



IN THE THEATRE OF **GLORY**

WATCHING JESUS MOVE THROUGH HOLY WEEK

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH – VANCOUVER, BC

Coverphoto: Justin K. Kim

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“Father, the hour has come;
GLORIFY Your Son,
that the Son may **GLORIFY** You,
even as You gave Him authority over all
flesh, that to all whom You have given
Him, He may give eternal life.

This is eternal life,
that they may know You,
the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

I **GLORIFIED** You on the earth,
having accomplished the work which
You have given Me to do.

Now, Father,
GLORIFY Me together with Yourself,
with the **GLORY** which I had with You
before the world was.

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IN THE THEATRE OF **GLORY**

Watching Jesus Move Through Holy Week

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

During the sacred season of Lent, I invite you to join me in what John Calvin called "The Theatre of Glory." I invite you to join me in studying chapters 18 and 19 of the Gospel according to John, where the apostle takes us through the final events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

Why call this part of the story of Jesus; why call the last few hours ending in His cruel death, "The Theatre of Glory"?

Because of the way John tells the whole story of Jesus.

John sets up the story in the opening section of his Gospel, in what is called The Prologue, or better called The Overture. John 1:1-18 – the poem, the hymn, about the eternal, creative Word. "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. All things came into being by Him." Leading to the fundamental affirmation of the Gospel, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," or, "in us." God the Word became flesh, what we are, and dwelt among us, in us. "And we beheld His glory." The whole of the story of Jesus according to John is one sustained beholding of glory.

Glory. It means luminosity. It means weightiness. It means essence. Glory: the essence of the luminous, weighty God. In the Word made flesh, in Jesus of Nazareth, we are beholding the essence of the luminous, weighty God. In everything Jesus says and does we are beholding glory.

So in the first half of his Gospel, in chapters 2-11, John narrates what he calls "signs." Deeds of Jesus which point beyond themselves to glory. John tells us about seven "signs" - turning water into wine; healing a nobleman's son of a life threatening illness; curing a man who had been lame for 38 years; multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish to feed a crowd of over five thousand people; walking on water; giving sight to a man born blind; and raising a man named Lazarus from the dead. Wonderfully glorious acts of potent creativity!

Then in the second half of his Gospel, chapters 12 to 21, John narrates the events of Holy Week, "The week that changed the world," as many have rightly called that brief period of time.

On Palm Sunday, after riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, deliberately fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, signaling that He is the King for whom Israel has been waiting for centuries, Jesus says, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name."

"Now" is the time for glory! Holy Week. "Now" is the time to finally and decisively manifest glory! To once and for all show forth the essence of the luminous, weighty God!

And whereas the other three Gospels writers – Matthew, Mark and Luke – then tell us about what Jesus said and did on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of that week, John immediately jumps from Palm Sunday to what Jesus says and does on Thursday, setting up what happens on Friday, on Good Friday.

On Thursday night, after sharing a meal with His first band of disciples, during which He washed their feet - "And we beheld His glory" - Jesus then prays to His Father: "Father, the hour has come ...glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You."

Then we come to John 18 and 19. To events that take place within less than 24 hours. "When Jesus had spoken these words ..." says John; that is, when Jesus had finished praying "... Jesus went forth ..." The implication being that in what now happens we will behold glory as never before. The implication being that in what John now narrates the essence of the luminous, weighty God will be displayed once and for all. In what John now narrates we will find ourselves in the Theatre of Glory.

May you see as never before how glorious our Saviour is!

In His love,

Daniel

4. How does Jesus reveal His glory in this passage?

- How may this be surprising to us? How was it unacceptable to Peter (vv. 10- 11)?

5. What are ways that we acknowledge Jesus as Lord ('I am he'), and yet seek to restrain or 'arrest' Him in our lives?

As you spend some time in prayer together, share how this passage may impact you as we enter into this season of Lent and behold God's glory unfolding.

WHO IS ON TRIAL HERE?

Darrell Johnson

John 18:12-27

March 1, 2015

Read together John 18:12-27.

1. Share what particularly jumps at you from this passage. What people, surroundings, conversations or details do you notice?

Focus on the interaction between Jesus and the high priest (John 18:12-14, 19-24).

2. What do Annas's questions reveal about his view of Jesus? Who is Jesus in the mind of the high priest and his officials?

3. Discuss how Jesus “defends” Himself before the high priest, and before one of his officers.
 - Share what you know about Peter before this incident: his character traits and his relationship with Jesus. Then have someone read John 13:36-38.
4. Take a look at each of the 3 times when Peter is questioned and denies Jesus. Where is he and who are the people who test him? Pay attention to the charcoal fire in v. 18.

Read John 21:1-17.

5. What is Jesus' response to Peter's failure? What is the significance of Jesus meeting Peter at the charcoal fire?

6. Have you experienced anything like Peter's failure and subsequent encounter with Jesus? How did Christ meet you in it?

Spend some time together in prayer in response to the way Jesus lets us see His glory even when we fail.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PILATE

Darrell Johnson

John 18:28-19:22

March 8, 2015

Together, read John 18:28-19:22.

1. Share what we know about Pontius Pilate apart from this text. What images, language or details do you find particularly striking in his interaction with the Jews outside of his palace and with Jesus inside?
2. Why did the Jewish leaders bring Jesus to Pontius Pilate?
 - How do they use diplomacy as part of their plan to have Jesus killed?

3. Look closely at the questions Pilate asks Jesus in this text: John 18:33, 35, 37, 38, as well as in John 19:9-10. What does this reveal about his attitude towards Jesus?

- Are these questions to which you can relate?

4. Can you articulate the tension in which Pilate finds himself?

- Do you see any political leaders today who face a similar tension?

5. What affirmations does Pilate make about Jesus? Look at John 19:4-6, 14, 19. Discuss Jesus' responses.

6. So, who is Jesus to Pilate?

Pray together in response to this passage.

WHEN CAPTURED BY GLORY

Carson Pue

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:19-23

March 15, 2015

Together, read Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-18.

1. How do these passages comfort us?
How do they challenge us?
 - How does Jesus call us to respond to His authority and good news?
2. Review what we have learned about St. Patrick's life.
What was particularly memorable or exceptional about his story?

3. Reflecting on the difficulties faced by St. Patrick, what are ways that we have either drawn closer or drawn away from God during turbulent times in our lives?

4. Considering people or circumstances in our lives that have caused us pain, share your experiences of times when you have needed to forgive.

- What was difficult about forgiving? In what ways do you need to continue to choose to forgive?

5. Read John 20:19-23. How may this passage shed light on how we think about forgiveness?

6. What is the role of forgiveness in the Christian life? How are we both recipients of, and agents for, forgiveness in the world?

Pray in response to what you have discussed.

WHAT HAPPENED THERE?

Darrell Johnson
John 19:23-37
March 22, 2015

Together, read John 19:23-37. (As you read, notice Jesus' tenderness and care for His mother, even in the midst of His agony.)

John here shares his own theological reflections. He cites Scripture and relates it to what is taking place.

1. Identify all the places where John refers to Scripture, and look up some of the references. What are the contexts of these passages?

2. By quoting Scripture, what may John want us to know about who Jesus is?

3. Discuss the reference to Exodus 12:46 in John 19:36 (it would help to read Exodus 23:32-23 for context). Why may John be pointing to the Passover lamb in connection to Jesus?

4. What are similarities between the Israelites' rescue from Egypt in Exodus and Jesus' death?

5. What is 'finished' (verse 30)? List at least 7 things you can think of that are 'finished' at the point of Jesus' death.

Share ways that God is teaching you more about Himself through this passage, and then spend some time praying together in thankfulness for what Jesus has done.

NOW

Darrell Johnson

John 12:9-50

March 29, 2015 - Palm Sunday

Together, read John 12:9-50.

1. What particularly strikes you from this passage?
Any immediate impressions, phrases, or scenes that stick out?

2. Identify verses where Jesus shows us what was being accomplished through the events of Holy Week.

3. What do we learn about Jesus and what He has come to do?

4. What does Jesus teach us about following Him in light of who He is?

- What is the cost?

- What is the promise?

5. Discuss John's caution in verses 42-43. Are there ways in which you can relate to this fear in your own life?
 - Are there particular areas (or relationships) in our lives where we are afraid to confess our faith in Jesus?

Share these now, and pray for each other.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF A NEW WORLD

Darrell Johnson

John 20:1-18

April 5, 2015 - Resurrection Sunday

Read John 20:1-18 together, paying attention to all the instances where John uses the verbs "see", "look", "behold".

1. Try to summarize all that the disciples and Mary see.

2. What is Mary's first response to Jesus' empty tomb?

3. Why did she not recognize Jesus immediately?
What made her recognize Him?

4. What does it mean to be resurrected in light of this passage?
Compare it with the resuscitation of Lazarus in John 11.
What is the significance of Lazarus still being wrapped in his
grave cloths when he came out of his tomb and of Jesus'
linen wrappings lying in His tomb by themselves?

5. What does John want us to know about who Jesus is?

6. What did Jesus promise to Mary and His disciples?

7. Together, share ways in which – like Mary – we can say, “I have seen the Lord,” in our life and testimony?

Pray together for the different ways God has been teaching and challenging us through this Lent and Easter series.

