ST MARYS
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Lent Course 2026

The Gospel according to St John

Week 4

The Hour

- John has a particular interest in times and seasons. He notes hours and days and festivals in many places, usually with significance.
- There are three different Passovers (2.13, 6.4, 11.55) defining the broad timescale of the Gospel.
- We read of the tenth hour (1.39), sixth hour (4.6, 19.14), and seventh hour (4.52)
- On the third day there was a wedding in Cana (2.1), cf 2.19 "Destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days"
- Lazarus had been in the tomb four days (11.17) – removing any doubt of death as a popular belief held that the soul finally departed after three days.
- At the time of the festival of Dedication (10.22) "it was winter" – symbolising the approaching darkness, followed by the Jews taking up stones.
- When Judas went out, "it was night" (13.30) (cf 9.4)
- For Jesus though, what matters is "his hour". Three times we read that "his hour had not yet come" (2.4, 7.30, 8.20)

- The first half of the Gospel anticipates this hour, which arrives in 12.23 “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified”, a reference to the death of Jesus, and as we read on we find that the hour refers to the whole of the remainder of the Gospel.
- The first half of the Gospel gives us the signs, and builds anticipation of what is the primary mission of Jesus – what will happen in this hour.

The Glory

- And it’s all tied up with another great theme of John. What will happen in this hour? Jesus will be glorified.
- Does that mean the hour refers just to the resurrection? No!
- Three times we have seen reference to Jesus being “lifted up” (3.14, 8.28, 12.32-34) and each is a reference to the cross.
- The word is a reference to Isaiah 52.13 “See my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up”, a reference both to exaltation (glorification) and being put up on a cross.
- This glory is not just about an obvious triumphant blaze of glory as in the resurrection, it is the glory of the persistence of the love of God in the face of death and of all the darkness of this world.
- Remember that key question from the first week: “Where are you staying?” (1.38), and we had been told where Jesus stays, abides, dwells…
- “No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has made him known” (1.18)
- And later we’re told “One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining in the bosom of Jesus” (13.23)

- Where Jesus dwells is where we are destined to dwell "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will be my servant also". (12.26)
- "This Gospel is a story about coming to the Father's heart. And it happens in intimacy with Jesus. And yet that intimacy is broken tragically and horribly by the betrayal, by Judas, and the desertion of the disciples. So what's going on? How do we cope with that? Well, we are reminded that because the Word is eternal in God, the Word shares God's glory. God's glory is eternal and solid and real in such a way that (back to the beginning of the gospel) no darkness can swallow it up. So it's for Jesus to demonstrate that in the deepest darkness of sin, God is not defeated. Glory blazes through. And while we try and run away, glory floods after us and catches us up. So the death of Jesus, the crucifixion, is an occasion of glory. That's where you see God, if you like, throwing his radiance and his love into the very heart of darkness and overtaking it. And so, although we try and wriggle away from the Father's bosom and the heart of the Son, that heart reaches out to us and restores us, as in that wonderful balanced story of Peter's no and Peter's yes." *Rowan Williams*

The Commandment

- How then can this glory be seen now, if Jesus is no longer walking among us?
- Not simply in teaching about Jesus. If believers are dwelling with the Father, then they are dwelling with each other – living with mutual trust and love.
- "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love

one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." 13.34,35

- "The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." 17.23-23

Some of the Questions in John

Chapters 12-16

Do you know what I have done to you? (13.12)

Where are you going? (13.36)

Will you lay down your life for me? (13.38)

How can we know the way? (14.5)

Do you now believe? (16.31)

Questions for us:

- Work through the above questions and look at the context. Can we hear them being asked by us now, or asked of us now? How can they be answered? Are any answers found in the text?
- What have you found fresh, inspiring, or encouraging in these chapters?
- What have you found difficult or disturbing?
- "What are you looking for?" – a theme that runs through the Gospel. How do these chapters point to answers?