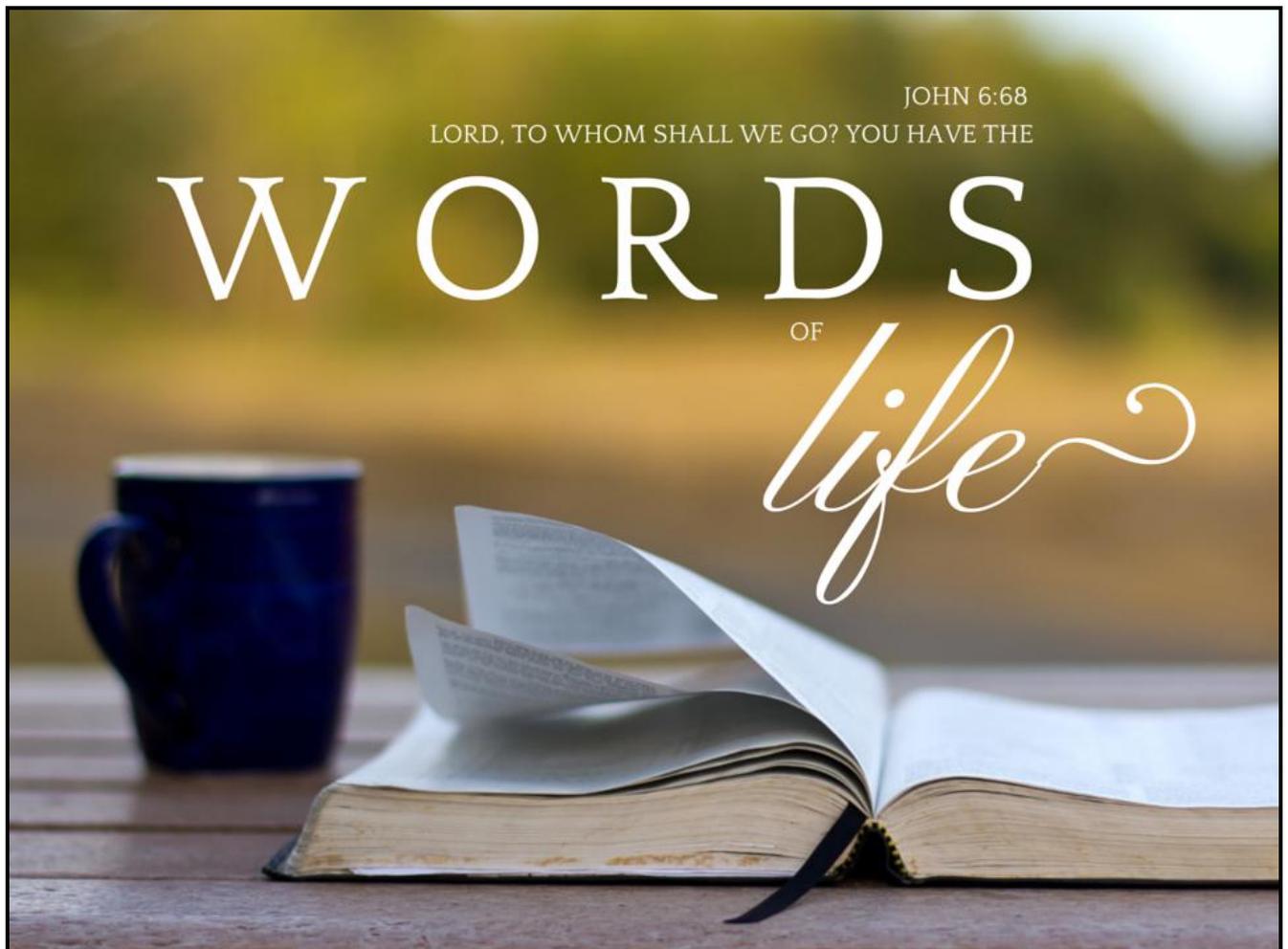




Beverly Hills Kingsgrove
Anglican Church



"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." John 11:25-26

NOTES

BIBLE STUDIES FOR JOHN 1-11**PURPOSE OF GROWTH GROUP SERIES**

The current sermon and Growth Group series we will be studying is the book of John. The purpose of these Bible studies is to *follow* the sermon series and therefore allow members of our congregations to further investigate, reflect on and apply what they have heard in the Bible talk the previous Sunday. Given church members will have heard the Bible passage/s explained on Sunday, the studies are deliberately designed to have more application style questions. However, the study will still require group members to engage with the passage in order to draw out the main ideas.

The studies are designed to *help* small group leaders and do not take away from the need for leaders to prepare properly. Leaders will still need to read and reflect on the passage and if necessary engage with a commentary. Growth Group leaders are encouraged to adapt the study to suit the circumstances of their own group or the Bible talk.

We pray you enjoy learning from and applying God's Word so that '*you may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*' (Ephesians 4:12-13)

RECOMMENDED READING

John's Gospel, St Helen's Bishopsgate, <http://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/bible-study-resources>

Read Mark Learn: John, St Helen's Bishopsgate (as above in paper back)

The Shepherd King, Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today

New Bible Dictionary, Inter-varsity Press

Leading better Bible studies, R & K Morris, Aquila Press

Growth groups, Colin Marshall, Matthias Media

All available at www.koorong.com.au

SERIES BREAK UP

Week 1	John 1:1-18	Jesus the Word
Week 2	John 1:19-34	Jesus the Son
Week 3	John 1:35-51	Jesus the Lamb of God
Week 4	John 2:1-11	Jesus the Messiah
Week 5	John 2:12-25	Jesus the Temple
Week 6	John 3:1-21	Jesus the Saviour

We will work through John 3:22-5:47 later in term 4

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

John states his aim for writing his gospel for us in chapter 20:31 – *“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”*

All that John has written has been recorded with the purpose of convincing his reader of the identity of the Christ and of the necessity of a right sort of response in order to have life. Therefore, as we read John’s gospel it is important to keep asking two main questions:

First, how does this passage show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the life-giver?

Secondly, what does it mean to believe in Him?

As stated in 20:31, John deliberately selects a number of key ‘signs’ or ‘miracles’. The signs are significant events - each one has a teaching point or meaning and the significance of the sign is brought out by Jesus in the teaching that comes either after or just before the sign. As our series will begin at chapter 11, the only signs we will cover are the respective resurrections of Lazarus (Ch 11) and Jesus (Ch 20). However, it is important that we understand that John has been seeking to establish Jesus identity as ‘the Christ, the Son of God’ throughout Ch 1-11 through the disclosure these selected signs.

THEMES***Belief***

Faith is the primary characteristic of God’s people. Faith is not just about gaining entry into eternal life, but is the ongoing mark of the life of the Christian.

Apart from the incarnation & resurrection, John only recounts 8 miracles (he calls them signs) but he knows of many more (20:30). Jesus miracles are performed in accordance with God’s will (5:35; 10:32), they are God’s works as well as Jesus (9:3; 10:37) and they bear witness to him (10:25).

The word ‘signs’ suggests they are pointing to something. Just as God pointed to his character via the ‘signs & wonders’ in the Old Testament, Jesus through the signs reveals God’s glory (11:40) & his own (2:11; 11:4). As well as revealing the glory of Jesus and the Father, the signs act as a catalyst of faith or unbelief.

The occurrence of the word ‘sign’ is confined to Ch 1-12 with the exception of 20:30. From 13:1ff the signs give way to reality. The sign is a material action pointing towards a spiritual reality. That is, the signs point towards The Sign (the cross) and what will be accomplished there. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, sign and reality coincide

Salvation and Life

John wrote that his readers might believe and thereby have life. This is a big concept in the gospel. John makes it clear that God is the creator and source of life (5:26; 5:21). All life comes from Him, but He alone has it eternally (1:1). For us however, eternal life is knowing God (17:3) and comes to those who believe in the Son he has sent (1:12; 3:16). Because Jesus brings us life is *“the bread of life”* (6:35) and the one of gives *“living water”* (7:38)

While John does refer to resurrection life (11:25) his primary focus is not just the future but a present reality. This is because the believer knows Jesus who makes known the Father (14:8ff). Life is a present experience now because in Christ we *“have life to the full”* (10:10)

However, Jesus is more than the revealer of salvation – he **is** the saviour for he is (i) The lamb of God (1:29) – all lambs in the OT were sacrificial; the context of Jesus death during Passover suggests the Passover lamb; (ii) he is the Good Shepherd (10:11) who lays down his life for his sheep; (iii) he is described as a grain of wheat (12:20-36) that must die for the world wide mission to the Gentiles to happen; (iv) Caiaphas ironically prophesies that *“It’s better for one man to die than the whole people”* (11:50); and (v) Jesus says *“The son of man lifted up”* (3:14) thereby predicting his death on the cross.

Revelation and Truth

In John 1:1-18 Jesus is ‘the Word’ who reveals God to the world as he comes as God in flesh. But not only is Jesus the Word of God, he also speaks the word of God as says only what the Father tells him to say (12:50; 14:10). Because Jesus is from the Father and says only what the Father tells him, then what Jesus says is the truth. 26 times Jesus says “I tell you the truth” before explaining something about himself, his Father or the Kingdom of God. It’s for these reasons that Jesus can even call himself *“the way, the truth and the life”* (14:6). In summary, Jesus is both the medium and the message; he brings the message and is the message.

Christology (Jesus)

John uses various titles to describe Jesus, especially in 1:19-50. These include Christ, The Prophet, Elijah, Lamb of God, Rabbi, King of Israel, Son of God, Son of Man all of which help us to understand the work and person of Jesus.

John mostly uses the title Christ (Greek form of the Hebrew word – Messiah) which means ‘Anointed One’. In the Old Testament kings and prophets were anointed. The title Messiah came to represent God’s future king who would rescue and restore the kingdom of God. The title is not used by Jesus himself but of others in debating his identity or confessing faith in him. John redefines the Jews understanding of the Messiah as the one who brings about the new wine, new temple, new birth etc.

MISSION THINKING

6. Spend some time revisiting your growth group's mission activity.
 - a. Have you developed / agreed on what mission activity you want to do as a group?
 - b. Are there things that need following up from last term?
 - c. Are there things you need to plan for / put in place for term 2?
 - d. Try and work out what might be the 'next step/s' for those who connect with through your mission activity

7. Spend some time praying for your groups mission activity
 - a. Give thanks for progress / opportunities so far
 - b. Pray for the people you are trying to reach through your mission activity
 - c. Pray for good conversations and connections with people through your mission activity
 - d. Pray that God would help move your connections to the 'next step' (see above).

JESUS THE SON

John 1:19-34

Read John 1:19-34

1. What do we see from these verses is the mission of John the Baptist?
2. What do we learn from John the Baptist about Jesus mission? (v29, 33).¹
3. Look up 2 Sam 7:11b-16 and Isaiah 9:6–7. How do these verses help us understand the significance of John's claim that Jesus is 'the Son of God'?

Application

4. How do these verses give you confidence / encouragement in who Jesus is and what he came 'in the flesh' to do?
5. While it is a good thing for Christians to be baptised with water, why is it so much more necessary that a person is baptised with the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying about the lessons learnt, encouragements and challenges from this passage.

¹ Refer to Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Ezekiel 36:25-27 to understand the significance of Jesus baptising with the Holy Spirit

MISSION THINKING

6. Spend some time in two's or three's sharing what you have been reading in the Bible lately
 - a. Share something you've learnt or been reminded of about God
 - b. Share something that's God's word has challenged you

7. Spend some time praying for one another

JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD**John 1:35-51****Read John 1:35-51**

1. Split into two groups - one group review Exodus 12:1-20 and the other Isaiah 53:1-12. Share with broader group what these passages have to say about the function or imagery of the lamb? With these Old Testament passages in mind, what is John implying when he declares that Jesus is 'the lamb of God'?
2. What exciting activity do we see happening once people (the disciples) starting understanding who Jesus is and what he's come to do?

Application

3. What's your response to the fact Jesus – who is God in the flesh (1:1, 14), light of the world (4-8), Son of God (34, 49), Christ (41); King of Israel (49) – is also the lamb of God?
4. How are the responses by the disciples both an encouragement and a challenge for you?
5. What was motivating the disciples response? Should our motive be the same? Why / why not?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying about the lessons learnt, encouragements and challenges from this passage.

MISSION THINKING

6. Last term we started encouraging one another in our personal mission to our friends as we 'scatter' out and away from church each week.
 - a. Write down (re-write) those friends or contacts you have that you would like to mission to on page 19
 - b. Share with the person next to you how your personal mission to your friends is going (points of encouragement, challenges, points for prayer)
 - c. Spends some time praying for those on your list
 - i. Thank God for your friend /s and the relationship you have with them
 - ii. Ask God to work in them by his Spirit to soften their hearts to the gospel
 - iii. Ask God to give you opportunities to connect and share with them
 - iv. Ask God to give you wisdom and boldness as you connect and share with your friends

7. If there is time, share any encouraging stories with the larger group of how God is answering your prayers in your personal mission.

NOTE: not every encounter with your friends has to include you sharing the gospel with them. It may be that just catching up with your friend, showing them some love or hospitality is what's best at the moment.

The important thing is we are bringing our friends and their eternal future regularly before God in prayer as he is the one who works by his Spirit to open people's hearts and minds to the truth about Jesus.

JESUS THE MESSIAH

John 2:1-11

Read John 2:1-11

1. In John's gospel, John records a number of 'signs' that Jesus did that are meant to point us who he is and what he has come to do. In v11, John tells us that Jesus turning water into wine is his '*the first of his miraculous signs.*'. What does this sign tell us about Jesus and what he has come to do? (Hint: refer to Isaiah 25:6-9 and Amos 9:13-15). How do the details of v6-10 help to make this point?
2. In v4 Jesus tells his mother that his '*time (or hour) has not yet come*'? What is the 'time' Jesus is referring to? (Hint: refer 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). What clue does that give us about how and when the 'messianic kingdom' (Kingdom of God) will coming into being?
3. What was the purpose or intended effect of Jesus performing this miraculous sign?

Application

4. How does this miraculous sign help strengthen your faith in Jesus?
5. How does the miraculous sign and what it symbolised encourage you as a Christian?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying about the lessons learnt, encouragements and challenges from this passage.

MISSION THINKING

6. Spend some time getting an update from your link missionary. Break into two or three groups and spends some time praying for them. Pray for
 - a. Their ministry
 - i. Opportunities
 - ii. Points the thank God for
 - iii. Points to petition God for
 - b. Their persona, spiritual and financial needs

7. If you have time, why not write a quick email to your link missionary to let them know you prayed for them and giving them an update about your group and church.

JESUS THE TEMPLE

John 2:12-25

Read John 2:12-25

1. Based on your understanding of the temple from the Old Testament, how was the temple meant to fulfil the following purposes?
 - a. The presence of God among his people
 - b. Atonement for sin
 - c. The inaccessibility of the people to God
 - d. Place for learning about God

2. The Old Testament prophets were looking forward to the day that God's Messiah would come and clear and cleanse his temple (Malachi 3:1-5). How was Jesus judgment on the all in the temple area indicate that the temple was no longer functioning as it was intended?

3. In v19-21 Jesus (and John) tell us that as the Messiah HE will be the new temple. How does Jesus fulfil the functions a, b & d listed in Q1 above?²

Application

4. What three responses do we see to Jesus in these verses? How are they typical of responses we see today to Jesus?

5. If Jesus came into our church today, would there be any practices or attitudes that he would condemn that we might need to repent of?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying about the lessons learnt, encouragements and challenges from this passage.

² Note: this is the first reference in John's gospel to Jesus resurrection (v19-22)

MISSION THINKING

6. Our church and our various ministries are meant to be gatherings where Jesus Lordship and grace and declared and rejoiced in. Sometimes we can lose focus on that because of our traditions, our sinfulness, our preferences or pressure from the world around us to conform to it's way of thinking

Spend some time praying for the ministries that happen across our church – that they will be gatherings where the grace of God to us in Jesus remains at the centre of all we do and proclaim.

These include:

- 8:15, 10am, Cross Connect, Church@thepeak and Beauty Point congregations
- Growth groups
- Kids church
- Youth group
- Super Seniors
- Playtime
- English for Life
- Women's ministry
- Christianity Explored

Pray for any events or activities that you know of that are about to happen or being planned by either by your group, other groups or for the whole church

JESUS THE SAVIOUR**John 3:1-21****Read John 3:1-21**

1. So far in John has been outlining who Jesus is (the Christ, the Son of God) and what he has come to do (usher in the Messianic Age / Kingdom of God). But as he hasn't explained how a person enters into the Kingdom of God. What things do we learn in these verses as to how this is made possible?
2. How is Jesus interaction with Nicodemus in these verses an example of what John told us in 1:10-12?
3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in a person's salvation? (Refer Ezekiel 36:25-27)

Application

4. At what points do we see God's grace on display in these verses?
5. Some people think they are born neutral in their attitude towards God and then choose to either reject or accept him. How do these verses refute that way of thinking? How is this humbling for the believer and challenging for the un-believer?
6. How do these verses clarify for us what it means 'to believe'?

PRAYER

Spend some time praying about the lessons learnt, encouragements and challenges from this passage.

MISSION THINKING

7. Break into two's or three's and spend some time praying for one another. You might like to share:
- a. Something you are thankful to God for
 - b. Something you would like God's help in

Feel free to pray for much more than this.

GROWTH GROUP PRAYERS POINTS

GROWTH GROUP & CHURCH MISSION

OPPORTUNITIES AND PRAYER POINTS

LINK MISSIONARY

Our growth group link missionary is _____

PRAYER POINTS

PERSONAL MISSION

PEOPLE I AM PRAYING FOR

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

NOTES