



Preparing Disciples

John 13:1-15:17

+ ST MATTHEW'S

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Introduction

The Gospel of John was written "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). This gospel was probably written around 80 AD in Ephesus. While the author is not explicitly mentioned, they do refer to themselves as the disciple whom Jesus loved. They first cryptically insert themselves into the gospel in John 13:23 during the Last Supper. By a process of elimination and church tradition, it is believed that the gospel was written by the apostle John, son of Zebedee. He was part of the inner three disciples of Jesus who saw the transfiguration, visited the empty tomb on the first Easter morning, and with Peter healed the crippled man near the temple (Acts 3:1-10). He may have been the youngest of all the disciples.

John 13:1 sets the scene for all that follows in the rest of the Gospels, stating that "Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave the world and go to the Father." Jesus's hour is a key idea in the Gospel of John, for that is when he will be glorified (John 12:23, 17:1). This concept of "the hour" in John's Gospel refers to Jesus' death, resurrection and glorification.

Chapters 13 to 17 are known as the Farewell Discourse. In this section, Jesus is preparing his disciples for all that is to come so that they will believe (John 13:19, 14:29), as he knows he is going to be betrayed and then go to the Father. Overall, Jesus wants to demonstrate, teach, instruct, warn, and comfort his disciples in the way of love.

In our five-week series, we will look at the first half of this discourse. Disciples are to love God and others as modelled by Jesus. Obedience to God is loving him, and we see this demonstrated in how Jesus loves the Father by obeying him. Jesus showed humble leadership towards his disciples, and they are to do the same to others. While Jesus is going away to prepare a place for them to dwell, his followers will not be abandoned, for God will dwell in his followers.

As we start our year, there is no better person for us to set our eyes on than Jesus. Over the next few weeks, may we be challenged and comforted by seeing what Jesus does and what he teaches, so that we can more and more love God and others.

About these studies

At St. Matts, we want everyone to feel confident that they can read, understand, and apply God's word for themselves without the use of external tools like commentaries, devotions, and even study booklets. This is one of the reasons we have introduced SOAP as a model for daily Bible reading.

In our Life Groups, we follow a similar method to help equip everyone in the group to read, understand, and apply God's word for themselves. In this booklet, you will see the SOAP headings of Scripture, Observations, Application, and Prayer, although there are a few little subheadings to flesh out the Observation phrase. The basic elements are:

Scripture: We have a strong belief that Scripture is clear and can be understood. The text in the passage is the only data or "evidence" that we are working with. Everyone comes to the study with the same data, so we all sit under the text to simply look and see what it says.

Observation: As we see what the text says, to better understand the passage we may have *questions*. Using the standard Who? What? When? Where? How? questions on the text can help us go deeper in our understanding. We may have questions that the text doesn't answer. We can ask, but we must not force an answer from the text if an answer simply isn't there. We are letting the text guide us and not our own hang-ups, hobby horses, or even theology.

We also seek to find a *key* to the passage. This is distilling the passage into one main idea. This could be a key verse that the whole passage hangs on, or a concise statement on the timeless principle in the passage.

Application: Since scripture is living and active, with the help from the Spirit it will change us. From our observations and key, we ask what this passage is calling us to believe or how this passage is saying we are to behave. The more specific to your everyday life the better.

Prayer: We mustn't ignore the text or the application when we come to our group prayer time. We should thank God for His word to us and ask for help to live our faith to those around us.

John 13:1-17 – Jesus Sets the Example

Scripture

¹It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

²The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Observations

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

What is Jesus teaching his disciples by washing their feet?

Peter had a hard time letting Jesus wash his feet. Is it harder for you to serve others or to let them serve you? Why is that?

Do you find it hard to serve people you view as undeserving? What are some excuses you make? How can you overcome these excuses?

How is humble service a picture of the gospel to an unbelieving world? How might you show humble service to those in your workplace, family or neighbourhood this week?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action

Loving Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for him:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave up his life and died for us,
and yet lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



John 13:18-38 – Jesus Gives the Command

Scripture

¹⁸ "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'

¹⁹ "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. ²⁰ Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

²¹ After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

²² His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³ One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

²⁵ Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." ²⁸ But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹ Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. ³⁰ As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

³⁷ Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

³⁸ Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

Observations

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

Why does Jesus prophesies Judas's betrayal and tell his disciples of its necessity before it happened?

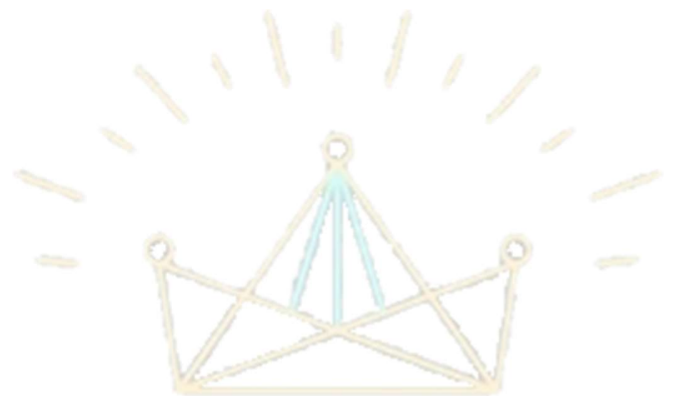
How does Jesus' death glorify God? What does that say about the meaning of "glory"?

In what ways does our loving one another demonstrate that we belong to Jesus?
What can you do this week to show your love for someone else?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action

Holy God, source of all love,
on the night of his betrayal
Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment,
to love one another as he loved them:
write this commandment in our hearts,
and give us the will to serve others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave his life and died for us,
yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
on God, now and for ever. Amen.



John 14:1-14 – Jesus and the Father

Scripture

¹ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

Observations

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

If the remedy for troubled hearts is faith in Jesus, what must be the root cause of troubled hearts?

How has the promise that Jesus is preparing a place for you affected your life today?

What is so offensive about Jesus's statement of exclusivity? How would you respond to people who are offended by His statement?

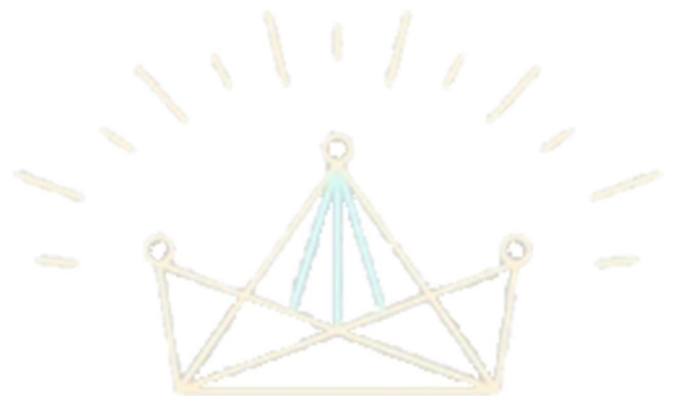
What does it mean to know the Father? Would you say you know the Father? Explain.

What can we believe about Jesus based on his words on prayer?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action

Everliving God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
give us grace to love one another,
to follow in the way of his commandments,
and to share in his risen life:
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



John 14:15-31 – Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Scripture

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

²² Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

²³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

²⁸ "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰ I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, ³¹ but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

"Come now; let us leave.

Observations

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us to do today?

Extra Questions

How can the Holy Spirit help us when we're troubled? How can you rely on Him more?

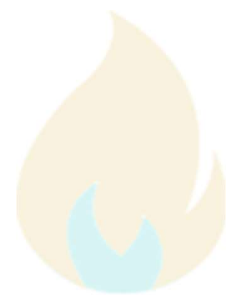
How has Jesus given you peace through belief in Him?

How do true disciples reveal their love of Jesus? How will you be obedient this week?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action

O God, the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we pray you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us,
and exalt us to the same place where our Saviour Christ has gone before;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



John 15:1-17 – Jesus and the Disciples

Scripture

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Observations

Questions

What verses are unclear to you? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

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Which verse does this whole passage hang off, or what is the timeless truth of this passage?

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Extra Questions

How does God prune us? What fruit does God want us to produce? In what ways do you try to bear fruit for God's kingdom?

How might God's commitment to your fruit bearing change how you respond to different events in your life?

Describe the difference between obedience to earn love and obedience as evidence of love.

How do you "remain" in Jesus?

In what ways do you struggle to love others as Jesus commands?

From this short series:

How is Jesus's relationship with the Father the same for our relationship with Jesus?

How has this part of John's Gospel prepared you more to be a Christian in the world?

Prayer

Pray from the passage thanking God for His truth and asking for help in putting it into action

Loving God,
your Son has chosen us
and called us to be his friends:
give us grace to keep his commandments,
to love one another,
and to bear fruit with will abide;
through him who is the true vine,
the source of all our life,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Most of the questions in this booklet have been taken from:

Exalting Jesus in John by Matt Carter, M., & John Wredberg

Be Transformed (John 13-21): Christ's Triumph Means Your Transformation by
Warren W. Wiersbe

All the prayers have come from *A Prayer Book for Australia*