

**Journeying with John**  
**A St George's Lent Course**  
**Tuesdays at 7 45p.m. for 8p.m.—9p.m. in the Lady Chapel**  
**Tuesday 3 March: Jesus the Word**  
**Tuesday 10 March: Love**  
**Tuesday 17 March: The Eucharist**  
**Tuesday 24 March: The Role of Women**  
**Tuesday 31 March: Jesus thinks aloud**  
**Good Friday (Good Friday Service): The Crucifixion**

### **Introduction**

You are warmly invited to all the sessions in this series, but notes will be available to help those able to come to only some of the sessions to keep track; and to give a learning opportunity to those unable to come at all. The notes will also be available on the parish website. Tuesday sessions will begin with refreshments at 7 45p.m. Leaders will start promptly at 8p.m. and finish promptly at 9p.m. A number of those leading were involved in studying the St John's Gospel on Monday evenings during 2008.

### **St John?**

Perhaps the wisest thing said about St John's Gospel is that it is:

*A book in which a child may paddle  
But an elephant can swim deep.*

It might be added, after a look at all the scholarly books written over the years, that the elephantine scholars can also drown in the Gospel. The debates are mainly about who wrote the Gospel; when he, she, or they, wrote it; and the background to the writing. For all the confident assertions down the centuries, we don't know with certainty the answers to any of these questions. For example, while the name St John was attached to the Gospel when the four Gospels were collected together long after they were written, the author does not tell us the author's name. There is a case for saying that the author was Lazarus, who is the close follower for whom we know Jesus had a special affection; but that too is speculation.

There are good reasons for thinking that this was the last Gospel to be completed, but scholars now think that it was completed within 50 or 60 years

of the final events to which it relates, by someone who knew from personal experience about those events, and had prayerfully reflected on them, and on subsequent events, and no doubt kept notes. Even the disputed last chapter would fit in with this theory, and the style suggests it was added by the same author who wrote the earlier chapters.

We think that the Gospel was first written in Greek by someone who wrote Greek naturally and was familiar with Greek thought; but that could be said of many Jews at the time of Jesus. This writer was clearly also familiar with Jewish thought, Jewish history, and Jewish traditions - most probably a Jew who had lived in or near Jerusalem. If he wrote in Greek, he was writing for Christians and others who understood Greek; but Greek-speaking Jews even at the time of Jesus, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, probably outnumbered Aramaic-speaking Jews. Nor can it be said of "John" that he is anti-Jewish: nothing he says about the Jews who rejected Jesus (and had expelled the Jewish Christians) was as strong as what the Old Testament prophets said about their fellow countrymen who turned their backs on the Covenant, or as strong as what was said by the radical Jewish sects of the First Century whose work John must have known and we have now rediscovered.

We owe "John", as we owe Jesus, to the Jews...and especially to those Jews who recognised in Jesus all that the Jewish people had hoped for over the centuries: keeping alive a hope that any other people would have abandoned altogether under persecution, disaster, dispersal, and disappointment.

### **What is special about John?**

It is sometimes said that the other three Gospels, which contain much more common ground material than John's Gospel does (only a small proportion of John's detailed material is in the other Gospels), are history, while John is commentary. This isn't really accurate. John would have known that there were other gospels out there, and he was selective about what he included in his one scroll and 15,000 words; but, like the other Gospel writers, he is concerned to present the Jesus of history *and* to remind us who the Jesus of history IS. If we don't know that, the history isn't all that interesting!

If you had to choose three words to characterise John's Gospel (though that is a rather miserly allocation for one of the world's great works of literature), the

three might be Love, Sign and Glory. Contrary to some theories and to some of the speculation of the early centuries of the Christian debate, this Gospel writer is very clear that Jesus is fully human and fully God. Right from the outset, he portrays a Jesus who weeps, gets angry, becomes tired, but who is God Incarnate. Hence the three words. You need to recognise in the love of Jesus the love of God. You need to see in the signs that Jesus did/gave, signs of God at work. You need to see in the life of Jesus, the glory of God's presence.

### **Cut the cackle and get in!**

It is significant that, unlike many other commentators, Tom Wright gives only two pages and three lines of introduction to his two volume commentary on John's Gospel. After that, he is straight into Chapter 1 of the Gospel. The good Bishop seems to be saying two things. One is that the academic speculation about John is all very well, but not necessarily very edifying, and certainly not very conclusive. The other is that it really is worthwhile settling down to read and think about what John says, even if your knowledge of Greek and of the philosophical and religious debates of the First Century of the Common Era is a bit rusty. This matches the Gospel writer's own approach to his task: he says "Here is something to think about: think about it, and go on thinking".

### **The Word**

We all know the Christmas Gospel from St John as the most dramatic statement ever made about what happened on Christmas Day. Forget the other Gospels' two different genealogies, forget the colourful though lovely stuff about angels and shepherds and wise men, and concentrate on the reality that this was God coming into God's world in a unique way that changed everything for ever. Jews and Greeks alike found this hard to stomach, though both had traditions about God being active in God's world. The personal relationship with God theme that runs through the Old Testament helped prepare Jewish Christians for what they now experienced through Jesus.

### **Love**

Whether or not the Letters attributed to John were written by the same author who wrote the Gospel, divine love is a key theme we associate with St John. The English word "love" is rather multi-purpose, and most of us are not much

helped by retreating into the four or more Greek words for the different sorts of love. Suffice it to say that what John (or whoever) is on about is that God loves us, and we can learn from this how to love God in return and love our neighbours (neighbours being everyone with whom we share this earthly space).

### **The Eucharist**

This is an intriguing theme for a discussion of St John's Gospel, because John doesn't actually record the institution of the Eucharist. (Nor is Baptism covered in the way other Gospel writers cover it.) You might think that if Church tradition had followed John, we would have foot washing every Sunday morning and not Communion. But John is shot through with Eucharistic theology, and we make heavy use of John in the Communion Service.

### **The Role of Women**

St Luke tends to be regarded as the Gospel writer who gives most prominence to women; but John gives special recognition to women - indeed more than he gives to The Twelve, who were all men. His account of the Resurrection is dominated by the deeply moving story of the encounter between Jesus and Mary.

### **Jesus thinks aloud**

In place of what we might expect to have been a report of the Last Supper, John has Jesus giving his disciples (men and women!) their final extended teaching session. This is by any standards terrific stuff, and would constitute in itself a good course for new Christians. It is commonly called "The Discourses", but "discourse" has become a rather prissy term among professionals in recent years.

### **The Crucifixion**

Perhaps the most striking aspect of John's Gospel is how much of it is devoted to the last week of Jesus' life, and of course to what follows. No Christmas story in John, but Passiontide and the Resurrection are to the fore—comprising more than half the Gospel chapters if you include the raising of Lazarus.

Journeying with John  
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Tuesday 31 March: Jesus thinks aloud

**Introduction**

*Please try to read St John Chapter 13 verse 31 to St John Chapter 16 verse 33 before you come to this session. There won't be time to read all of Jesus' final talk to his disciples before he was arrested and killed on the Tuesday evening. The discussion will focus on the sections below in italics, in the paraphrase by Eugene Peterson.*

Jesus has given his final messages to the crowd. He is now alone with his disciples, who probably included his close female as well as his close male friends. He has done the feet washing work of a servant. He has shared a meal. Judas has gone out to do his last (treacherous) job for the Master he has followed for three years. Like a favourite teacher summing up key points for his pupils before the big exam, Jesus packs in some last minute teaching about what matters most. As teachers sometimes find, even these star pupils seem a long way off being ready for what is to come. Unlike the school teacher, Jesus can say that while he has given them their last lesson, he is sending them another teacher who will see them through the exam that is the rest of their lives.

**Love one another**

*"Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognise that you are my disciples - when they see the love you have for each other."* Shortly, Jesus picks up the theme of loving God, and of loving obedience. Here he talks about their relationship with each other. He knew that they were going to be scattered, but that they needed to get back together. He also knew that they were shortly to find out just how much he loved them; and to see, on the cross, how much more he expected of them than just being nice to each other. There followed centuries during which Christians did indeed die for each other; but also, God forgive us, killed each other for being "the wrong sort of Christian".

**Plenty of room**

*"There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. I'm on my way to get*

*your room ready for you. And you already know the road I'm taking."* Thomas promptly says that none of them has a clue where he is going, so they have no hope of following him. Note that this passage probably isn't talking about nice little semi-detached houses in heaven. It is talking about a waiting place until the new heaven and new earth at the end of time. But hang on to the promise that there is plenty of room.

### **The Road, the Truth and the Life**

*"I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. ... To see me is to see the Father... The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act."* Philip has asked to see God, for a bit of reassurance, and to close the evening party in a really convincing way. Jesus asks him whether he has completely missed the point for the last three years. Even Christians have stumbled apologetically over what Jesus says here. Only Christians go to heaven? Worse still, in later years, only Catholic or only Protestant Christians go to heaven? That's not what Jesus said. He said that there is only one God, and that God is seen in Jesus. God is Christ-like, Christ is God-like - however badly the Christian Church sometimes messes up. Many will not take the Christian route. However, at the end of the day, the only destination is Christ. There isn't anywhere else to go.

### **Ask and you will get**

*"Whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it."* Two things to note. First, this isn't a promise that anything we fancy, we can have. We'll get what Jesus knows we need. Second, no intermediaries. Jesus says "Just talk to me". How unlike the artificial hierarchies we create!

### **A Friend is promised**

*"A loveless world is a sightless world. If anyone loves me, he will carefully keep my word and my Father will love him - we'll move right into the neighbourhood!"* The way Chapter 14 ends, John might be saying that what follows is whispered conversation as the group moves through the darkened street to the Garden. Maybe so, maybe not; but here is Jesus saying that the earthly stage of his ministry and friendship is over; but that the disciples won't be alone. The Holy Spirit - the Friend, the Comforter, will be there for them, and will see them through. That promise wasn't just for them.

### **I am the Vine and you are the Branches**

*"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant."* Those who heard Jesus say this were familiar with God's vine as a description of Israel, and with the prophetic warnings about what the vine-keeper did to vines on which care had been lavished, but which produced no good fruit. Now Jesus was in effect saying that he was the new Israel himself, the true vine; and that those who joined up with him would need a lot of pruning discipline but if they stuck in there they would produce great fruit. Jesus then returned to the theme of love, reminding his hearers that just doing the right things, going through the motions, wasn't enough. His followers needed to follow in love.

### **Rough times ahead**

*"There will even come a time when anyone who kills you, will think he is doing God a favour."* Jesus was going to die for his disciples, and that included the Twelve and the loyal women, but this didn't mean that they would be spared their own martyrdom. If John wrote this Gospel, John escaped being murdered, but he didn't escape persecution and exile. Those who couldn't take the truth from Jesus Himself were not going to take it from his bunch of second rate followers; and those followers knew what had happened to their prophetic predecessors. They knew what had happened to John the Baptist. They knew that the powers that be were anxious to have Lazarus "really dead" this time. Telling the truth didn't make you friends or increase your prospects of longevity.

### **While the godless world throws a party**

*"You will be in deep mourning while the godless world throws a party. You'll be sad, very sad, but your sadness will develop into gladness....When a woman gives birth, this new life in the world wipes out memory of the pain...Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks."* Maybe on Palm Sunday it wasn't just the ultra-radicals among the disciples who entertained high hopes of being the inner council of the new King of the Jews, who would throw out the Romans and their quislings, and usher in the Kingdom - with all the nations of the world beating a path to the gates of Jerusalem and its Temple. The Gospel writer knew by then that the Temple had been destroyed; but even on Maundy Thursday the disciples knew that their Plan A was not to be.

### I've conquered the world

*"I'm not abandoned. The Father is with me. I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world."* Chapter 17 is the disciples listening into Jesus praying, or as much as they could listen before falling asleep because it had all been too much for them. So the tail end of the pre-exam lesson is some final encouragement. Jesus is saying that the following day is not going to look much like a victory, but that it is a victory - in fact the ultimate victory.

Generations of Christian martyrs have been told that they were losers, only to give the response that in fact they are winners, because they are on the side of the Ultimate Victor.

As Jesus says in the Prayer in Chapter 17:

*I give them a mission in the world.  
I'm consecrating myself for their sakes  
So they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission.*





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Tuesdays at 7 45p.m. for 8p.m.—9p.m. in the Lady Chapel  
Tuesday 10 March: God is Love

*Please try to read the following passages in St John's Gospel before you come to this session: there won't be time on the evening:*

*Chapter 3 verses 16 and 17: God so loved..*

*Chapter 3 verse 35*

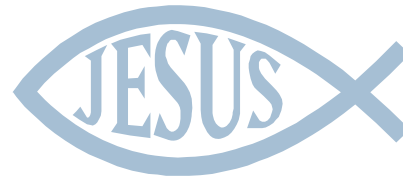
*Chapter 10: The Good Shepherd*

*Chapter 11: Lazarus*

*Chapter 13: The Feet Washing*

*We shall consider the evening's theme and what it may mean for us in the light of these extracts and others.*

*We look forward to your company!*



### Some Resources

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life..

Car Dieue a tant aime le monde qu'il a donne son Fils unique, afin que quiconque croit en lui ne perisse pas, mais qu'il ait la vie eternelle.

Alboweim tak Bog umilowal swiat, ze Syna swego jednorodzonego dal, aby kazdy, kto wen wierzy, nie zginal, ale mial zywt wieczny.

Denn also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, dass er seinen eingeborenen Sohn gab, auf das all, die an ihn glauben, nicht veloren warden, sondern das ewige Leben haben.

Poiche Iddio ha tanto amato il mondo, che ha dato il suo unigenito Figliulo, affinche chiunque crede in lui non perisca, ma abbia vita eterna.

Kwa maana jinsi hii Mungu aliupenda ulimwengu, hata akamtoa Mwanawe pekee, ili kila mtu amwaminiye asipotee, bali awe na uzima wa milele.

## The Message version of the Bible

**St John Chapter 3:** This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

**St John Chapter 3:** The Father loves the Son extravagantly. He turns everything over to him so he could give it away - a lavish distribution of gifts.

**St John Chapter 10:** I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary... I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me. In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father.

**St John Chapter 11:** The sisters [Mary and Martha] sent word to Jesus, "Master, the one you love so very much [Lazarus] is sick". His disciples said "Rabbi, you can't do that [go back to Judea]. The Jews are out to kill you.".... Jesus said to Martha: "You don't have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?" ....When Jesus saw her [Mary] sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, a deep anger welled up within him.... Now Jesus wept. The Jews said, "Look how deeply he loved him."... Then Jesus said to the others, "Go ahead, take away the stone".

**St John Chapter 13:** Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear companions, he continued to love them right to the end. .... Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on the way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of disciples, drying them with his apron.....Then he said, "If I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each others' feet. I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do. I'm only pointing out the obvious."

*A modern version of a 17th Century prayer by George Hickes*

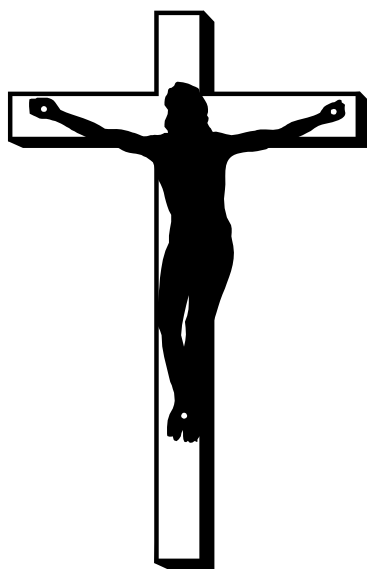
*O God our heavenly Father, who has called us to love one another as your children, and has given us your Spirit of love to tie us to each other, keep us strong in love to all who need our love, and to those who are close to us by kinship or by choice, that we may grow in love, strengthened by your love that never fails - even when everything else fails. Bless us with your presence, that our loving relationships may last, and may after this life be fulfilled in your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Amen*

*From the Mozarabic Rite (modernised)*

*O God, who in your great love for us, reconciled earth to heaven through your Only Begotten Son, grant that we, who darkened by sin turn away from brotherly love, may through the light of your love turn again to embrace our friends and to forgive our enemies, just as you in Christ embrace and forgive us.*

*Amen*



**Journeying with John**  
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**Tuesday 3 March: Jesus the Word**

**Portraits of Christ in John's Gallery.**

Children and uncommitted adults can handle "Jesus as special". They often stumble over "Jesus as God". 2,000 years later, we have the same problem as many of those Jesus of Nazareth walked with and talked with: we can't believe that being God and being human mix, whatever the Creed says. The writer of John's Gospel spells out what he was trying to do (Chapter 20 verses 30-31). He says that what he has written is *"that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, you may have life in his name"*. (The language sometimes differs from the other Gospel writers and the Epistle writers: the message is essentially the same.)

So why does John introduce Jesus as "The Word"? He uses the Greek word Logos because he is writing for the majority of Jews and all educated Gentiles, who spoke Greek, but the idea is as much Jewish as it is Greek. In the Old Testament, God at work in the world is often described as Word; just as in Greek thinking Logos is the connecting link between God and the world. John goes further, and emphasises the logic that God at work in the world, and God meeting the world, must BE God – not some other created thing or person. When (John 14 verse 9) Philip asks Jesus to show them God, Jesus says gently "That is just what I am doing: when you see me, you see God".

**Jesus was there before the beginning (Verses 1-3)**

**He Is The Constant Word** - Jesus has simply always existed! He didn't come into being in Bethlehem, but He has been here through all the endless ages of eternity. Was in verse 1 = "always has been." Contrast this with was in verse 6. This word used concerning John the Baptist means simply "to become." (John became, but Jesus always has been!) Thank God He is the constant, unchanging Word of God - Heb. 13:8. That is why the Christian can depend on Jesus. He will never fail us nor leave us - Heb. 13:5.

**He Is The Communing Word** - This phrase says that Jesus "was with God." That is, He was with the Father, But as a distinct Person. The Trinity doesn't mean three gods: it means that just as human beings are complex (body, mind

and spirit), God is complex (Father, Son and Spirit), and words and pictures take us only so far. Jesus Christ wasn't an after thought with God. He wasn't something conjured up when things got out of control. Jesus was there when God moved to make man in His image - Gen. 1:26. Jesus was there in Heaven when the plan to redeem the world was formulated - Rev. 13:8; Eph. 1:4; Titus 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:19-20. Since before time began, Jesus was with the Father in Heaven.

**He Is The Controversial Word** - When Jesus came preaching repentance, Mark 1:15, men thought He was strange. When He began to heal and perform miracles, men thought He was a prophet sent by God, John 3:2. When He spoke the Word of God with power, men thought He was amazing, Luke 4:36. However, when Jesus claimed equality with God, men thought He was crazy, John 19:7. He stopped being a blessing and became a controversy when He claimed to be God, John 14:9, "*Jesus said to him, Have I been so with you so long, and yet you haven't got to know me, Philip? **Those who have seen me have seen the Father;** and yet you ask me to show you the Father?*"

We still grapple with these truths! We are willing to accept the humble Christ, the teaching Christ, the meek Christ, the dead Christ, the serving Christ. However, we hesitate about the God/Man Jesus Christ: 100 % God and 100% human, all wrapped up in one. It is best summed up by Paul in his Letter to the Philippians 2:5-8. In these amazing verses, the Apostle sets forth in clear, concise, language the fact that Jesus existed before Bethlehem. He willingly humbled Himself and came to this world as a servant. Jesus is God in human flesh!

**He Is The Creative Word** - This verse tells us that Jesus was the energy behind the creation of the universe. He spoke and it was! He stood on the edge of nothing and spoke all this into existence, Colossians 1:16-17.

I am grateful that this God is my God, that this Saviour is my Saviour! I am glad that I can know in Him the free pardon of sin and that salvation is in His control. The worries and pressures of life begin to grow amazingly dim when confronted with the power and might of our all powerful Saviour - Matthew. 28:18!

These four truths, taken as one, give us the clear teaching that Jesus always has been and always will be! No matter where we wind up, or what we have to face as we travel through this world, we can rest assured that Jesus is there

for us, while time runs, before time begun, and once time ceases to run.

### **Jesus is the Personal Word (Verse 14)**

This verse is one of the clearest in the entire Bible regarding the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Incarnation means " a supernatural being appearing in a human body.")

**How?** - This verse tells us that "The Word became flesh and lived among us." How? Only God knows! alone. All we know is that God chose a virgin/young woman named Mary and caused her to miraculously conceive and bring forth a baby. When Jesus was born, God had come to earth. Somehow, the Word became flesh! While Jesus himself had existed from all eternities past, He took up a human life here in Palestine. The Creator was born to the creature. God placed His life in the hands of mortals. What a scene that must have been! This verse says that God "lived" among us. That word is rich in meaning. It literally means that Jesus pitched His tent here among mortals. He lived among us, worked among us, prayed among us, suffered among us and died among us. God walked upon the earth and was unrecognized by many who came into close contact with Him. What a tragedy that we came in contact with the Saviour and still failed to recognize Him.

**The Mystery** - The word was "made" flesh. This word carries the meaning "to appear in history, to step onto the stage." There in Bethlehem, God stepped out of eternity and onto the stage of human history. He came as a tangible proof of the existence of God and of God's willingness to save mankind. When He was here on earth and through the record left to you and me, we can see that Jesus came to this world to reveal God to man. He did this through the medium of His flesh - 1 John 1:1. We may envy those who met Jesus physically; but by no means everyone who saw Jesus on this earth came to faith in Him!

**The Majesty** – "We beheld His glory". John actually saw the glory of Jesus in a very real sense. In Matthew 17, John, along with James and Peter accompanied Jesus upon a mountain side. There Jesus allowed the veil of His flesh to be pulled aside and He revealed the glory that was concealed beneath. Jesus concealed His heavenly fame within an earthly frame. However, His greatest glory was revealed the day He allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross and

died for sinners. On Calvary, the glory of God was in sharp focus!

After all, that was the reason Jesus left the halls of Heaven and came to live among men. He took upon Himself a robe of flesh so that He might be able to die for mankind. That is what He did for each and every one of us. To me the greatest evidence of the glory of God is the broken body of Jesus Christ. This demonstrates His love for me in the clearest of terms, Romans 5:8.

### **Jesus proclaims God**

According to this verse, Jesus came to reveal God to man. The word "declare" means "to unfold." Every thing the Lord did was done to unfold more of the revelation of God to man. Men needed to see God not just as a Lawgiver, but also as a Lover. Not only as a judge, but as a justifier. Not as some stern, hateful being, but as a saving, caring God. Jesus did just this by His life - John 14:7-9; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3. Jesus came to put God on display before men and He did this in two primary ways.

**He Came To Proclaim Light** - He came to a world in spiritual darkness and opened the curtains of grace. Jesus came to illuminate the pathway of men toward God. This light will either cause men to repent of their sins and run to the opened arms of the Lord, or it will cause them to reject the light and continue in their darkness. Thank God for the light that He gave fallen man! Now, we are free to respond to the lovely pleadings of Grace. And, praise the Lord, this light reaches out to all - v. 9! Even me!!

**He Came To Proclaim Life** - Jesus came to His people, who had His Word and were living in His promised land. In what may be the saddest verse in the Bible, they refused this call from the sinner's friend to come to Him. However, verses 12-13 make it clear that anyone who responds positively to the light of God and comes to Jesus and receives Him into their heart and life will experience the new birth and will enter into eternal life.

John makes it clear in verse 13 that this life comes not by our natural birth (not by blood), not by our own good works (not the will of the flesh), not by the work of others (the will of man), but only through the will of the Father. There is only one entrance into life: Jesus: the Door, John 10:9; the Way, John 14:6. Those who enter into life enter through Jesus.



**Journeying with John**  
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**Tuesday 24 March: Jesus thinks aloud**

**Agenda for Discussion**

We take the section headings in the earlier note for this session, and the Message paraphrases highlighted there.

- **Love one another**
- **Plenty of room**
- **The road, the truth and the life**
- **Ask and you will get**
- **A friend is promised**
- **I am the vine and you are the branches**
- **Rough times ahead**
- **While the godless world throws a party**
- **I've conquered the world.**

**Some Quotations**

**Thomas a Kempis: The Imitation of Christ (Imitatio Christi):** Follow thou me: "I am the way the truth and the life". Without the way, there is no going; without the truth, there is no knowing; without the life, there is no living. I am the way, which thou must follow; the truth, which thou oughtest to trust; the life which thou oughtest hope for. I am the inviolable way; the truth infallible; the life that cannot end. I am the straightest way; the highest truth; the true life, the life blessed, the life uncreated. If thou remain in my way, thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free, and thou shalt lay hold of eternal life.

**Dorothy L Sayers: The Other Six Deadly Sins:** [Tolerance] is the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing and remains alive because there is nothing for which to die.

### Love one another

- *Why have Christians been so ready to use the Gospel to beat each other, rather than using it to love each other?*
- *What are the key characteristics of Jesus love?*
- *What did the onlookers mean when they commented (non-sarcastically!) "See how these Christians love one another"?*

### Plenty of room

- *How do we understand Jesus' statement that there are many guest rooms in his Father's house, and that he has gone to get those rooms ready for us?*

### Ask and you will get

- *Is this "ask and get" statement about prayer absolute; or are their ifs and buts?*
- *Why have Christians insisted on sticking in Mary, saints, and priests and professionals, rather than taking seriously the Jesus promise: talk to me and I'll listen?*

### A Friend is promised

- *How do we picture the Holy Spirit and the role of the Holy Spirit?*
- *Do we need to sort out who does what among the Persons of the Trinity?*

### I am the vine and you are the branches

- *What do you know about looking after vines?*
- *What do you know about the vine in the story of the Jewish People?*
- *Why did Jesus choose this as his final I AM saying?*

## Rough times ahead

- *Why did John emphasise the hostility of “the Jews”?*
- *What did await the first disciples?*
- *Why can't it be easy (with Christians still being persecuted, tortured, killed)?*

## While the godless world throws a party?

- *What does the parallel with child birth mean?*
- *What is Joy?*

## I've conquered the world

- *The disciples struggled with the question: Why did Jesus have to die? What is our explanation?*
- *Is it a glorious thing to “die for your country”, or is this the State conning young men?*
- *Is seeking martyrdom living out the Jesus example or is living our faith more important than dying for it?*

*When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride*

...

*Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

*(Isaac Watts)*

***Footnote: We discussed these issues. Those not able to take part, may like to reflect on the issues themselves. If there is a follow-up booklet to the series, some of the reflections will be included.***

