

Catherine
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JESUS

active in

John's Gospel

StudyNotes

INTRODUCTION to the series...

John & Jesus

Jesus is introduced to us in John's Gospel as the 'Word through whom all things are made'. This creative activity is seen in the person of Jesus who continues to act in this way throughout his ministry. Together, we will look at Jesus in a variety of contexts in John's Gospel and see what he is doing, we will consider why he is acting in that way and think about what this means for us today. I have gathered some recipes together to put alongside the studies - I hope you enjoy making some tasty treats & meals, brought to you with love from each of the contributors.

The guiding texts for the series are below:

Feeding	John 6: 1-21
Teaching	John 7: 37-52
Leading	John 10: 1-13
Resurrecting	John 11: 32-44
Suffering	John 19: 1-19
Travelling	John 12: 12-19

It may be that you have opportunity to talk on the phone with a friend about some of the items in **bold** found in this booklet; or you could join in a zoom Bible-Study or House-Group. I have tried to phrase the things to think about in a way that encourages you to engage with these activities of Jesus as part of your own, personal, devotions. The guiding texts will be expounded during Lent on the EMC YouTube Livestream and on my own channel, [YouTube.com/catherinehuttonUK](https://www.youtube.com/catherinehuttonUK). I will alert you to any bonus materials as they arrive - keep an eye on my website for these updates.

Jesus is still active as the Word in the world. He is always drawing us to God the Father. He is forever encouraging us to see Him as he truly is.

I pray that as we read and learn together, we will catch a picture of Jesus – bringing the work and presence of God close to each one of us, even now, even today.

With love,



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SEA BASS WITH MUSHROOMS, SAGE & CRÈME FRAICHE

A 'Holiday at Home' favourite from Andrew Jennings reminding us of the fish in the feeding the 5000 & also Jesus cooking for his disciples while they were out fishing in John 21.

A simple way of serving a fillet of Sea Bass which brings out the delicate flavour of sea bass and provides it with a delicious sauce to compliment these flavours.

Ingredients:

2 Fillets of sea Bass (about 200g each)

20g of butter

1 small clove of garlic finely chopped

60g of mushrooms finely sliced (eg chestnut mushrooms)

1 teaspoon of chopped sage

3 tablespoons of crème fraiche

3 tablespoons of coarse breadcrumbs

1 tablespoon of parmesan cheese

Method:

Heat oven to 200° C / 400° F / Gas 6

Melt butter in frying pan. Add garlic and mushrooms and stir-fry over a medium to high heat for about 3 minutes (until mushrooms are soft).

Then stir in the sage and the crème fraiche and remove from heat.

Season with salt and pepper.

Mix together the breadcrumbs and the parmesan cheese.

Place fillets of fish, skin side down on foil on a baking sheet, spoon the mushroom mixture over the fish and then sprinkle the breadcrumb/cheese over the fish and the mushroom sauce. Bake in the oven for about 9 minutes until the breadcrumbs are lightly toasted and the fish starts to turn opaque.

Serve with your choice of vegetable (eg. green beans, mangetouts, courgette or even braised fennel) and potatoes (mashed goes well).

Notes:

Fillets of Sea Bream, Plaice or Sole also go well with this recipe. For added flavour include 15g of (previously soaked) dried porcini mushrooms in place of 15g of the mushrooms above.

Study 1 Jesus: Active in **Feeding**

Opening Thoughts

What are your favourite foods? When did they become favourites? Are these foods connected with times of life, places or people? What is your favourite scenario in which to enjoy a meal?

Prayer

Loving God, You are the giver of good things!

We are thankful that you bless us with food that nourishes our body and fuels our brains. We are grateful that, by your provision, we have everything we need – especially the privilege of feasting with you in unity with Jesus Christ & the fellowship of his people. Loving God, may we truly see Jesus & give glory to your Holy Name. Amen

Now Read John 6: 1-21

Please read it from your own Bible.

For Your Consideration

Food is an important subject, whether you are a small boy on the mountainside with Jesus or a hungry CEO looking for a sandwich in town. Whether you are a ‘foodie’ or just like to eat something to keep the wolf from the door, we all like to know that going hungry will not be an unresolvable issue.

Consider the times when you have been hugely thankful that the food arrived. What was going on?

Why was eating then so necessary?

Perhaps it is when we have been up since first light and spending the day outdoors that the keenness of hunger really does bite. Here, Jesus and his disciples have been followed by the large crowd to the ‘hillside’ by Tiberias of Galilee.

Look back at your Bible. Why were people following Jesus? What were they hoping to see? Have a think about who they thought they were following. Note down your thoughts.

In verse 5, Jesus' response to the crowd suggests that he and his disciples have been wrapped up in thinking about other things. The people involved in John's narrative to this point along with Jesus are the 'crowd', the 'disciples' and 'the sick'. In verse 5, the narrative takes on a more personal tone.

Note the names of the individuals mentioned in verses 5-9. Write something specific about each person in the verses and then why you think that they are important to the narrative.

Jesus offers those with him the opportunity to understand that they are in the presence of God's Kingdom. In the Old Testament, to those who were wandering in the wilderness, far from home, God provided Manna from Heaven. Philip, being local to this area of Galilee, has concerns. His response to Jesus is one of earthly terms and numbers. Morris, in his commentary notes that;

Philip's reply stresses the hopelessness of the situation judged from the meagre resources of the little band. 200 denarii's worth of bread would not suffice to give all this crowd a little taste. Philip does not point to a solution, but to an impossibility. P. 343

Jesus, reminding us that the people are looking for a miraculous sign, directs the disciples to remember that 'Jehovah Jireh' - God provides. The poverty of our earthly provisions will be utterly transformed by God's Blessing and by placing them into Jesus' hands.

Consider the times when you have reached the end of your personal resources. Have you approached God for provision?

What are your expectations of God?

What do you note about provision from John 6:1-21?

Most commentators now reject the response to the miraculous sign that 'the crowd were all guilty by the small boy's offering of sprats & barley loaves into revealing their secret stashes of food'. Morris directs us to be reminded of heavenly banqueting, of feasting being a sign of blessing and of the;

Vision of God ... as when Moses and his companions "saw God and they ate and drank". (Exod 24.11; cf also Deut 12.7; 15.20; 27.7; Ezra 6.21; New 8:10; Ezek 44.3). P. 340

Eating together is so much more than having food.

Discuss what the miraculous sign shows the following people:

- A. Philip, Andrew & The Small Boy.
- B. The crowd hoping for a miraculous sign.
- C. The people who were starting to see Jesus for who he is.
- D. The people looking for a way out of oppression by the Romans.
- E. You, in your fellowship group and/or church.

Jesus' miraculous signs reveal who he truly is to the people who are willing to see him. For those who are not, Jesus becomes the object of their misunderstandings and they would force him into being king.

How would you describe the 'Jesus you know' to someone who doesn't know him?

What would that show them about Jesus, God & you?

Pray that you may be fed by Jesus with the good things of God.



A recipe for making **Easter Nests** from Hannah deBourcier,
our Children & Family Ministry Lead at EMC

You could create these in cupcake cases,
or maybe make something larger if you're feeling brave!

Vegan Rice Crispy Cakes

40g of vegan margarine	1 heaped tbsp of caster sugar.
1 heaped tbsp of cocoa	1 heaped tbsp of golden syrup
Packet of rice crispies.	

Decorations, edible and non-edible - check ingredients are vegan!

Melt together margarine, cocoa, golden syrup and sugar on a low heat.
Then stir in plenty of rice crispies!

Shape into nests or place into cases and decorate with festive flair.
We would love to see photos of your creations.

Study 2 Jesus: Active in **Teaching**

Opening Thoughts

Who have your favourite teachers been? These could be from school, college or university - colleagues or mentors - even ministers! What has made their teaching memorable & why do you think they made an impact? *Subject, personality, passion, style, willingness to engage with you, your success in the subject, striking a chord in you, and so forth...*

Prayer

Lord Jesus, open my eyes and my heart now, so that I may receive the teaching and direction that comes from you by the Holy Spirit. May I be transformed in my thinking and attitudes, mirroring your love for the world and your compassion for all people. Teach me always to follow the right paths, so that I might forever live and grow in the knowledge and love of God through you, God's only Son, my Saviour - Teacher of the Way. Amen.

Now Read John 7: 37-52

Please read it from your own Bible.

For Your Consideration

Sometimes, teaching is relentlessly answering questions from those who either don't understand or who have chosen to not understand. We often find Jesus in this role as he responds to the accusations of his opponents. We know that Jesus has been teaching during this "Festival of Tabernacles" as we read through the whole of John 7; looking specifically at verses 14-18; 28-29 and then 37-52.

Look at the specific nature of the teaching Jesus brings.

In our previous study, Jesus has offered food. Now, Jesus addresses the people's thirst. He shifts the focus from the people's bodily needs to their deep, spiritual needs. John Stott describes it this way;

There is a hunger in the human heart which none but Christ can satisfy, a thirst which none but he can quench. P. 38

When we consider the earthly and basic needs of our body for food and drink - we are aware that physically, we are much better at functioning when we are well-hydrated and our bodies are nourished with healthy food. Our brains work better, we are more patient and we are better able to make good decisions. Jesus, in his teaching, takes the perpetual human quest for this nourishment and uses it as the basis of his teaching about spiritual needs.

He directs people towards God.

CK Barrett notes;

What John perceived with far greater clarity than any of his predecessors was that Jesus is the Gospel and that the Gospel is Jesus. P. 70

Look at verses 37-38. Jesus is teaching people about their spiritual longings.

Note down what Jesus says about the festival and the water. What was he really saying?

What difference does it make that this teaching was not in response to Jesus' opponents but simply that; "Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice..." v37

While the people are praying for rain that will provide water for their crops, Jesus teaches them to see the water as the 'living water' (John 4:10; 4:14 & 7:38) and the Holy Spirit. (7:39). **What will this mean for people who know that they function better when they have their thirst satisfied by 'rivers of water flowing from within them' [sic] in verse 38?**

Look up Isaiah 58:11 along with the references above and consider how Jesus is linking his promise with those previously made in the scriptures.

Note the times when you have felt ‘refreshed’ by God. How did you know it was God? What difference did/does it make that Jesus satisfies your thirst?

Jesus teaches the Gospel, which is the truth of God’s love and presence with all people. Jesus’ teaching points people towards the salvation that God brings both in and through the person of Jesus Christ. (Jesus is the bread of heaven, the source of nourishment; Jesus is the living water). Jesus’ teaching shows the path to the Salvation that He brings. Throughout John’s Gospel, this teaching is often accompanied by ‘miraculous signs’ which point to the provider of the sign being also the provider of the ultimate Salvation.

What has Jesus taught you about himself in the past few days, weeks or months?

Some people see Jesus for who he is and others still recognise something special or appealing in him, but not that he is the Christ. This is still the case today.

What would you tell a friend is the single most important thing that you have learnt about Jesus’ love?

As John writes his Gospel, he is clear that we should see the divinity of Jesus in his union with the Father as an important incarnational attribute. As Jesus teaches about the Holy Spirit which flows from Jesus himself in union with the Father, we see the Trinitarian unity of God. God’s very self is bringing Salvation to the world - with life-giving power.

Pray that Jesus will teach your spirit the truth of who he is and that you might know the Gospel as we find it in him.

Pray for opportunities to invite people to be taught by Jesus, to be inspired by Him and to discover the joy of Salvation.

Study 3 Jesus: Active in **Leading**

Opening Thoughts

Are you happiest being a follower or a leader?

Remember times when you experienced being in one of these positions and enjoyed it! What was good?

Prayer

Loving Jesus, you are 'God with us', you are our Way.

Help us to look to you to discover the right paths on which to walk; to listen to you for the right words with which to speak.

Turn our eyes towards you and let us see that to live the life you call us to will be the very best life. Forgive us our foolishness in neglecting your goodness, your guidance, your Word. Grant us the joy of life, forever with you, in all its fulness to the Glory of God. Amen.

Now Read John 10:1-15

Please read it from your own Bible.

For Your Consideration

Jesus' leadership is one which is authentic and powerful. His voice is compelling and his leadership is life-giving, even at the expense of his own life.

Whose leadership has made a strong impression on you? Is it leadership you admire (why?), or is it leadership that scares you? Note down some of your thinking.

We can look at Jesus as being the Teacher and also the Text-Book. He teaches the Way, preaches the Gospel and also is the Way and is the Gospel.

Consider what the important attributes of leadership are. Put them in order of importance. Why have you picked these ones?

Morris makes an interesting suggestion to the notion that the Good Shepherd is a pastoral, protective and benign mode of leadership;

Nowadays we think of the shepherd in terms of tender care and concern for the flock, thoughts which are legitimate for the ancient world as well as the modern. But we should not overlook the fact that for men [sic] of biblical times other associations were aroused by the term. The shepherd was an autocrat over his flock, and passages are not wanting where the shepherd imagery is used to emphasise the thought of sovereignty. Jesus is thus set forth in this allegory as the true Ruler of his people in contrast with all the false prophets. P. 498

Looking at John 10: 7-15, note down the ways that Jesus describes his method of leadership. Try to make them make sense in terms that aren't 'gates', 'sheep', 'wolf' and so on.

1. *Gate for the sheep - Jesus is the way by which people enter kingdom of God*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What sort of leadership is Jesus promoting?

How do you respond to his leadership?

Jesus' leadership is one which completely embodies his Messiahship. The passage is full of saving imagery. **Underline in your own Bible, the words of hope that Jesus offers as leader of the people of God.**

Jesus makes a big deal about the power and authority of the right voice in this passage. **When has hearing the right person say the 'right words' really mattered to you?**

Why are Jesus' words and actions of more worth than 'the hired hands' v12, or the 'thieves and robbers' of v8?

Who might these people have been?

Jesus' importance as Leader is of sovereign proportions. Israel has lacked a true Ruler who values and cares for the people with proper authority and diligence.

**What are the main characteristics of Jesus' leadership?
Is he a leader you choose to follow?**

Imagine telling someone who doesn't know Jesus why you follow him and what his leadership is like. How would you describe Jesus?

**How would you encourage them to see what he is like?
Pray for the opportunity to share your understandings with someone who doesn't yet know Jesus.**



Easter Biscuits

This recipe was used for many years by the Monday Brownies, who would take the biscuits to the residents of Swail House in Ashley Road at Easter. The biscuits were also a great favourite with the (then) Venture Scouts on their Easter expeditions.

12 oz (300g) plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon mixed spice
6 oz (150g) margarine
6oz (150g) caster sugar
4oz (100g) currants
1 egg

Sieve the dry ingredients
Rub in the margarine
Stir in the sugar and currants
Add egg

Roll out about ½ cm thick and cut out with a biscuit cutter
Cook at gas mark 5 (190° C/375° F) for 15 - 20 mins
Makes about 20 biscuits

Christine Riley

Study 4 Jesus: Active in **Resurrecting**

Opening Thoughts

In my 2nd year as a Minister, Harold had a 'bit of a funny turn' & died during morning service on Easter Day. The medics we had in the congregation confirmed it. I shifted the service to the schoolroom, the ambulance came - and of course, not knowing he had died, I led the congregation in praying that Harold would be healed. Despite having been dead for a while, I brought Harold home from hospital that Easter afternoon - he had completely recovered from the morning's drama.

What stories do you have of instances of God doing unexpected and amazing things in response to prayer?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we are in awe at the power of your Word. We thank you that you are The Resurrection & the Life. We praise you for the miracles and wonders that you do. We ask that you would teach us how to pray, how to ask you for what we need - and how to understand when you answer us with a different picture to the one in our mind. Reveal the wisdom of God to me as you hear my prayers, that I may better share the huge depths of your love with the world around me. For the Glory of our Father in Heaven. Amen.

Now Read John 11: 32-44

Please read it from your own Bible.

For Your Consideration

In verse 25, Jesus declares to Martha;

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, even though they die will live and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Turn in your Bible to John 5:21.

Note how Jesus is making these assertions real in the description of Mary, Martha & the disciples gathered at Lazarus' tomb.

We know that Jesus loves his friends - and that the Twelve have been concerned that Jesus did not set off sooner to pray with Lazarus.

The moment that Jesus did choose to travel was when there was greatest risk to Jesus' own person. There was deliberate intent to capture him, and Bethany's proximity to Jerusalem made that all the more likely. Barrett notes that;

Jesus' command to take the stone away which seals the grave causes surprise. He prays, thereby emphasising his dependence on the Father and bids the dead man come forth. Still in the trappings of death, Lazarus comes out alive. In the last miracle the last enemy is overthrown... p 388

Look closely at the last two sentences above. What is Barrett asking us to note?

Nobody expected Jesus to bring about resurrection for Lazarus. They knew that Jesus could heal - but the four days that Lazarus had been dead meant that they were now past all hope for Lazarus' healing & physical restoration to his sisters.

Do we, as people of faith, limit Jesus' power by our own expectations or experience? How and why might this be?

Consider how prayer and resurrection are linked through Jesus. Note down your thinking.

Jesus, in approaching Bethany in Judea, has chosen to walk towards his own death.

In his prayer, Jesus directs the focus of the people to his Father from whom he has come and from whom is life. Life may be through the Son, but is given by the Father. Even after this mighty act of resurrection for Lazarus, the faithful are still unable to comprehend that Jesus' own resurrection is going to come.

The activity of Jesus in John's Gospel is about stirring up belief in people. Everyone would see the power of God in the resurrection of Lazarus, but only those who believed in Jesus would see the Father's glory being revealed.

Talk about places where you see God in action, where other people may see it as 'just life' or 'that's science' etc.

Again, it is the Word of Jesus that causes Gospel activity in this passage. Jesus' word makes a difference in the world. The word of God causes death to give way to life.

How might you share the good news of the Gospel with a friend or neighbour?

Jesus' first act of love towards Lazarus' family was in showing up and being present with them. The miracle was a foretaste of 'the miracle' that would come.

Why do you think the words 'I am the Resurrection and the Life' are read at funeral services? What hope can they bring?

Pray for your friends and neighbours who are grieving. Think about how you might show something of God's love to them this week.



Bread by Heather Blakeburn

I first started making bread with my Brownies when I used to make the harvest sheaf. I had to make it down at the church as my oven at home wasn't big enough.

The Brownies enjoyed it so much that we started making it at Easter as well, usually making rolls which we would then pack up as an Easter gift.

450g/1lb strong white flour

1tsp salt

7g/¼ oz dried yeast (about half a sachet if you've bought sachets)

1tbsp vegetable oil plus 1 tsp for greasing (if making a loaf and not rolls)

300ml/10 fl oz warm water (not hot)

1. Mix flour, salt and yeast together then add oil and water and mix to form a dough (lovely and messy!!!).

2. Turn onto floured board and knead well by hand for about 6 mins or 4-5 mins in mixer with dough hook.

The dough should look smooth and feel elastic.

3. Return dough to bowl, cover and leave in warm place to prove for about 1hour. It should have doubled in size.

4. Knead again for 30 seconds until smooth (known as knocking back).

5. Make into whatever shape you want – loaf or rolls, remembering that it will rise again. Leave in warm place again for 30 mins.

6. Cook in oven 220°C/425°F/ gas mark 7, for about 25/30 mins if it's a loaf (rolls won't take as long). The loaf or rolls should sound hollow when tapped on the bottom. Cool on a cooling rack.

7. Enjoy!

Study 5 Jesus: Active in **Suffering**

Opening Thoughts

'Suffering' has settled into the English language in a typically downplayed way - 'I suffered through an entire football match' or 'I suffer from hay fever', etc. In some ways, we have adopted it with affection. How many different types of ways can 'suffer' or 'suffering' be used? Note down your observations.

Prayer

Loving Jesus, I don't like suffering, or that people I love suffer and struggle, or that injustice throughout the world leads to suffering through lack of basic means for life & health. Forgive my part in this suffering. At home & locally, help me be an agent for healing.

In the world, may I be an ambassador for justice.

Loving Jesus, I don't like that you suffered & died, but I am thankful that you chose to go through it all; deliberately to bring us all into right relationship with Father God. Amen

Now Read John 19:1-19

Please read it from your own Bible.

For Your Consideration

Over the years, there has been some discussion as to whether God compels Jesus to suffer and die, in a kind of bullying and abusive manner. To go down this route would entirely change the character of God as it is revealed to us through scripture and tradition. God is good, and the perfect characteristics that ARE God will remain after all else passes away 1 Corinthians 13:13; *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

It is in this section that we see Jesus' commitment to being 'fully human' and sharing in the worst of human life, through betrayal, false arrest, torture and a sham trial culminating in the humiliation of Jesus' crucifixion and death. The suffering of Jesus in this way is

sometimes termed as his Passion - and indeed this reading is for Passion Sunday, the Sunday before Palm Sunday.

Consider the choices you have made that have been difficult for you to deal with. What led you to make the decisions?

Don't dwell on anything too painful - if this question is too hard to think on - then note down times you've made a decision that resulted in your suffering - like running a marathon or having to sit through endless meetings that bored you rigid!

The choices we make have consequences. Some of these consequences are ones we could well do without! Others may be wonderful, if hard-won. To have real choice means that we have free-will. Selwyn Hughes writes about Jesus in this way;

The will, it is believed by almost all theologians, is the citadel against which all the forces of temptation are directed. And because our Lord had unclouded intelligence and undivided affection, His will was unswerving when it came to obeying the commands of God. In John 8:29, He said,

The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.

Clearly Christ had a will of His own because He drew a distinction between His will and His Father's will. Our Lord was perfect in the way He willed. P. 167.

Why do you think that Jesus chose to 'live our life, bear our griefs and die our death upon the Cross'? Methodist Worship Book, P. 454

What have been the consequences of Jesus' suffering and death for you, your community, the whole world? *This is a big one that you might need to come back to a few times! Make your notes below...*

The suffering of Jesus is part of the 'Saving Love of God'. John Stott suggests that the Gospel of John;

Reveals its height, for [John] depicts the Word made flesh who looks up to the heights from which he came and to which he intends to raise us. P. 40

Jesus' suffering is purposeful and is entered into deliberately. Because Jesus suffers in this way, he opens the heights of heaven to 'us'. **Why is this good news? Why does this activity of Jesus' suffering matter particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic?**

The horror of the crucifixion is not dwelt on in John's Gospel, and according to Morris (P. 805); "*None of the Gospels does this. The Evangelists record the fact and let it go at that. The death of Jesus for [people] was their concern. They make no attempt to play on the heartstrings of their readers.*"

The crucifixion was never intended to be a spectacle, or for us to become fascinated by the details of the brutality and pity of Jesus' death and passion. Look at the simplicity of verse 18. There is a clinical, reporting of the facts that offers little in the way of editorial comment in the verses around Jesus' suffering and death.

Look at the words of Cecil Frances Alexander below;

*We may not know, we cannot tell what pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there.*

*There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate of Heaven and let us in. (H&P 178)*

Maybe this does play on your heartstrings? It is certainly hard to read and believe without witnessing the pain of Jesus' suffering. I wonder if Morris was alerting us to the fact that Jesus suffered is sufficient to stir our hearts towards belief. What do you think?

Pray for those who are suffering due to sickness and ill-health. Pray for those whom suffering is part of their everyday— whether physically or emotionally.

Pray that the activity Jesus' suffering might be a real sign of his love for those who are suffering and struggling through life.

Now, find something lovely to do - make some bread or biscuits - because Jesus never leaves his people in a state of despondency.

Study 6 Jesus: Active in Travelling

Opening Thoughts

Our travels have been 'somewhat curtailed' due to the Pandemic and the various 'tiers' and 'lockdowns'. Are you planning journeys for 'when this is all over'? Are you happy where you are? Consider your favourite times of travel - if they were travels with a friend, & if you are able to, why not give them a call and share memories?

Prayer

Loving God, you travelled with your people, keeping your covenant promise that you would be with them wherever they went. As a pillar of fire or pillar of cloud, you shared the journey with your people in the wilderness. You travel with us on roads that are meaningful and important as people celebrate.

You travel with us on the difficult roads that lead to hard destinations or unexpected places.

Thank you that we are never alone. Thank you that you are with us always. Thank you that you are travelling with us now. Amen.

Now Read John 12:12-19

Please read it from your own Bible.

For Your Consideration

The Palm Sunday Reading is one which is full of activity. Each activity is weighty with meaning and some have a prophetic dimension. Jesus' travelling into Jerusalem is more than a casual trip into town...

Look at the following phrases that show activity and spend a while dwelling on the movement and importance of the activity. Make a few notes.

Verse 12: The great crowd heard Jesus was on his way.

Verse 13: They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!"

Verse 14: Jesus found a young colt and sat on it...

Verse 16: At first his disciples didn't understand all this...

Verse 17: The crowd continued to spread the word.

Verse 18: Many people believed because of Lazarus' resurrection...

Verse 19: The Pharisees become anxious about Jesus' influence.

There is a lot of activity in the account of Jesus travelling to Jerusalem. Many people are repositioning themselves in readiness for the business of Holy Week. Jesus' first miracle is at the Wedding in Cana in John 2:4. Jesus is not ready to act at this time which we see as he says to his mother; "My hour has not yet come". Having travelled through his earthly ministry, showing signs of God's Kingdom, in 12:23, just after our scripture selection for this study, Jesus declares; "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified". It will be in the glorification of Jesus that the significance of many of Jesus' actions will be seen and known for what they truly are rather than what they may have appeared to be. Jesus is not prophet/miracle-worker - he is Messiah/King. Barrett points out that;

The glorification of Jesus was the necessary condition of their understanding –another main theme of the gospel. P 416

How is knowing the right timing important as we too act for God's good purposes?

What things are you waiting for 'the right time' to engage with?

Travelling means changing location, or repositioning ourselves in a new environment for a while. Jesus locates himself in Jerusalem, the city of Worship and pilgrimage as he makes himself available for the next phase of his ministry. Those who had heard of Jesus' ministry now came to see him for themselves. It is the people who declare Jesus as King and Messiah – although they still have not grasped the full nature of this and will not do so until the Resurrection.

Jesus is travelling towards the time when 'his hour comes'. He must be in the right place at the right time. His willingness to stay close to God

and to understand God's perfect will is part of Jesus' gift to the world.

Look carefully at John 17:1 in your Bible.

In the activity of Jesus crucifixion, death and resurrection, God will glorify Jesus. All earthly things will be gone and the divine will completely shine in Jesus. This is Jesus' glorification. As ever, The Son points to Father God as the location of Glory and points the people to God, offering the hope of glorification as even we make our way to God through Jesus, his Son.

What has your journey of faith looked like?

Note the instances or periods where you have felt

A. Closest to God

B. Most useful as a witness to Jesus' saving love

What are the most important aspects of your faith at this time?

For Example: Worship, fellowship, prayer, Bible-Study, theological study, service, helping others, communion, meeting together, other...

Why do you think these things are so important at the moment?

John Stott encourages us as he observes that;

John even assembles three verbs which characterize God's people: they believe in Christ; they love one-another and they obey his commands. (1 John 3:23-24) p.40

Pray for your group, your friends at church and your other Christian friends. Ask that Jesus would bless them with a greater knowledge of God through him.

How can you meaningfully show your local community how God loves them in the next few months? *This may be easier in conversation with friends from Church.*

What would you like to support your church in doing to extend the saving love of Jesus to people who don't yet know him? What could this look like? Why do you think your heart is geared towards this missional activity?



Roast Lamb - for Easter Day or Holy Week

Ann Arthur

A number of years ago, one Maundy Thursday evening, a special Passover meal was prepared for about 40 participants and an invited guest came to explain the meaning and significance of this Jewish festival meal. The gentleman was a Messianic Jew, that is a person who is born and brought up in the Jewish religion but had recognised Jesus as the Messiah prophesied in their scriptures, and accepted him into his life as his Saviour. He was able to explain how all the ingredients and symbols of this Passover meal pointed to Christ.

The tasty portion of lamb we had that evening was similar to this recipe.

You will need:

Large leg of Lamb, garlic cloves, lemon (rind and juice) 1 onion, pack of mushrooms, $\frac{3}{4}$ pint of stock.

Directions:

Pierce fat and insert small slivers of garlic

Grate whole lemon and rub over lamb

Chop onion and mushrooms and tip into the meat tray around lamb

Squeeze the lemon and pour over lamb

Add stock

Cover lamb with foil and cook in the oven for just over three hours.

Oven at gas 4 or 180°C for 15 minutes,

then reduce to gas 2.5 or 160°C for two hours,

then back up to gas 4/180°C for final hour.

Take out of tray to rest and add another half pint of stock to tray.

Thicken as needed.

Eat and Enjoy!

Serve with all the trimmings for traditional celebratory roast dinner.

This editor recommends a side of Yorkshire puddings

and plenty of gravy!!

Simnel Cake adapted by Liz Frost

8oz / 200g plain flour	3 medium egg	2 oz / 50g glace cherries
1 tsp baking powder	2 tbsp milk	(quartered)
1 tsp ground cinnamon	4oz / 100g raisins	Grated rind 1 orange
¼ tsp ground nutmeg	4 oz / 100g sultanas	1 pack ready prepared
6oz / 150g butter /	6 oz / 150g currants	marzipan
margarine	2 oz / 50g chopped mixed	A little apricot jam or
6oz / 150g soft dark brown	peel	apple jelly
sugar		1 pack chocolate mini eggs

Grease and line a 7” / 18 cm deep round cake tin.

Sift together the dry ingredients.

Cream the butter / margarine with the sugar until light and fluffy.

Beat the eggs into the creamed mixture, one at a time, adding a spoonful of the flour mixture with the second and third eggs.

Fold in about half of the remaining flour with 1 tbsp of milk, followed by the remaining flour and milk.

Mix the dried fruit, peel, cherries and orange rind together, then stir them into the mixture to combine.

Put about half of the cake mix into the prepared tin and smooth it.

Take half the marzipan and form it into a flatish round so that it is just smaller than the tin, and put it on top of the

cake mixture. Add the rest of the cake mix and smooth it.

Bake in oven 160°C, Gas Mark 3 for approx. 2 hours.

Cool in the tin for 10 mins then turn out onto a wire rack to cool, removing the lining paper with care.

When cold roll out the remaining marzipan and form a 7” round. Brush the top of the cake with warmed jam / jelly and put the marzipan topping on. Arrange the mini eggs on the top of the cake, securing with a drop of icing.

If there is any marzipan left over (that you haven’t eaten!), you can use it to add further decorations to the top of the cake.

Bibliography

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