

Listening Guide 4

March 30th 2018

John's Gospel 6-9

Knowing Jesus

Bread of Life from heaven
God's Lamb provided for us
and Light of the world

- who is God's Passover Lamb for us
- who shields us from God's holy anger
- who fortifies us to live properly, reconciled with God
- who asks us to “eat his flesh” and “drink his blood”
so that we can have life in ourselves.
- who is the Light of the world
- who is a true Apostle, speaking for his Father
- who has the great Drink of the Spirit to give
- who does not condemn us, but will have us live a
godly life.
- who releases us from the power of sin which
dominates our lives
- who teaches us to obey, so that we know truth
- who comes for those who are blind, so that they
might see and come to know God for themselves
- who teaches us to honour his Father as he himself
did; as a ‘holy’ Father.

A series conducted in 2018: from 7.00-8.30pm over seven Friday nights
in the Leederville Town Hall, 84 Cambridge Street, West Leederville.

1st half of the Evening - John 6.1-8.1

⌘ Jesus: I am [no.1] the bread of life [John 6.1-40]

- Feeding 5000 - miracle of multiplication, God's provision.
They search for Jesus to have food which perishes, it goes off/goes stale
Jesus provides enduring, constantly fresh food/life
To believe in the One who sent Jesus; this is proper human work
Jesus is the true manna [bread from heaven] = life for the world
Jesus never loses those the Father has given him. His own are safe.

⌘ God's Passover Lamb: eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood [John 6.41-59]

- Why is this night unlike any other night?

⌘ Some disciples desert him - words of life [John 6.60-71]

- Jesus' Ascension proves he came from heaven.

⌘ Jesus attends the Feast of Tabernacles [John 7.1-13]

- His unbelieving brothers advise him on how to become a public figure, but it is not Jesus' right time. The crowd have a mixed assessment of him.

⌘ Jesus teaches at the Feast [John 7.14-24]

- "My teaching is not my own. Comes from Father who sent him.
Obedience releases the certainty that we are taught of God [6.45]
Judging by appearances - in relation to the Sabbath

⌘ Public try to assess him [John 7.25-44]

- I am not here in my own - I am from Him who sent me
I am with you for a short time - then go to Him who sent me
- Promise of the Spirit - thirsty, drink. Spirit = stream of living water [Isaiah 58.11]: not yet given because Jesus not yet glorified = died, risen and ascended
People divided as to whether he is the Christ. Confusion: Bethlehem, Galilee

⌘ Unbelief of the Jewish leaders [John 7.45-52]

- Nicodemus pleads for the leaders to not condemn Jesus without a hearing.

⌘ Woman discovered in adultery [John 8.1-11]

- Application of the Law: they want to trap Jesus. The issue for Jesus goes to the difference in upholding Law in regard to actions, and being a judge of a person. He does not condemn, but tells her to change her ways and stop being adulterous.

⌘ Valid testimony - I am [no.2] the light of the world [John 8.12-30]

- Light of the world [5.35] followers don't walk in darkness, have light of life. The Pharisees cannot test his validity, not knowing where he is from.
He has good judgment because He serves his Father; he has his own testimony and his

2nd half of the Evening - John 8-9

Father's.

- Where is your Father? You will die in your sin. They are of the world: don't know Father, and when they have "lifted up" the Son of Man then they will know He spoke truly.

⌘ Children of Abraham [John 8.31-41]

- Hold to his teaching you will know the truth, and be free. Slaves, in what sense, to whom? They are slaves to sin [seen here as a power as for Paul Romans 3.9]. Abraham is our father - but their father is the devil because they obey him.

⌘ Children of the devil [John 8.42-47]

- They cannot hear Jesus because they are listening - and therefore committed - to their own father- the devil, wanting to carry out his desires. Murder and lies are his will. Which is what they are bent on doing to Jesus.

⌘ Jesus claims [John 8.48-59]

- I honour my Father: I don't seek my own honour. He who keeps my word will never see death. Abraham died - greater than him?? Before Abraham was, I am.

⌘ Jesus heals a man born blind [John 9.1-12]

- Question that seeks for the answer "why is this man born blind; looks for the answer as the sin of man or his parents.
- Jesus deflects the answer to say that it is a matter of the displaying of the works of God. Doing Father's work, now that it is still day, night comes when no man can work. Heals the man as a washing of his eyes,

⌘ Pharisees assess the healing [John 9.13-34]

- Division among the Pharisees. The Jews check out the presupposed blindness. Give glory to God - oath. Disciples of Moses not his fellow.

⌘ Spiritual blindness [John 9.35-41]

- Believe in the Son of man? Never seen the face but knows the voice. Worships a man. Judgment come into the world blind will see, those who see become blind.

⌘ Shepherd and his flock [John 10. 1-21]

- The watchman of the gate and the shepherd. Sheep don't hear voice of strangers. I am the door of the sheep: entry through the gate and exit via the gate - entry to security and to abundant life. I am the good shepherd - lays down life - not a hireling. The attack of the wolf. - Hired hands do not care, they run away from the wolf.
- Other sheep which are not of this fold. Father loves me - lay down life - authority to lay it down. This command I have received from my Father. [Demonised !!]

⌘ The unbelief of the Jews [10.22-41]

- Feast of Dedication: miracles in his Father's Name. If God once called gods those to whom the word of God came - what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own, and sent into the world?

Reflecting on the 4th Reading - knowing God as Father

A disconnection, a split, that we often make

If we rely on our own point of view as the starting place for our thinking, then, in all our thoughts of God we often find ourselves thinking of him from two perspectives. Both of these points of view arise from the state of affairs in which we find ourselves. We either think of Him as dwelling above us, far removed and not engaged with us, this is typically how people see him as Creator, Lawgiver and Judge. Or we think of him as close, dwelling within us, working within us by his a Spirit.

This split in our thinking makes the way God justifies us and reconciles the world to Himself a remote work, something done 'over our heads' with the result of it is simply announced or declared to us. And often, the work of Christ on the cross is explained to us from our own selfish point of view - as people liable to punishment - and not from God's point of view. We are not often given to understand what was it that God found so acceptable in the sacrifice of his Son that a reconciliation of God to the world was worked there. But then, we are told that 'regeneration', and the 'receiving of the Spirit' is an intensely personal matter and engages deeply our inner life. And we want that intimacy. So this 'split' maintains itself often, carrying into our Christian experience because it was our perspective after all.

Our Creation was a close matter

In the revelation brought to us by the Bible, which is coming from God's side, concerning our creation however, we do not find this remoteness and the split in thinking to be the case. God, in his making of us is close and engaged. He is the moulder of our frame from the elements of the earth and then, working closely with the human frame he has made, He breathes his life into us. The breath of God, when breathed into the body of the human, makes the man or woman into a living soul. So, whether in the case of Adam, or subsequently, in the case of every foetus conceived in the womb, a human being is, from conception, at the same time, an 'ensouled' body and a 'bodily' soul - and is so by the creative Spirit of God.

Our broken state is also a close matter

In our current disobedient state of affairs, we have guilt about matters where we have offended God or robbed him of the responses we ought to have made. We have also and have come under a power which makes it impossible to be free for God, even if we wished to. In our refusal to have God in our life, we find the effects of that are not just external to ourselves, they are intensely real both within ourselves and in relation to others - such a decisive refusal brings these 'up close and personal' results for us.

Our redemption is also a close and personal matter as well.

If there is anything we are learning from such expressions of Jesus as our need to "eat his flesh and drink his blood" it is that this work of the passover Lamb of God is something that has to enter our lives deeply as the basis for knowing the love of God as the motive for the atonement. If the Lamb of God is God's provision for us, in the light of his holy wrath/anger, then his holy love for us includes his merciful provision of a way forward in the midst of judgment. The redemption is close and personal. For he does not love us, or forgive us, because Jesus died for us. That would mean the love and forgiveness of God is conditional upon a deal made, or an acceptable sacrifice being made. And then we shall love the Saviour more than his Father - a matter He would not have us do. No! - it is the reverse; Jesus died for us because God "so" loved us, and He is, in Himself, a forgiving God; and has found a holy and good way, at great cost, to bring that forgiveness to us. Through his own Lamb.