

Listening Guide 5

April 6th 2018

John's Gospel 10-13

Knowing Jesus

**The Good Shepherd
Our Resurrection and our Life
Who was "lifted up" to die for us**

- who is God's own appointed Shepherd for us
- who shields us from the ravages of Satan
- whose one Flock includes Jews and Gentiles
- who raises/awakens the 'dead' and brings them life
- who is heard by his Father, for our sake's
- who was predestined to die for God's people
- who is to be treasured because present
- whose death is a giving up of his life for a harvest
- who met the "wolf" with his life and delivered his flock from Satan's oppressive mastery.
- who knows that those who are blind concerning their unbelief, are wilfully so
- who teaches us to maintain each other as holy in a defiling world
- who teaches us to love each other as He did love us.

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 10-11

⌘ 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 and exit through the gate is 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, doing the job for themselves, do not care, they run away from the wolf.
- There are 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 !!] Life not taken from Him - he laid it down.

⌘ The unbelief of the Jews [10.22-41]

- Feast of Dedication: miracles in his Father's Name.
- The unbelief of the Jews indicates they are not of his sheep. [Not all those in Israel are Israel [Romans 9-11]. John calls them the "Jews" - but they are not, at this time, Jesus' flock. They beg him to speak plainly - he points them to his works. His sheep are secure in his and Father's hand.
- They attempt to stone him for blasphemy. 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? Crowd knows that what John the baptiser said about Jesus was true.

⌘ The death of Lazarus - "I am the resurrection and the life" [11.1-37]

- Mary, who had wiped his feet with her hair, had a brother Lazarus and a sister Martha in Bethany. Jesus delays, knowing that God would be glorified and also the Son of God. He loved the three of them. Then, he decides to go to them - although it is dangerous, as Thomas the Twin ironically makes clear.
- They find his speech unclear - till it is obvious that for Jesus death is but a sleep, from which we are to be aroused by Jesus. [Powerful eschatological drive of this Gospel - salvation is now, life with God is now, resurrection can be now. Jesus present is the kingdom present.] This will be an occasion for the disciples to believe. Even if a 'truster' in Jesus physically dies - he shall rise.
- Jesus is indignant at death - and deeply moved. He must have prayed about this beforehand [11.14-15], for he knows he has been heard and he violates his own teaching about secret prayer, making an exception so that what follows is known to have come about by the Father hearing his request while, at the same time, the Son of God would be glorified. This is to see "the glory of God" [11.40] - that is, the interrelation between the Father and the Son.

⌘ The plot to kill Jesus [11.45-57]

- The plot to kill Jesus arises from fear of disturbing the Romans who may retaliate and they would lose their place [land? cudos?] and their nation [be dispersed]. As aman, Caiaphas is politically calculating; and yet holds an office; his cynical exchange is actually a prophecy of the predestined mind of God. Jesus retires to Ephraim a city in a desert region [7km NE of Bethel]. Knowing the Pharisees command that they should turn Jesus in if they know where he is, the common people wonder if Jesus will come to the feast.

2nd half of the Evening - John 12-13

✠ Jesus anointed at Bethany [12.1-11]

- The Bethany 'group' prepare a dinner for Jesus, in the middle of which Mary anoints Jesus with expensive ointment and wipes his feet with her hair. The house is filled with the beautiful perfume. Judas objects, pleading the need of the poor. Although his body will not decay, Jesus directs them forward to his burial - where Lazarus had so recently been. The burial asserts the certainty of a death having taken place - they are about to lose him in 6 days. In this way our writer prepares us for his death and burial.
- The plot to kill Lazarus, for he was an occasion of many turning to Jesus.

✠ The triumphal entry [12.12-19]

- As Jesus enters Jerusalem the disciples do not immediately, at that time, understand the significance of this Messianic reception as one who comes in the Name of the Lord. Our writer's editorial comment shows they comprehend after the resurrection.

✠ As Greeks seek Jesus; He predicts the hour has come for his death, for the son of man to be glorified [12.20-36]

- There are sheep, who are not of the Jewish fold. As Greeks begin to press in to know Jesus they begin to anticipate the 'breaking down of the dividing wall' which his death will work for the two folds to become one [Ephesians 2.11-22].
- The grain that falls into the ground is said to die. Jesus' death will yield a harvest of new grain, much multiplied. The parallel in the life of the disciples will be evident as well - losing of this life to keep the real life that God always intended for us. To serve Jesus is to be honoured by the Father. Father speaks from heaven, for our sake.
- The son of man must be "lifted up" [= the way he was to die 3.14-16] means:
[1] His death is the judgment of Satan [the devouring wolf 10.10-18] who, as ruler of the world, is cast out of that position. By laying down his life Jesus protects the flock.
[2] That Jesus will draw all people to himself.
Darkness is coming, [at his death] and the light is with them for a little while longer - a matter of days now - folks need to become sons of light [light bearers] through faith in him.

✠ The unbelief of the Jews continues[12.37-50]

- The hiding of himself mirrors the unbelief [Is 53.1] and the blinding of eyes that Isaiah spoke of [Is.6.10] - Isaiah had seen his glory [chapter 6]. Jesus speaks of how his words uttered in the world will judge unbelief later.

✠ Jesus washes the disciples' feet [13.1-17]

- The day-to-day washing of disciples' feet speaks of their presence in the defiling world. They themselves are clean [15.3] - although not Judas - and they need daily maintenance one another of their purity and sanctification.

✠ Jesus predicts his betrayal [13.18-30]

- Once Judas has taken the morsel, Satan entered him. Now the train of events will unfold - the darkness has descended.

✠ Jesus predicts Peter's denial [13.31-38]

- Jesus is going to Father, where the disciples cannot follow. Peter declares he will, even unto death. Jesus says that he will not keep that promise - he will deny Jesus three times before the night is out.

Reflecting on the 5th Reading

Being closely cared for by Him with others of the flock

We must take seriously the deeply personal relation between Jesus and ourselves which the image of the middle eastern shepherd puts before us. Our own estimation of ourselves as included in this flock implies that we should always think of ourselves as known by name by which He addresses us.

It requires us to relate to Him as a shepherd whose voice we long to hear and since his voice is the signal of his presence among us, just as sheep would know the approach of their shepherd through his voice.

We accept our circumstances in life as our shepherd's provision for us of his 'table in the wilderness' - there is to be a full acceptance of where we are placed and what we have to live in, to wear, to eat and to cherish among the flock we are part of. We must take a closer look at the Christian's we know and are in relation with - these are his cherished ones - as are we.

We live now - between the times

Jesus made clear to his disciples that his presence with them was their shared entry into the life of God. For, He was the eternal Word of God, the same person who was present in the Hebrew's past, and will be present in the future. The continuity of his presence with them now, starts to make future and present things equally available. So, as Martha can speak of a sureness about the future raising of us by the Messiah, but only on the last day; so Jesus can speak of being the resurrection and the life and this can be for Lazarus now. He is all these things, whether past, present or future for us. All things inhere in his Person. We always have to reckon on Jesus as the presence of the kingdom of God simply by being present Himself. The disciples then knew it by his being with them; for us it is his Spirit. Once this begins to be a reality in our own lives by the Spirit coming and residing within us, then we are simply indwelt by God. This is the presence of the Father, and the Son by the Spirit. We now live between the 'now' and the 'not yet'.

Our broken state restored

Jesus was standing before Lazarus' tomb; when the text says that he was indignant, the Greek word used here [ἐμβριμάομαι] comes from the picture of horses snorting, harumphing and tossing their heads as if suppressing inner rage and irritation at something. We have to take into account the deep, irrevocable hatred of God towards death as Satan sets out to annul the life that God has given us at our creation and entry into this world. Here, in this text, is recorded the wonderful overwhelming of death that glorifies the Father and the Son. He brings Lazarus out of death's hold, and restores him to what He always intended all of us to be - full of his life and revelling in it without hindrance. It is from this perspective that we understand something of Jesus' own perspective when at Lazarus' tomb he is irritated, troubled and weeps. He is sympathetic to Martha and Mary - to say nothing of Lazarus - but the main matter is the death itself. This is what he carries as his main burden here since he is the resurrection and the life.

"I am the resurrection", speaking of Jesus as the incarnate Word is retrospective. He will come to make to stand up again that which has fallen over because it has succumbed to death. This action is restorative, overwhelming the brokenness which has come upon humans in respect of their given life from God. It has been snuffed, stifled and as a wage of sin, it pays death.

"...and the Life" is prospective, looking forward to the beautiful enervating life that God always is for us, since he shares his life with us so that it becomes ours. This was the initial work of creation which, after resurrection, is restored to us as that which had been lost.