

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN LENTEN READING PROJECT~ LENT 2023

I am delighted that you have chosen to take on the challenge of reading the Gospel of John during the 40 days of Lent this year. Each day, you will be asked to read and respond to a short section of the Gospel of John. Each daily reading is short and probably can be read in 10 minutes, and by the time you reach Easter, you will have read the entire Gospel of John. The plan is to start reading on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, and continue through Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. As Sundays are feast days and not counted properly as the 40 days of Lent, you will find no reading assignment on those days. However, in God's perfect world, you will find that concurrent with your reading plan, the Gospel of John will be read for 4 of the 5 Sundays in Lent, the special days of Holy Week, and several Sundays in Easter.

A few notes on the Gospel of John

As you read the Gospel of John, you will note that John sounds very different from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Known as the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke clearly tell the story of Jesus, from the announcement of his birth and that of his cousin John the Baptist, through his death and resurrection. These synoptic gospels share similar material in recalling events in Jesus' life, his teachings, his miracles, and his purpose in inaugurating the Kingdom of God. John, on the other hand, digs deeper into all of the hows and whys of Jesus' life, such as how he is related to the Father and the Son as co-equals and co-eternals and the theological mysteries of how the Son of Man could die for the people of the world, while using metaphors that challenge us to think deeply. The miracles Jesus performs in the Gospel of John are not so much miracles in and of themselves, but are actually considered signs that point to God. There are 7 signs in John's Gospel. John also is known for using metaphors with multiple meanings, such as what you find in the 7 "I am" sayings of Jesus, all of which point back to the great "I am" whom Moses approaches as he encounters God.

Things to look for when reading the Gospel of John

The 7 signs in the Gospel of John

- Sign #1 ~ John 2:1-12 (Jesus turns water into wine at a wedding)
- Sign #2 ~ John 4:46-54 (Jesus heals the son of a royal official)
- Sign #3 ~ John 5:1-11 (Jesus heals a man at one of the pools, on the Sabbath)
- Sign #4 ~ John 6:1-15 (Jesus feeds the 5,000 people from 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread)
- Sign #5 ~ John 6:16-21 (Jesus walks on water)
- Sign #6 ~ John 9:1-12 (Jesus heals a man who had been born blind)
- Sign #7 ~ John 11 (Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead)

The 7 "I am" sayings of Jesus

- John 6:35 – "I am the bread of life"
- John 8:12 – "I am the light of the world"
- John 10:7 – "I am the door"
- John 10:11, 14 – "I am the good shepherd"
- John 11:25 – "I am the resurrection and the life"
- John 14:6 – "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"
- John 15:1 – "I am the vine; you are the branches"

Lectionary Readings that include the Gospel of John

2 Lent (March 5) ~ John 3:1-17 (Jesus and Nicodemus)
3 Lent (March 12) ~ John 4:5-42 (The Samaritan woman at the well)
4 Lent (March 19) ~ John 9:1-41 (The healing of the man born blind and reactions)
5 Lent (March 26) ~ John 11:1-45 (The raising of Lazarus from the dead)
Maundy Thursday (April 6) ~ John 13:1-17, 31b-35 (Foot washing, the great commandment)
Good Friday (April 7) ~ John 18:1-19:42 (The Passion Narrative)
Easter Sunday (April 9) ~ John 20:1-18 (The resurrection of Jesus)
2 Easter (April 16) ~ John 20:19-31 (The risen Jesus greets the disciples in the upper room)
4 Easter (April 30) ~ John 10:1-10 (Jesus the Good Shepherd)
5 Easter (May 7) ~ John 14:1-14 (Do not be afraid; in my Father's house are many mansions)
6 Easter (May 14) ~ John 14:15-21 (If you love me, keep my commandments, promise of H.S.)
7 Easter (May 21) ~ John 17:1-11 (In the upper room, Jesus prays for all disciples)

THE READING PLAN

Days 1-4 plus Sunday

John begins his gospel with what we call the Prologue (John 1:1-8), a beautiful poetic work that sets the tone for the whole Gospel as we seek to understand who this Jesus is as the embodied Word of God, pre-existing in time, and active with God and the Holy Spirit in the creation of the world. The rest of the readings will further explore who Jesus is as he encounters disciples, turns water into wine, and thoroughly befuddles Nicodemus as he explains what it means to be born again or anew.

DAY 1: Ash Wednesday, February 22 ~ John 1:1-18
DAY 2: February 23 ~ John 1:19-51
DAY 3: February 24 ~ John 2:1-25
DAY 4: February 25 ~ John 3:1-21
Sunday, February 26 ~ 1 Lent

Days 5-10 plus Sunday

This week's readings begin by examining the roles of Jesus and John the Baptist. John's role of witnessing to Jesus will end as Jesus leads the way. The bulk of the readings contain well known stories of Jesus: the Samaritan woman at the well, the healing of the official's son, healing a crippled man on the Sabbath, and the feeding of the 5,000. You will read signs 2, 3, and 4

DAY 5: February 27 ~ John 3:22-36
DAY 6: February 28 ~ John 4:1-26
DAY 7: March 1 ~ John 4:27-54
DAY 8: March 2 ~ John 5:1-18
DAY 9: March 3 ~ John 5:19-47
DAY 10: March 4 ~ John 6:1-15
Sunday, March 5 ~ 2 Lent

Days 11-16 plus Sunday

This week highlights the magnificence of John's Eucharistic theology. John's Gospel does not contain the story of Jesus' Last Supper, otherwise known as the Institution Narrative. Instead, listen for the deeper meanings of the Eucharist.

DAY 11: March 6 ~ John 6:16-40
DAY 12: March 7 ~ John 6:41-59
DAY 13: March 8 ~ John 6:41-59
DAY 14: March 9 ~ John 7:1-24
DAY 15: March 10 ~ John 7:25-53
DAY 16: March 11 ~ John 8:1-30
Sunday, March 12 ~ 3 Lent

Days 17-22

This week's readings delve deeper into the full identity of Jesus. He argues with the Pharisees, saying that he was before Abraham. In the story of Jesus healing the blind man, he points to the ultimate blindness of the Pharisees. We also read stories of Jesus the Good Shepherd and the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and after all that, we ask the question, "Who is Jesus?"

DAY 17: March 13 ~ John 8:31-59
DAY 18: March 14 ~ John 9:1-17
DAY 19: March 15 ~ John 9:18-41
DAY 20: March 16 ~ John 10:1-21
DAY 21: March 17 ~ John 10:22-42
DAY 22: March 18 ~ John 11:1-27
Sunday, March 19 ~ 4 Lent

Days 23-28

By this point in the Gospel of John, Jesus has freely set his face towards Jerusalem. The raising of Lazarus from the dead seemingly was the last straw for the Jewish leadership, so they begin to plot Jesus' death. Jesus knows this and speaks openly about the fact that his hour has come. John 13 begins Jesus' final days with his disciples as they gather in the upper room in preparation for the Passover. Jesus will wash his disciples' feet, identify Judas as his betrayer, and begins to urge to his disciples not to be fearful.

DAY 23: March 20 ~ John 11:28-57
DAY 24: March 21 ~ John 12:1-19
DAY 25: March 22 ~ John 12:20-43
DAY 26: March 23 ~ John 12:44-50
DAY 27: March 24 ~ John 13:1-38
DAY 28: March 25 ~ John 14:1-31
Sunday, March 26 ~ 5 Lent

Days 29-34

In this last week of Lent, you will find Jesus speaking with his disciples about life without knowing and seeing him in person. He promises that he will never leave them and that his presence will be made known through the power of the Holy Spirit. After all this, Jesus and his disciples leave the upper room and head to the Kidron Valley and to a garden. There, he is arrested and taken to Pilate and ultimately handed over for crucifixion

DAY 29: March 27 ~ John 15:1-27

DAY 30: March 28 ~ John 16:1-33

DAY 31: March 29 ~ John 17:1-26

DAY 32: March 30 ~ John 18:1-24

DAY 33: March 31 ~ John 18:25-40

DAY 34: April 1 ~ John 19:1-16

Sunday, April 2 ~ Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week

Days 35-40

You are now in Holy Week. The first three days of reading will be out of sync with what is going on in the church. You will finish the Gospel of John with Jesus' crucifixion, death, resurrection, and post resurrection stories. Beginning on Maundy Thursday the readings will have you go back and review the events of Maundy Thursday, Good, Friday, and Holy Saturday. Better yet, come to services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Read the end of John 19 on Holy Saturday.

DAY 35: April 3 ~ John 19:17-42

DAY 36: April 4 ~ John 20:1-31

DAY 37: April 5 ~ John 21:1-25

DAY 38: April 6, Maundy Thursday ~ John 13:1-38; 18:1-14

DAY 39: April 7, Good Friday ~ John 19:1-30

DAY 40: April 8, Holy Saturday ~ John 19:31-42

Sunday, April 9 ~ Rejoice, for He is Risen! Alleluia – Easter Sunday