What would you most like to emulate if you were ever called before the courts for your faith?

**PRAY:** Jesus suffered as 'the righteous in place of the unrighteous' (1 Peter 3:18). Give thanks for His perfect righteousness and His willingness to endure injustice in order to protect His own.

# DRINKING THE CUP

## Day 5

READ JOHN 18:15-27

1. How do you think John wants us to think of Peter? What is courageous about him and what is cowardly?
2. What is Peter fearful about and what do you think he is forgetting?
3. When are you most likely to be ashamed of following Jesus? What would you want yourself to remember in those moments?

**PRAY:** Give thanks that God is gracious and forgives His children. Ask him to give us such an expansive view of Jesus' worthiness and such a clear view of our own status in Him that we would endure anything for Him.

# WEEK 5: JOHN 18:1-27

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. What evidence does Jesus give for his kingdom being 'not of this world'?
2. Rather than taking a kingdom by force, Jesus' kingdom comes as a result of His testimony to the truth. (v 37) What insight does this offer about how to grow the kingdom?
3. How can we play our part in seeing this kingdom grow? In what ways might we expect people to respond?

# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# WEEK 6: JOHN 18:28-19:16A

John includes more detail about the trial before Pilate than any of the other gospel writers combined. We may wonder how John came by some of the details, which certainly took place behind closed doors. We'll consider that this week. However, while Pilate is the only character who appears in every one of the scenes to follow, it is Jesus and His kingdom that are central to the narrative.

## Week 6: Day 1

READ JOHN 18:28-19:16a

1. Imagine you were writing a description of the characters in a play. Excluding Jesus, list the characters (or groups of characters) that appear in this account & describe them in a few words.

2. How is the hypocrisy of the Jewish authorities revealed in the opening scene?

**PRAY:** As Paul writes in Romans 3:4 "Let God be true, and every human being a liar." Nowhere is this seen more vividly than in the trial of Jesus. Thank God for the faithfulness of Jesus on which our salvation rests!



# BEHOLD YOUR KING!

## Day 2

READ JOHN 18:33-38

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter fought for it in a worldly way, but Jesus' kingdom is not of this world.

1. What evidence does Jesus give for this truth about his kingdom?
2. Rather than taking a kingdom by force, Jesus' kingdom comes as a result of His testimony to the truth. (v 37) What insight does this offer about how to grow the kingdom?
3. How can we play our part in seeing this kingdom grow? In what ways might we expect people to respond?

**PRAY:** Ask God to help you become someone who is more and more able to offer clear testimony to the truth. Ask God to help His people trust this avenue to the kingdom rather than putting hope in worldly solutions.

# WEEK 6: JOHN 18:28-19:16A

## Day 3

READ JOHN 19:38-19:8

1. What events, expressions or contrasts in this passage highlight the innocence of Jesus alongside the sinfulness of the human characters?

2. The scene closes with Pilate afraid, most likely as a superstitious pagan. How is his lack of integrity revealed?

3. Barabbas, the criminal is a picture of us. In what ways do we identify with him?

**PRAY:** Praise God for our undeserved acquittal in Christ and pray that you would increasingly submit to His rule in your life.

# BEHOLD YOUR KING!

## Day 4

READ JOHN 19:8-11

1. Why do you think Jesus remains silent?
2. What kind of power does Pilate have over Jesus? (Verses 10-11)
3. Consider Jesus' answer in v 11. How does it help us understand God's sovereignty in human history without diminishing our own responsibilities?

**PRAY:** Without an awareness of God's sovereign appointments we can chafe and complain instead of taking the initiative to act with godly diligence. Pray that the latter will be true of you in every realm of life.

# WEEK 6: JOHN 18:28-19:16A

## Day 5

### READ JOHN 19:11-16a

There is a terrible irony in this closing scene. The Jews who had for so long awaited their Messiah, rejected Him when He came in the most decisive and terrible way. This is no reason however for the antisemitism which has begun again to mark our age. It could have been any race on earth and the result would have been the same!

1. Consider the various characters (or groups of characters) in this closing scene and list them below.

2. Imagine their eyes were suddenly opened to the truth. Write a script to show how each might have responded in a God-honouring way.

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The crucifixion of Jesus is the event in history which focuses human sin in its most graphic, cowardly and God rejecting horror. But it would be easy to shake our heads and see nothing more.

3. Consider the various spheres of your life (eg. home, family, work, social), what might it look like to honour Jesus in these different areas?

**PRAY:** Ask God to help you live with clarity, courage and sacrifice under Jesus' rule and before a hostile world, even when we know it will be costly.

# BEHOLD YOUR KING!

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. Imagine you were writing a description of the characters in a play. Excluding Jesus, list the characters (or groups of characters) that appear in this account & describe them in a few words.(Day 1 Q 1)

2. Consider the various characters (or groups of characters) in v's 11-16. How might each have responded in a God-honouring way? (Day 5 Q 1,2)

3. Consider the various spheres of your life (eg. home, family, work, social), what might it look like to honour Jesus in these different areas? (Day 5 Q 3)

# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# IT IS FINISHED!

The gospel writers were not simply stringing together all the events that took place otherwise Simon of Cyrene would be included in John's gospel at this point. Instead, each had an overarching message and John's concerns the obedience of the Son to the Father's sovereign plan. So Jesus carries His own cross to finish the work of salvation.

## Week 7: Day 1

READ JOHN 19: 16a-24

1. In what ways does John show the sovereign hand of God behind the events described here?

*Aramaic was the common language among Jews in Judea; Latin was the official language of the army; and Greek the common language of a multicultural empire. The Romans were motivated to warn people about disobeying Rome but from the gospel perspective more was going on!*

2. Pilate's statement in v 22 fits what we know of his petty and vengeful arrogance. How is Pilate's sinful character co-opted for God's purposes?

3. What scripture is John reminded of in v 24? Use your cross references to find out or google it.

**PRAY:** Jesus identified with humanity in His baptism and now, flanked by two criminals, also in His death. Turn these reflections into a prayer of thanksgiving.

# WEEK 7: JOHN 19:16B-37

## Day 2

### READ JOHN 19:25-27

As we read this singular moment which took place in the midst of suffering and grief, we are given a window into Jesus' compassion which transcends His anguish.

1. What do you think Jesus is seeking to achieve by making these arrangements?

2. As Jesus says these words, he is enduring the most excruciating pain human beings have been able to inflict on one another. What does it show of his character that he would think of, and act on these concerns at this moment?

3. In Roman Catholic thinking about v's 26 & 27, Mary isn't given into the care of John but John into the care of Mary. The conclusion of the verse makes this entirely unlikely. How does this momentary event point to the nature of the new community Jesus was beginning?

**PRAY:** Just as, in the event of the cross, Jesus ensured provision for his mother's earthly life, so he also ensured provision for our eternal safety. Lord, shape my heart to trust in this hope, and to be like Jesus, committed to the needs of others.



# IT IS FINISHED!

## Day 3

### READ JOHN 19:28-30 & PSALM 22

1. There is a strong sense of intentional “completion” in this passage. List below the elements that convey this idea to you.

*There is good evidence to suggest that throughout the hours of His crucifixion, Psalm 22 was constantly on Jesus' mind. This Psalm ends with a cry of triumph which is rendered by our English versions as, "He has done it!" However, the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) expresses it as one word "tetelestai", "It is finished".*

2. Try to divide Psalm 22 into two parts noting below the verses which comprise each. In what does the suffering man rejoice at the end of the psalm?

3. In v 30 Jesus celebrated that the work of His mission was “finished”. Thinking back over His earthly life, can you list occasions where a lesser person might easily have faltered?

**PRAY:** the finished work of Jesus is the cause of our great hope and joy - not merely at Easter but all year round. Praise God for the faithfulness of His Son's work for us!

# WEEK 7: JOHN 19:16B-37

## Day 4

### READ JOHN 19:31-37

Roman practice involved leaving the crucified on the cross till they died, which usually took days and then leaving the rotting bodies to be devoured by carrion. By contrast, the Mosaic law forbade those who were executed on a gibbet to remain overnight, since they were considered “cursed” and so would desecrate the land.

1. The hypocrisy of the Jewish authorities was startling. Why do you think they wanted to hasten Jesus’ death by having His legs broken?
2. Jesus’ reverence for the scriptures is shown by His active obedience in deliberately fulfilling them. Use your cross references to find out the various scriptures fulfilled.
3. A friend tells you that Jesus sounds like a political rebel who lost control and was accidentally arrested and killed. How would you persuade them that they’ve misunderstood?

**PRAY:** Jesus’ active obedience is shown in submitting to God’s laws in order to please Him, while His passive obedience is His suffering and death as a sacrifice for us. Both were necessary if He were to pay for our sins. Ask God that this Easter many might catch a glimpse of the wonder of Jesus’ obedience and come home to their heavenly Father.

# IT IS FINISHED!

## Day 5

READ ZECHARIAH 12:8-13:1

In John 19:33-37, John describes the piercing of Jesus' body by the soldiers after his death and explains this as a fulfilment of Zechariah 10:12.

1. Who seems to be pierced in Zechariah 12:10? Given that John sees Jesus' piercing as a fulfilment of this prophecy, what claim is he making about Jesus' identity?

2. As Jesus is pierced, blood and water flow out. What flows out from Jerusalem in Zechariah 13:1? What insight does this give into the purpose of Jesus' death?

3. As Jesus dies, his disciples mourn but their grief is soon turned to joy (John 16:20). In light of these verses, what emotions should we feel in reflecting on Jesus' death?

**PRAY:** Praise God for his mercy in taking on flesh to cleanse his people from sin and impurity. Ask that many more this coming weekend would know and receive the cleansing power of Jesus' blood.

# WEEK 7: JOHN 19:16B-37

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. In what ways does John show the sovereign hand of God behind the events described here? (Day 1 Q 1)

2. There is a strong sense of intentional “completion” in this passage. List below the elements that convey this idea. (Day 3 Q 1)

3. A friend tells you that Jesus sounds like a political rebel who lost control and was accidentally arrested and killed. How would you persuade them that they’ve misunderstood? (Day 4 Q 3)

# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# WEEK 8: JOHN 19:38-20:8

John's gospel is said to have been constructed around seven miraculous signs: Turning Water into Wine (John 1:1-11); Cleansing the Temple (John 2:12-17); Healing the Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54); Healing the Lame Man (John 5:1-15); Feeding the Multitude (6:1-15); Healing the Blind Man (John 9); and Raising Lazarus (John 11). However, the great culminating sign is surely the resurrection. Paul refers to this (Romans 1:1-4) as the vindication of Jesus claim to be the Messiah.

## Week 8: Day 1

READ JOHN 19:38-42

"Light" and "dark" in John's gospel are common themes. Light speaks of revelation and clarity. Darkness speaks of ignorance, deception and evil. There is a reason Nicodemus came to Jesus under cover of darkness but by the end something had changed.

1. What observations strongly suggest that none of these disciples expected a resurrection?
2. Like Nicodemus, Joseph was a wealthy member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (Matt 27:57; Mark 15:43), looking for the kingdom of God. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was most likely his. Why do you think Nicodemus and Joseph now decide to show their faith publicly?
3. John had little sympathy for "secret discipleship" (John 12:42,43). What does it require for someone to be public in their faith? How public is your own faith?

**PRAY:** Many will come to church this Easter who sincerely believe they are Christians but are probably not. Pray for them that this Easter might be a turning point for them.

# THE EMPTY TOMB

## Day 2

### READ JOHN 20:1-2

The Jewish Sabbath was a Saturday so the resurrection took place on Sunday; it is called the “first day of the week” to emphasise that it begins something new. So firmly is this event established in history, that it resulted in the shifting of the Christian Sabbath to a Sunday. Readers are often troubled by these verses since they appear to suggest that Mary went to the tomb alone while the other gospels report a number of women accompanying her. (see Matt 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:9-12)

1. Read the parallel passages cited above and you will notice that, in listing the women they all have something in common. What is this?
2. Mary appears to be the leader of the women who went to the tomb and as such John lists only her name. What suggests that she was most likely not alone?
3. Although Jesus had often foretold His resurrection, what tells you that Mary for one did not seem to expect it? What might you infer from this about human habits with God’s word?

**PRAY:** It is easy to read the scriptures in too superficial a manner. Pray that God will cause you to revere His word, reading it with trust and always assuming you have more to learn.

# WEEK 8: JOHN 19:38-20:8

## Day 3

### READ JOHN 20:3-10 & LUKE 24:9-12

As we've seen on previous days, the other gospel accounts of the resurrection, like Luke's, seem to back John up in some respects but differ from him in others. This again is a warning to take account of the nature of human reporting and read carefully before beginning to doubt.

1. How does Luke seem to agree and disagree with John? Consider how Luke 24:22-24 might change this conclusion?

*The fact that the graveclothes were present rules out the idea of a robbery. Who would take the time to unwind grave clothes especially when they were valuable.*

2. Much has been inferred about the graveclothes but with respect to these, how does the resurrection of Jesus contrast with the raising of Lazarus? (John 11:44)

3. The "other disciple" is again almost certainly John. Compare Luke 24:12; Luke 24:24 and John 20:8-10. What can you infer about the strength of John's belief at this point?

4. Jesus will later rebuke the disciples for being "slow to believe". (Luke 24:25) Is there a difference between being "slow" and being "thorough" in examining the evidence?

**PRAY:** Ask God to help you, along with your brothers and sisters to be thoughtful but ready to believe. Pray also for those who are new to Christian life and need time to deepen in their belief.



# THE EMPTY TOMB

## Day 4

READ JOHN 20:11-18

It seems that Mary, perhaps driven by her grief, returns to the tomb where she encounters two angels and one whom she thinks at first is the gardener.

1. Although the angels were dressed in white, what observations suggest the simple humanness of the three heavenly visitors?

*Consider the angelic appearances to the women in the other gospels. (Matt 28:5-10; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:1-8) These accounts appear to be "telescoped", with only John recording Mary's return to the tomb - with or without the other women.*

2. We saw on day 2 that differences in the gospel report of the number of women at the tomb can be explained by recognising that Mary had a prominence among them. How might you explain the difference in the number of angels?

3. What is both astonishing and wonderful about Jesus' words in v 17b? What does it mean to you to have God as your Father?

**PRAY:** It is hard for us to conceive of what a massive jolt all this would have been to the disciples. Perhaps similar to what will happen for us when Jesus returns. Pray that you will be ready for that day!

# WEEK 8: JOHN 19:38-20:8

## Day 5

READ JOHN 20:1-18

Having considered during the week how we might harmonise any apparent contradictions in the accounts of the resurrection appearances, try to create a stepwise sequence of events.

**PRAY:** The resurrection is life transforming. Paul can say that because of it “the old has passed away, behold the new has come.” (2 Cor 5:17) Christ’s resurrection power is now available to transform believers (Romans 8:11) and our own resurrection is guaranteed. (1 Cor 15:20ff) Praise God for his astonishing gift!



# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# MY LORD AND MY GOD

## Week 9: Day 1

READ JOHN 20:19-23

1. The disciples are clearly frightened that what happened to Jesus may have happened to them. How does Jesus show His gentleness to them in these verses?

2. "Peace be with you!" This is Jesus' repeated greeting in His resurrection appearances. What do you think He meant by this?

3. The events of v's 22 & 23 raise a question which we'll consider tomorrow. How would you describe the intention behind the gift of the Spirit in v's 23? What opportunities do you have in your normal week to pursue this mission?

**PRAY:** Ask that all God's people might know the peace and joy that comes from knowing the risen Jesus. Ask for courage, conviction and intentionality to take your part in making Him known

# WEEK 9: JOHN 20:19-31

## Day 2

READ ACTS 1:4-8, 2:1-4

1. What does Jesus say will happen in Acts 1 and what will be the outcome?

2. In Acts 2:32-33, how did Peter explain what was happening at Pentecost?

*Given that the real reception of the Spirit took place in Acts 2, with life changing effect, it is best to understand John 20:22 as an acted parable of what would occur seven weeks later at Pentecost.*

3. Noting that the word for 'breath' and 'spirit' are the same in Greek, what does the mini 'sign-act' in John 20:22 show about the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit? (See also John 16:7).

**PRAY:** Give thanks that Jesus poured out his Spirit, just as he had promised. Ask that the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son would continue to reveal Jesus to us and make him glorious in our eyes.

# MY LORD AND MY GOD

## Day 3

READ JOHN 20:24-29

1. What can you infer about Thomas and about Jesus from these verses?

2. Thomas wanted visual evidence in order to believe? Was this an understandable or a sinful request?

3. The scriptures suggest that in fact, while all should believe the truth about Jesus and their accountability to God, not all will. Why not? (See Romans 1:18-23) How then should we respond to this fact?

**PRAY:** Thank God for his patience and kindness in revealing himself & pray that he does this more and more in our experience. Ask that He would give us humble, worshipful hearts that stand in awe of the risen Jesus.





# MY LORD AND MY GOD

## Day 5

### READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58

Twice in John 20:19-29 John mentions that Jesus stood among the disciples 'even though the doors were locked'. Other gospel accounts have him appearing to the disciples, and then disappearing. Jesus'S resurrection body is recognisably him, but at the same time... different.

1. In this passage, compare what Paul says about our current bodies to our glorified, resurrection bodies. List the things that are similar and different.
2. According to these verses, how has Jesus made all this possible?
3. The resurrection produces confidence, joy and hope. What would Paul have us do with this? (Verse 58)

**PRAY:** Praise God who raises the dead and gives eternal life! Thank him for the hope and confidence we have through the resurrection of Jesus. Ask that he would help us stand firm and give ourselves to the work of the Lord so that more and more on the Peninsula and beyond would share this hope.



# PRAYER POINTS & NOTES

# WEEK 10: JOHN 21:1-25

John 21 can appear to be anticlimactic. The great highpoint was achieved in chapter 20 and then the disciples go fishing and have breakfast? It's not particularly in keeping with the tone that accompanied their master's charge in 20:22,23 to pursue the mission. For this reason some go so far as to suggest that the chapter is a later addition by another author. But the chapter is exactly what we'd expect of a triumphant Jesus' and disciples who have received the promise of the transforming Spirit, yet not the Spirit Himself.

## Week 10: Day 1

READ JOHN 21:1-14

This scene reminds us of the one in Luke 5 where Jesus first commissioned the disciples to "fish for people". (Luke 5:10)

1. Try to summarise the key point of this episode.
2. How does it remind you of Jesus' message to them in John 15:5 & 16?
3. In an age that's hostile to the gospel, we will constantly need Jesus' help to fish for people. How could Jesus' help you in this?

**PRAY:** God has called us to share in his work of bearing fruit for eternal life. Ask that he would keep you humbly dependent on him in this and that He'd encourage and sustain you to be fruitful.

# FEED MY LAMBS

## Day 2

READ JOHN 21:1-14

1. Jesus' provision for His disciples is on display in this episode. What do you think He is teaching them by doing this?

2. While we might attribute the catch to Jesus, He points to their role in the work (v 10). What should we conclude about God's role and ours?

3. Perhaps there are areas where we like to claim credit for ourselves or on the flip side, where we tend to be lazy.. What pitfalls do we experience if we forget one side or the other of this work?

**PRAY:** We are powerless creatures, especially in the spiritual realm but God is able to work in and through us for his purposes. Confess your failure to acknowledge him and ask for his help to accomplish good things for His kingdom.



# FEED MY LAMBS

## Day 4

READ JOHN 21:15-17 & ACTS 20:17-31

“Do you love me more than these?” What did Jesus mean? More than these fishing nets? More than you love these other disciples? More than these others love me? Given Peter’s quickness to assert himself (John 13:37; Matt 26:33) it was most likely the last. So Peter needed forgiveness by Jesus as well as reinstatement in the eyes of his friends.

1. After each interaction with Peter, what does Jesus ask him to do?

2. Many Christians are inclined to undervalue the importance of being properly fed otherwise they would take greater care. In Acts 20:20-31, what insights do we get into the work of ‘shepherding’ God’s people?

3. Who are the shepherds among you? Judging by what you read here, what are their greatest needs? How can you be of help to them?

**PRAY:** Ask that you would have humility to learn from and listen to those leaders God has placed over you. Pray that He would protect all those men and women, granting them wisdom and raising up new leaders for the next generation both here and beyond.

# WEEK 10: JOHN 21:1-25

## Day 5

### READ JOHN 21:18-25

Peter lived for 30 years more with the prophecy of v's 18 & 19 hanging over his head. Clement of Rome around the year 96 AD indicates that Peter was himself crucified and this is borne out by Tertullian writing in the year 212 AD.

1. Remembering that the disciple whom Jesus loved was John, summarise what takes place in v's 18-23.

*As Christians today, we are inclined to put ourselves in a different position to the first disciples and in one sense we are. We are also apt to compare ourselves with others and complain at God's treatment of us.*

2. Jesus would be within His rights address say v 22 to you. What does it mean for you to "follow Jesus"?

3. How would you describe your present role as a follower of Jesus? Can you say before God that you are fulfilling it as you should?

**PRAY:** Consider Jesus' words in Luke 17:10. 'So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty." Pray that you will remember that you are the Lord's servant and that you will please Him in fulfilling your duty.



# FEED MY LAMBS

## FOR GROWTH GROUP PREPARATION

1. The feeding on the beach illustrated Jesus' provision for His disciples. How does He provide for them and for us in verses 15-21? (Day 3 Q 2)

2. What would Peter have been feeling at this time and why? (Day 3 Q 1)

3. How would you describe your present role as a follower of Jesus? Can you say before God that you are fulfilling it as you should? (Day 5 Q 3)

# PRAYER POINTS

# NOTES

