

## FRIDAY 22 April 2022 "John Remembers" John 13-19

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

*Do you often think back and 'relive' past experiences, especially traumatic ones?* If so, do you try and evaluate what happened, and how it impacted you, and what might have been different had you made different choices leading up to that traumatic event?

One week ago, today was Friday, often called "Good Friday". For the friends of Jesus who had witnessed or been told of the catastrophic events which Jesus experienced on that Friday of that Passover weekend, *I think it's safe to assume they spent this Friday, one week later, in reflection, trying to gain a fresh perspective on all that had taken place related to Jesus' horrific crucifixion.* While each disciple and each of the women who were close to Jesus had a different personal perspective, I think John the disciple may have had the most unique perspective of all the disciples. He was the only one standing at the cross, and the one to whom Jesus entrusted His mother, with gasping words from the cross.

Did you know that as John wrote his story, of the life and ministry of Jesus, he spends 8 of his 21 chapters focusing on the events of Thursday evening in the upper room, the garden of Gethsemane, the trials, the Friday crucifixion and finally Jesus' Sunday resurrection? Eight chapters! *Clearly for John the events of these three days of that Passover weekend were by far the most significant days in Jesus' entire earthly lifetime of 30 years.* Did you know that John does not refer to himself by his own name as he writes those 8 chapters, but rather John uses this remarkable phrase to describe himself: **"the disciple whom Jesus loved."** (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20) Why do you think John did that, and what do you imagine John was feeling on that Friday, one week after he witnessed the horrific crucifixion of his friend Jesus?

I wonder if John spent lots of time this Friday remembering Jesus. We know John was one of the first two disciples Jesus invited to come and spend some time with Him. It happened as John and Andrew were watching John the Baptist preaching and baptizing in the Jordan river one day and "the Baptizer" pointed at a man walking by the crowd and said, **"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."** (John 1:29) I wonder if on this Friday, one week after Jesus' crucifixion, John remembered that scene *and the crucial decision he made in that moment which changed his life and started his relationship with Jesus?* John wrote that he approached the man 'the Baptizer' had pointed to and simply asked where he was staying. Jesus responded with an invitation, **"Come and see".**

*John and his friend Andrew chose to spend that day with Jesus, and it changed their lives!* Andrew was so impacted he went to find his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus saying, **"We have found the Messiah."** (John 1:41,42)

I imagine John asked himself a simple question several times... *'What if, what if I had let that moment go by, ignoring what 'the Baptizer' had said, or at least not following the urge I felt to find out who this man was?'* Now ponder that my friends, as you look back in your life. *Can you identify those 'defining moments' which, had you made a different choice, your life would have probably followed a different path?*

I wonder if the next 'defining moment' scene that John remembered with Jesus was the day he and his brother James were working with their father Zebedee, washing their fishing nets and cleaning the boats, after a long night of fishing work. Jesus came strolling down the beach that day and invited both John and James to leave their fishing nets and follow Him. What do you think the conversation was at that moment between a father and his two sons who were in business together? It appears Zebedee sent them with his blessing, and that day they formally became true 'followers of Jesus'. But what if... what if John had said no, at least not today? What if John had reasoned *'an honorable son would stay and help Dad in the family business. I can't leave Dad to carry the load of this work without me, especially as he grows older, I should stay here with the nets and the boats.'*

*Those, my friends, are only two of many 'defining moment' decisions which led John to be in that upper room that Thursday evening sitting next to Jesus.* How do I know? Look at what John wrote in John 13. Jesus had just done the unthinkable. Jesus was the host of this Passover meal, yet He had gotten up from His place at the table, taken a towel and basin and gone around the table washing the feet of every man at the table. Dr. Luke tells us Jesus had earlier that Thursday sent Peter and **John** into Jerusalem to make preparations for this long-anticipated Passover evening together. (Luke 22:7,8) So was it an oversight by John that he had not arranged for a servant to be at the door for the customary feet cleaning as Jesus and the disciples came in from the dusty, dirty road that evening? *If so, can you imagine what John was feeling as he watched Jesus wash 24 dirty feet, including his!*

Coming back to the table Jesus shocked them all by saying: ***"I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray Me!"*** John was there and that moment was etched in his memory forever! John wrote: ***"His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them He meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to Jesus. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, 'Ask Him which one He means.' Leaning back on Jesus, he asked Him, "Lord who is it?"*** (John 13:21-25) It shouldn't be difficult for us to put ourselves at that table, my friends. These 13 men had spent almost every day of the past few months together walking the dusty roads of northern Israel, watching Jesus speak, perform miracles, and help people in need. He had spent many times of private, extended time with these men telling them about the kingdom of God and what God wanted them to understand if they were going to take His message to the world. So how could it be that one of them was a traitor? It was unthinkable!

Did you notice where John was sitting? Did you notice who bold Peter spoke to, urging him to ask Jesus who it was? Did you notice, as far as we can tell, no one else said anything as they all waited for **'the disciple whom Jesus loved'** to do what none of them had the courage to do... ask Jesus who the traitor was! This was another 'defining moment' for John and for all of them. I love this moment! It tells me *John had such confidence in the integrity and strength of the relationship Jesus and he had, that he could ask the question no one else was courageous enough to ask, confident it wasn't him and willing to be the advocate for the rest of the group.* Now look around the table... what do you see in each man's face? Matthew, James, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel, Thomas, Judas... all of them, what do you see? And think back over this past week, since Easter, your attitudes, your words, your choices. Now look yourself in the mirror... what do you see in your own eyes?

You'll remember Jesus identified Judas as the traitor, and after taking the bread from the hand of Jesus, Judas got up and left the room in shame, and in a hurry, but also in determination to accomplish his betrayal mission. Jesus continued on that Thursday evening speaking of His love for the Father and His love for these men and urging them to consider themselves as branches connected to Him, the life-giving Vine. (John 15:1-8) Jesus taught them much about the Holy Spirit and promised He'd send the Spirit as a Counselor to be with them forever. (John 14:15-27) Jesus prayed over them a remarkable prayer asking for the Father's protection of them and unity among them. (John 17) *Jesus of course broke the Passover bread and poured the Passover cup but explained these were now symbols of His body which would be sacrificed, and His blood poured out as payment in full for sin so God the Father could forgive any repentant sinner who would fully trust in Jesus. (Luke 22:14-20)* It was another defining moment for all of them!!

John remembered Jesus then led these friends to the garden of Gethsemane where they and even he, slept in their weariness rather than praying in support of Jesus who was struggling with the heavy weight of what He alone knew was ahead of Him. (Matt. 26:36-46) John records how Judas came, and betrayed Jesus and all the disciples fled into the shadows. (John 18:1-14) All except he and Peter who followed from a distance. (John 18:15,16) Then the long night of trials and beatings and mockery of Jesus, and Peter's denials... and John was eyewitness to it all! (John 18:17-27) Finally Pilate, and the screams from the people to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus! The long, stumbling, bloody walk up the hill to the execution site, and the barbaric nailing of long iron spikes into Jesus' hands and feet. And then... *John alone stood there, trying to comfort Mary, Jesus' mother, in this unthinkable but also defining moment. Why were no other disciples there, at the cross? Why was it only John?*

Listen, Jesus is gasping for air and speaking to John and Mary, His mother, whom Jesus sees standing and weeping at His cross: **"Dear woman, here is your son', and to this disciple, 'here is your mother."**

John wrote his reflection of this 'defining moment': ***"Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother... When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing near her, He spoke... and from that time on this disciple took her into his home."*** (John 19:25-27) Look at John, on this Friday, one week later as he remembers. Big tears roll down his cheeks as he gets up from the place where he's been reflecting and walks over to a dear woman sitting quietly in a rocking chair looking out the window. He gives her a hug, and I imagine him saying to her, "*Dear Mary it was one week ago about now, Jesus asked me to care for you. I want you to know it is, and will be, the greatest privilege of my life to care for the mother of my Friend, my Savior and my Lord, Jesus.*"

My "Walking with Jesus" friends, will you find some quiet time to remember today... remembering both what you know of that Passover weekend when Jesus gave His life for you, *and also remembering the 'defining moments' of your life which have shaped the course of your life?* What would you like to say to the risen Jesus today, one week after "Good Friday"?

I'm enclosing a video link to a powerful old song, "*Where you THERE when they Crucified my Lord?*" but I caution you, the scenes are graphic and taken from the film, "The Passion of the Christ."

**Today's Scripture is John 13-19.**