

For the next few months we will be exploring the Gospel of John in detail. John states that he wrote his Gospel so that his readers (including us) may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing they may have life in his name (John 20. 31)

In the first part of his Gospel, John carefully selected a series of 'signs', *semeia*, which reveal Jesus' glory (2.11) through which people believe in him (2.23, 7.31, 10.41). The second part, covers the last few days of Jesus' life and how Jesus glorifies his Father through his death and resurrection.

Read John 21. 15-22

'Follow me' (verse 19): Having used Peter's family name in verse 15, 16 and 17, Jesus takes Peter back to his original call. This was when Peter was first called to be a disciple, in John 1.40 - 42. Sometimes we need to go back to important, foundational experiences in our journey of following Jesus. Not to live in the past, but to hear the call to 'Follow me' more deeply in the present.

- What are your special discipleship experiences?

Peter and the Beloved Disciple

Towards the end of John's Gospel the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple becomes a bit of a 'theme'. For example, look at John 20:3 – 8 where they race each other to the tomb; or John 13. 23 – 25.

- In your own life and Christian service, have there been people you just can't help comparing yourself to? How does Jesus' reply to Peter in verse 22 help you?

We are called not to compare ourselves to others, but to be faithful in our own discipleship and to follow the voice of our good Shepherd.

Read 1 John 1. 1 – 4

The first few verses point to the doctrine of the Incarnation. The eternal life, which was with the Father became a historical reality in Jesus (v2). The apostles have seen it with their own eyes, they have heard it with their own ears and they have touched it with their own hands (v1-3). You may want to compare this reading with the first few verses of the Gospel of John (John 1. 1-4; 14)

This message of the incarnation and of the resurrection must be boldly proclaimed for it is grounded in the truthful audible, visible and tangible witnessing of the Apostles. The word becoming flesh is neither a philosophical speculation, nor a tentative suggestion, nor a modest contribution to religious thought, but it is a confident affirmation by those who have been first hand witnesses.

- What do you think it must have felt like to be able to say that you had actually *seen, heard, and touched* Jesus yourself? (during his life time and after his resurrection)
- In what sense have we 'seen, heard and touched' the Lord Jesus Christ?
- What is your own story of faith? What would you like to pass on to new or younger Christians? Take some time and maybe jot something down. This is the story that God has given you.

Sharing our stories of faith

We can share our stories with each other, and with other generations. We can also pray for ways to share our story with those who do not yet know God's saving love for them. Who would you love to share your story with? Think of a particular person and pray for an opportunity. *Leave some quiet space for people to do this.*