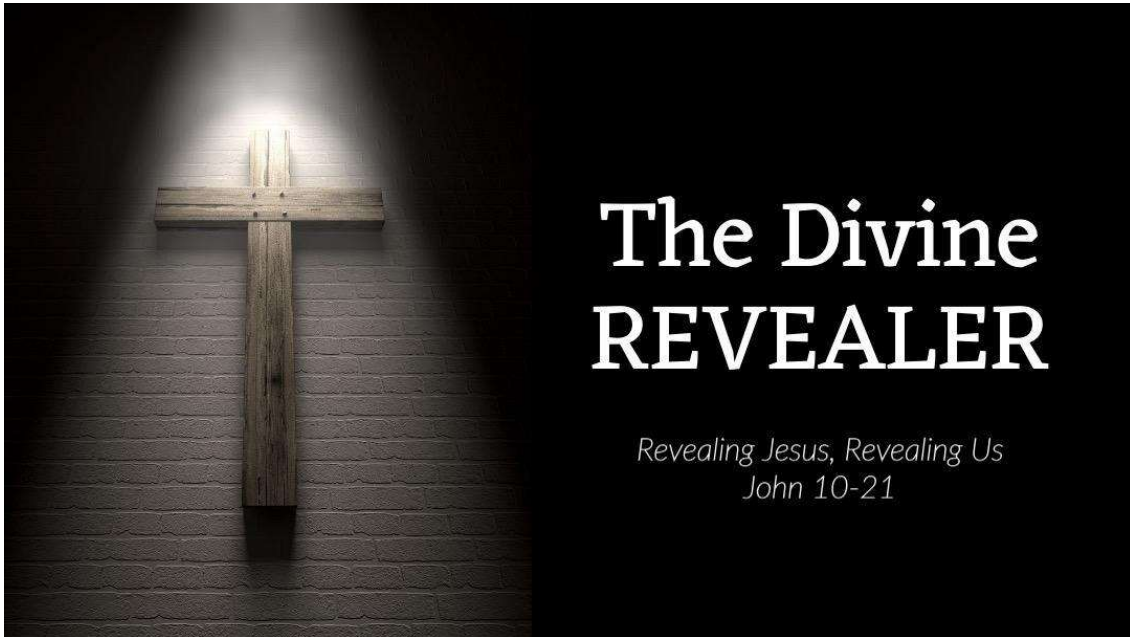


**Name:**

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# **Growth Group Booklet**

**Term 3, 2021**



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Welcome to term 3 in John's gospel. Some of our sister churches are continuing from term 1, others are joining us afresh. We pray we'd all be growing together in Christ Jesus, as we all learn together from 'The Divine Revealer – the Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us'.

This Booklet includes 9 episodes from our journey through John's gospel. Each episode has a 'big idea' – our summary of the main point the passage is teaching. We've also come up with a big idea for term 3: *'As the hour of Jesus' glory arrives in John's gospel, we discover that Jesus is the Divine Revealer, who reveals God as he also reveals our own hearts before him.'*

Each episode assumes about 1.5 to 2 hours together, for discussion in a group sized anywhere from 2 people up to 7 or 8. This booklet assumes weekly growth groups, and we're assuming our people are committed to being in church every week. We've worked

hard to align our Bible Talks in church with the questions in this booklet. To make the most of John's gospel this term, we encourage you to do the following:

**Before Church:** Read each week's Bible Reading, the day before church.

**To Church:** Take this booklet with you to church, using it to make notes.

**After Church:** Invest an hour or two by yourself sometime after church, working through the questions before your growth group meets during the week.

When we meet in Growth Groups, you'll notice we're using our 6 R's model: *Reflect, Read, Refresh, Research, Relationships* and *Respond*. The most important of the 6 R's are the last two: *Relationships* and *Responding* in prayer. Try to work through the first 4 R's efficiently in your group time so that you can

slow down, savour and really enjoy the last two together.



Your brothers in Christ

Reverends Joshua Rowe, Peter Evans, Brad Dewson, Andrew Purcell, David Bailey and Elders Nick Prins and David Coburn.

## **EPISODE 13 SEE THE GLORIOUS LIFE GIVER**

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*See the glory of Jesus, as He reveals his bitter grief and ultimate power over death - foreshadowing his own sacrificial death to call to life all who believe in him.*

### **Following Sunday 18 July**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 11**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. What does Jesus **say** and what does Jesus **do** when he hears that Lazarus is not well? (How is this 'unusual' compared to what we might call a 'normal response' to this situation?)
2. How do the crowd respond to Jesus' 'slowness to act'? (verse 37)
3. What is the response of the Jewish leaders when they hear what Jesus has done? (from verse 45 onward) How is their resolution an indication of their worldliness compared to Jesus' offer of life?

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. What (according to John) is the whole purpose of the episode with Lazarus? (verse 14)
2. In verses 17-37 what are Mary, Martha, the disciples and the Jews yet to understand about Jesus?
3. Jesus doesn't respond to the situation the way they would have liked. What did they want him to do? (what 'terms' did they suggest for Jesus?)

4. What does Jesus end up doing, and how are his terms far better than any of their expectations?

### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. In raising Lazarus from the dead, what events does Jesus foreshadow from the Old Testament? (see Daniel 12:2, Psalm 16:9-11 and Acts 2:29-32)

2. What is Jesus' greatest 'sign' in John's gospel, that the resurrection of Lazarus points to? How does this give us hope?

3. Compare and contrast the different responses that people have to this outstanding 'sign'. (See verses 45, 53 and John 12:9-11)

4. How do the different responses demonstrate the allegiance of each person, and what will the final outcome be for them (according to Daniel 12:1-4)?

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Pray that we might know and trust that Jesus has power over death itself, and gives life to anyone he chooses.

2. Pray that we'd not only see the glory of Jesus, but be able to share the news of Him and his power to give life - with others.

3. Pray that at the final resurrection we would be counted amongst God's people and blessed with eternal life.

## **EPISODE 14 WELCOME THE KING OF GLORY**

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*As the King of Glory arrives in Jerusalem for his enthronement, some are confused and others are conflicted, but the Father will reveal clarity – by glorifying His Son.*

### **Following Sunday 25 July**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 12**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. Noting the presence of Lazarus and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem that's about to happen in verses 12-19, what's the significance of what Mary does in verses 1-8?
2. In verses 23-26, how does Jesus explain what must happen to bring about eternal life?
3. The crowd is confused, in verse 34. How would you explain to them what Jesus is about to do?

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. In verse 16, we're told that the disciples didn't understand the magnificent scene before them – at the time. But what is Jesus revealing, and inviting us as readers to understand, in verses 12-15?
2. In verse 23 Jesus declares, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." What does Jesus mean by this, and how is



this a massive change to all his previous talk about 'his hour' in the story so far?

3. In verses 35-36, Jesus tells the crowd what they need to do while he is still with them. What 'darkness' now awaits Jesus up ahead, and how is this related to the 'darkness' about to overtake the crowd? (see also verse 46)

### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. So, Jesus tells his disciples that eternal life is found through dying (verse 24), hating our life in this world (verse 25) and following Jesus to 'where I... will be' (verse 26). Discuss what this means.

2. In verse 36 Jesus hides himself, once again being elusive. He's finished telling them what they need to know about him. What's the surprising path to life in verses 20-35?

3. We would think that physically seeing the miraculous signs of Jesus would result in belief. But in verses 37-43 we're told that's not the case. Who is speaking these verses and to whom is he speaking?

4. Discuss what **does** lead to belief, in verses 37-50?

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Pray for specific areas of your life that you would like to put to death and instead experience life.

2. Pray for the dark areas of your life where you need the shining light of Jesus.

3. Give thanks for the opportunity we have to know God the Father, his love, grace and mercy towards us, through his Son Jesus.

## **EPISODE 15 THE FULLNESS OF TIME**

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*As Jesus' hour of fulfilment arrives, he begins his farewell by 'patterning' his love for his people - commanding us to live accordingly.*

### **Following Sunday 01 August**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 13**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. What 'end' is John the storyteller referring to, in verse 1?
2. We are told that Jesus 'knows' three things. What are they? (verses 1, 3 and 11)
3. Jesus sets an example and gives a commandment to his disciples in this chapter. What are they (verses 14-15 and 34)?

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. How does each action of Jesus in verses 4-12 reflect his overall mission?
2. Have a look at Simon Peter's words in verses 8-9 and 37. What is admirable about what Peter says? In what way does he completely miss the mark?

#### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. Jesus sets out his example for Christian community in verses 14-15. If you were to describe a local church that followed his example well, what would be some distinguishing features?

2. How would we behave when:

- a) we meet together?
- b) we interact informally?
- c) engage each-other before the broader community?
- d) disagree with each-other online?

3. What are some things that make loving one another difficult?  
What are some of the barriers to following Jesus' command in verse 34?

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Praise God for the Divine Revealer, who has revealed what he 'knows' so we can know God's love.
2. Thank God Jesus' revealing the way of love, by giving us his own example as he commands us to follow him.
3. Pray for our friends and families to know that we are disciples of Jesus, by the ways we love one another.

## **EPISODE 16 PREPARATION, PROMISES, PRESENCE**

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*With his departure imminent, Jesus prepares his followers for a new era of the Spirit indwelling them, setting up a place for us to trust his promises and obey his commands – in a world of trouble.*

### **Following Sunday 08 August**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 14**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. What is it that Thomas and Philip find confronting about Jesus, the Divine Revealer? (verses 5 and 8)? What are they finding difficult to grasp?
2. When Jesus answers them (verses 6-7 and then 9-10), what does it reveal about their hearts at this point?
3. While he is still with his first disciples, before his 'hour of glory' up ahead, Jesus promises to send them '**another** advocate' (verse 16). Who was the first advocate?

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. Jesus seeks to comfort his disciples by revealing part of the future to them. What does Jesus promise his first disciples in verses 1-3, and why can we also find this reassuring?
2. In this chapter, what does John reveal about how all 3 persons of the Trinity work together in the life of believers?
3. In verses 28-29, what does the Divine Revealer promise he is about to do, to help his first disciples believe in Him? How does

this resonate with John's purpose for writing his gospel, for us (see 20:31)?

### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. How does Jesus calm the anxieties of his first disciples, and how might these things be good for us today?
2. What promises does Jesus make to those who love Him (see verses 3, 14, 16-17, 23, 26, and 27). Which of these give you the most assurance and confidence?
3. If you love Jesus, what does he say you will do?
4. Jesus talks about the 'home' of his Father in verses 2 and 23. After Jesus' death and resurrection – and return to the Father – who will they send to make their home with us, and what will He do? (verse 26)

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Praise God for the promises we have in Jesus, and for his Holy Spirit now 'indwelling' in us.
2. Ask God to help us 'live in the peace' Jesus has secured for us, and that we'd not let our hearts be troubled, or to live in fear.
3. Pray for those you know who are yet to believe. Pray they will find the life that Jesus promises to those who love Him.

## **EPISODE 17 BEAR THE FRUIT OF LOVE**

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*At the height of his farewell speech Jesus commands his disciples to bear the fruit of love, by abiding in him in a hostile world.*

### **Following Sunday 15 August**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 15:1-16:4**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. How does Jesus help his disciples become more fruitful? (verses 1-11)
2. What do we learn about love in verses 12-17?
3. Why should those who love Jesus expect to be hated by the world? (verses 18-25)

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

Chapters 1-12 in John span over two and a half years, while John 13-19 spans a mere 24 hours. In these chapters Jesus gives a 'farewell speech' (chapters 13-17) full of instruction for his disciples, once he's gone. John 15 (especially verses 12-17) marks the climax of this speech, and includes the most important topics Jesus wants his disciples to know.

1. What connections can you see between the imagery of the vine in 15:1-11 and foot washing in 13:1-17? Who does Jesus reveal to be the example of the unclean, thrown into the fire (see 13:18-30)?

2. Disciples remain in Jesus and bear fruit. How is the Samaritan woman the best example in John's gospel, of bearing fruit (see 4:39-42)?

3. How does this passage show that Jesus has "loved us to the end" (13:1b)?

### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. What pruning/cleaning do you think the Divine Revealer is currently doing in your life?

2. Jesus reveals that his command to love each other (verses 12 and 17) involves sacrifice (verse 13). But it also promises joy (verse 11). How does Jesus ultimately secure that joy for his disciples (see 20:20)? What now are some practical, everyday ways you could 'lay down your life' to love someone in your life?

3. How do you feel about the expectation that if we're loving Jesus, we should expect to be 'hated without reason' (verse 25)? If the world doesn't seem to hate you, is it because it loves you as its own (verse 19)? What comfort is there in verse 19?

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Pray for something that needs pruning in your life.

2. Pray for our ongoing commitment to 'remain' in Jesus, no matter how much the world might hate us.

3. Commit yourself to sacrificially loving your church family, as a reflection of how Jesus laid down his life for each of us.

## **EPISODE 18 TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH**

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*Even in the disciples' sorrow at his departure, Jesus reveals how the Father, Son and Spirit transform our sorrow to joy - because he has overcome the world.*

### **Following Sunday 22 August**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 16:4-33**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. Split into three smaller groups. Each group should read either verses 4-15, 16-22, or 23-33 and report back in their own words:
  - a) Which person of the Trinity (Father, Son or Holy Spirit) their section describes;
  - b) According to their section, how this person will help disciples in their sorrow; and
  - c) Describe how Jesus' words in their section bring comfort to Jesus' disciples in their sorrow.
2. Why is it better for Jesus' followers that he 'go back' to the Father? And what will Jesus do to ensure that his disciples' grief at his departure, will turn to joy? (see 20:20)

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. Based on this chapter, come up with a list of questions you could ask someone who claims they are seeing a 'work of the Spirit'. What are the criteria we could wisely use to measure whether it is truly a work of the Holy Spirit?
2. How does Jesus, through this chapter, give us confidence as we pray?



3. This chapter gives us many reasons why we can face suffering and sorrow with peace and joy, as followers of Jesus. As a group, list as many reasons from this chapter as you can.

### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. What are some practical ways could you remember these things for **yourself**?
2. How could we remind **each other**, when we are facing times of sorrow? What should we be careful of, as we do so?
3. How does Jesus' treat his disciples in their sorrows? How does this shape the way we treat each other in times of sorrow?

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Thank God for the precious gift of his Holy Spirit, and of free and full access to him in prayer – through Jesus.
2. Pray for those you know who are suffering or in sorrow. Pray that God would comfort them, give them peace, and turn their grief into joy, in Him.
3. Pray for someone you know who doesn't trust in Jesus. Pray that God's Spirit would reveal their own hearts, and also reveal the Lord Jesus.

## **EPISODE 19 DIVINE LOVE**

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*On the cusp of his glorious exaltation, Jesus gives his disciples a vast, cosmic perspective of how the loving unity of the godhead will unite us in His love, so the whole world will see that we share in the Father's love for His Son.*

### **Following Sunday 29 August**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 17**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. In verse 1 Jesus finishes 4 chapters of teaching his disciples directly. He now turns his head toward heaven and prays out loud. How is Jesus continuing to teach though, given this highly intimate communication with his own Father in heaven? How come we can overhear such a privileged conversation, held within the godhead of the Trinity, on the night of Jesus' betrayal?
2. Jesus prays for himself (verses 1-5), his first disciples (6-19) and for those 'who will believe through their message' (20-26). How have we been included in Jesus' prayer?
3. List everything Jesus specifically asks for, in his prayer:

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. Discuss how Jesus prays about 'glory'. For example, who is about to be glorified? Who does Jesus want to see such glory? Who gives glory, and through whom does glory come?
2. In verse 1 Jesus mentions his 'hour' again. He mentions 'now' 3 times (verses 5,7 and 13). And in verse 4 he talks about 'finishing the work' he has been given to do. What hour has now come at

this point in John's history of Jesus, and how is Jesus on the cusp of getting the job done?

3. Throughout this prayer Jesus talks a lot about 'revealing' and 'knowing'. The very prayer itself is a form of revelation (of 'revealing'). Who is this Divine Revealer revealing to us as we read this passage, and how does this passage reveal what we think about him?

### **Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer**

1. What does Jesus want the rest of the world to know about us – about how we relate to one-another?

2. According to verses 20-23, what is the whole purpose of Jesus' prayer for us?

3. This prayer is all about relationships. According to the Divine Revealer, for what purpose has he made God known to us? (see verse 26) How would you describe this 'Divine Love'?

### **Respond in Prayer**

1. Praise God for allowing us to 'overhear the godhead' on the cusp of Jesus' glorious exaltation.

2. Thank God for revealing his 'Divine Love' for us in Jesus, that He unites us in His love.

3. Ask God to fulfil Jesus' prayer in us, that we may be seen by others to be united in Him.

## **EPISODE 20 WHO IS IT YOU WANT?**

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*Under trial, Jesus offers us a choice - by revealing the Messiah he truly is, and the kind of Messiah we think we seek.*

### **Following Sunday 06 Sep**

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#### **Reflect on the Service**

Where in the Sunday service were you able to see or experience God at work (this could be in the sermon, Bible reading, songs, prayer or a conversation)?

#### **Read John 18:1-27**

What stood out to you?

#### **Refresh**

1. How does Peter's bravado in verses 1-11 change in verses 15-18 and 25-27? What sort of Messiah was he seeking?
2. The arrest of Jesus must have appeared disastrous to the disciples. What evidence is there in this chapter, that it's actually Jesus in full control of the situation?
3. How is it ironic in verse 21 that when interrogated, Jesus invites anyone who heard his teaching to testify? Who is there that could have done that?

#### **Research: Revealing Jesus, Revealing Us**

1. Jesus of Nazareth (verse 4 and 7) is finally captured, but who else does he reveal himself to be, in verse 6? How do you explain what happens at this moment to his captors?
2. The storyteller reveals in verse 4 that Jesus 'knew' that this was going to happen to him. Why didn't Jesus flee? Why did he allow himself to be arrested?
3. The walled garden where Jesus is arrested is a reminder of a walled sheepfold (John 10:1-8). Who is acting as the sheep, shepherd, thieves and hired hand in John 18?

## Relationships: Following the Divine Revealer

1. What does the contrast between Peter's denials (on the one hand) and the sovereign control of Jesus (on the other) teach us about what to do when our situation seems disastrous? And about what *not* to do, when all appears to be lost?
2. We'd all like to think that we wouldn't deny Jesus, like Peter did. What is yet to happen at the climax of John's gospel, to give Peter the courage to finally acknowledge Jesus properly? (as he does in 21:15-19)
3. **Jesus** answered his interrogators with "I Am" (verse 6). But throughout the chapter **Peter** answers his interrogators with "I am not." By using this simple poetic device, explain how the storyteller is summarising all that's different between God's character and the character of sinful human beings, desperately in need of resurrection?

## Respond in Prayer

1. Give thanks that Jesus willingly submitted himself to be arrested, so he could drink the bitter cup of judgement for our sin.
2. Ask the Spirit to help us trust that God is in control, even when disaster seems to strike.
3. Thank God that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, would lay his body across the entry to the sheepfold, to save his sheep.

## Notes

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