

# Growing Together

*Cro***X***ley Green*  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
*Devoted to Christ, His People, His Mission*

**Sunday and Mid-Week  
Teaching and Discipleship  
Programme**

**Journeying through John-  
*Discovering Jesus Through the  
Eyes of a Friend***

**Sept to Oct 2021**

## Introduction

At the start of this new season, we are hoping and working towards expanding our church life and mission following the easing of the covid restrictions which have shaped much of our life over the past 18 months. Part of this is the regathering of our small groups for face-to-face meeting. We hope that this will be an encouragement to you all. Yet we are aware that some remain anxious and cautious, and we will need to show grace and love to each other as we find the right path ahead.

Through the autumn, we will be following a new series **“Journeying through John-Discovering Jesus Through the Eyes of a Friend,”** reading through John’s gospel. It is often commented that this gospel is quite different from the other three. It is thought to be written by the “disciple who Jesus loved” - the apostle John. An account of Jesus’ life from someone to whom he was very close and who shared in events of his life, through to his death and resurrection. A historic account, but one also flowing from a lifetime of friendship and following Jesus. A story of God revealing his life in Jesus who “was with God in the beginning” yet who “made his life among us;” being continually made known in John’s and our lives by the Spirit who Jesus promised would “teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”.

At the end John says, “Jesus did many other things ... the whole world would not have room for all the books that would be written”. He leaves with a sense there was more to know of Jesus as we rediscover his life and as he shares life with us. We hope that the series will open all our eyes and hearts to Jesus in new ways. And that like John, we might “testify to these things”, to others who we meet in our lives, making Jesus come alive for them.

Dave Gregory and Lisa Kerry

## How to use this guide

### For each Sunday, this booklet provides

- The week's theme and Bible passage
- A pattern to use in Discipleships groups, your own prayer times or with another person within a home allowing you to go deeper in your exploration of our Sunday themes.

## Journeying through John-Discovering Jesus Through the Eyes of a Friend

Shaded weeks are when Discipleship Groups are scheduled to meet if they are following a twice a month pattern - usually weeks 2 and 4 of each month.

<b>Week Beginning Sunday</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Weekly Theme</b>	<b>Text</b>
<b>Sept 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Church Meeting Week	The Beginning	John 1v1-18
<b>Sept 19<sup>th</sup></b>		Seeing Deeper	John 1v19-28
<b>Sept 26<sup>th</sup></b>		Revealing Jesus	John 1v29-34
<b>Oct 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		Seeing Jesus Anew	John 1v35-42
<b>Oct 10<sup>th</sup></b>		An Invitation	John 1v43-51
<b>Oct 17<sup>th</sup></b>		A Sign	John 2v1-11
<b>Oct 24<sup>th</sup></b>		A Perfect Place	John 2v12-25
<b>Oct 31<sup>st</sup></b>		Late Night Conversation	John 3v1-21

## Discipleship Groups - Going Deeper

To help groups go deeper with Sunday topics, as well as discussion questions for each week, two more open patterns are offered that can be used with any Bible passage together.

The first - **“Listening to the Voice of God in Life”** - encourages you to explore the different ways in your life in which you have been aware of God and to share what you are grateful to God for. There is space to share how the Sunday teaching that week has both challenged and encouraged you. This wider pattern may allow you to explore the different Spiritual Pathways together and individually.

The second - **“Listening to the Voice of God in the Text”** has more of a focus upon the Biblical text used on Sunday. It still encourages members of the group to engage personally with the passage, exploring what stood out for them, what they did not understand and what challenged them.

**For both patterns, discussion starters are provided which draw out themes from the text. Don't feel you have to look at every question. Use the ones that are right for your group. There may be other issues that arise for people out of the sermon too.**

All the patterns end with asking how God is asking you to respond to what he is saying and showing you.

**On a given evening**, choose one pattern to use with your group. Or you may want to shape the evening by the specific questions. These might be helpful in combination with the patterns, so be creative and experiment!

Allow different people to share their responses to the questions. You may want to linger on some responses that might have wider relevance to people in the group.

Please remember to take some time each session for prayer. Prayer suggestions are provided for each week for you to ask God to help you to respond to what he has shown you, as well as prayers for people and wider issues as well as the life of the church.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pattern 1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Listening to voice of God in Life</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pattern 2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Listen to the voice of God in the text</b></p>
<p>Where and in what ways have you been aware of God this week?</p> <p>What are you grateful to God for?</p> <p>What has prevented you being aware of God? How might you resist these things?</p> <p>In what ways did God encourage you through the Bible text/worship/sermon?</p> <p>In what ways did God challenge you?</p> <p>How is God calling you to respond in your life, relationships, and discipleship to how you have heard his voice in your journey with him this past week?</p>	<p>What stood out for you in the Bible text or sermon? Was there anything new for you?</p> <p>Was there anything that puzzled you or you did not understand?</p> <p>What challenged you in the Bible text or sermon?</p> <p>How is God calling you to respond in your life, relationships, and discipleship to how you have heard his voice in the bible text this past week?</p>

## **Week Beginning Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021**

### **Theme : The Beginning**

### **Bible Reading : John 1v1-17**

- Share together was struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- Contrast v1 and v14. Which Jesus do you connect with most - the Cosmic Lord or the one who made his dwelling among us? How is God revealed in both? How does this shape your own faith?
- We are emerging from a time of darkness - how does v5 encourage, comfort, and challenge you?
- Jesus is the light. John points to the light. How do we point to the light?
- Look at v12. Is there a difference in receiving and believing in Jesus? Is it something we need to do once? Do we need to keep on growing in both?
- v12 has a promise for those who receive and believe - "the right to become children of God". What undermines this? How can we become surer of this truth?

### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- For the re-gathering of church life; that we would know grace and truth and we journey with one another

## **Week Beginning Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021**

### **Theme : Seeing Deeper**

### **Bible Reading : John 1v19-28**

- Share together was struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- Look at v19-22 - When people discover we are a Christian, do they make assumptions as to who you are and what you are like? How can you counter that?
- In v26, John says "among you stands one you do not know". How has your view of Jesus changed over the years? Are you open still to discovering something new of him?
- Reflect on v23 - John knows his purpose before God is to point people towards Jesus. How important is this in your life?

### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for the people working to restart church ministry and mission; that through us people will know Jesus

## **Week Beginning Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021**

### **Theme : Revealing Jesus**

#### **Bible Reading : John 1v29-34**

- Share together what struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- In recognising Jesus, John displays an openness to the Holy Spirit pointing to where God was at work in people. How might we become more aware to where God is at work around us?
- Look at v31 - John says he came baptising so that Jesus might be revealed. Where do we start in revealing Jesus? Character; Actions; Words; Listening?
- Look at v29 - John describes Jesus as "the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". The Jewish people were familiar with the imagery of sacrifice as part of worship. Does this language connect with people today? Might we need to speak of Jesus to people differently today?
- Look at v32 and 33 - In helping people to see Jesus, what part do we and what part does God play? Try to share from your own experience.

#### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for any barriers that stop you spending time with Jesus
- Prayer that you would be open to Jesus to help you know yourself better
- Pray for Philip and Rosemary Halliday, members of the church who are serving with BMS World Mission in France supporting Church Planting with the French Baptist Union

## **Week Beginning Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2021**

### **Theme : Seeing Jesus Anew**

#### **Bible Reading : John 1v35-42**

- Share together was struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- v35-36 - Share together about people who pointed you to Jesus or helped you see him in a fresh way.
- v38 - If Jesus asked you "What do you want" how would you answer?
- v39 - Andrew and the other of John's disciples were wanting to take time with Jesus. Is this something that you still feel is important? Or does it need to be renewed? If so, what barriers stop this and how might they be overcome?
- v40-42 - Jesus gave Simon a new name, "Cephas", "Peter", both of which mean rock. What are you discovering new about yourself through meeting Jesus? Is that always comfortable?

#### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for any barriers that stop you spending time with Jesus
- Prayer that you would be open to Jesus to help you know yourself better
- Pray for the church as we begin to seek God as to who should serve as deacons

## **Week Beginning Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021**

### **Theme : An Invitation**

#### **Bible Reading : John 1v43-50**

- Share together was struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- v43-44 - Philip shared what he knew about Jesus to Nathanael. What part does our story of faith have to play in others discovering Jesus?
- How does the feeling that you don't know enough about Jesus stop you speaking about him to others? What can we learn from Nathanael?
- v46 - When Nathanael argues, what does Philip do? Get into an argument? Or offer an invitation? What invitations might we offer? How are our lives an invitation?
- Share your stories with one another as to how you began your journey with Jesus. Was there one thing about him that caught your attention?

#### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for people by name whom you would want to introduce to Jesus

## **Week Beginning Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021**

### **Theme : A Sign**

#### **Bible Reading : John 2v1-12**

- Share together what struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- Look at v11. This is the first of seven "miraculous signs" that John records. What is the point of miracles? How might they strengthen our faith?
- Look at the conversation between Jesus and his mother Mary in verse 3-5. What does it say about Mary's expectation of what God had promised in Jesus? What does it say about how we need to have patience in God's promise being fulfilled? (You might want to look at Luke 1v26-38)
- Jesus performs this miracle to help a couple whose wedding plans went wrong. What does this say to us about Jesus' concern for our ordinary lives?
- In Jesus heaven and earth meet. What does this sign reveal about how God seeks to bring hope and transformation to the world? How can we have hope when we face difficult circumstances that don't seem to change?

#### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for Jesus' to be at work in the ordinary things of life that you have coming up in the next few weeks

## **Week Beginning Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021**

### **Theme : A Perfect Place**

#### **Bible Reading : John 2v12-25**

- Share together was struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- The Temple was a place where God's presence dwelled; where heaven and earth met. Do you have special places where you feel close to God?
- Through the past 18 months, we have been restricted in how we can meet. Are we too dependent on gatherings to sustain our spiritual life and coming close to Jesus? What have you learnt about staying close to Jesus beyond gathering?
- Look at v16. The Temple was a place where people could come close to God? What made Jesus so angry that he broke up the market? Are there people who might feel shut out of church? How can we be a more open community?
- Look at v19-22. Jesus depicts himself as a more perfect, permanent temple. How does the resurrection reassure us that we can come close to God?
- Look at v24-25. Why is there a hiddenness about Jesus? Do we try to shape Jesus according to our own desires and ideas? Should it be the other way around? Are you comfortable with that?

#### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for our regathering as a church - that we would be welcoming and understanding to the various levels of comfort and anxiety people feel.

## **Week Beginning Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2021**

### **Theme : Late Night Conversation**

#### **Bible Reading : John 3v1-21**

- Share together was struck you in Sunday's sermon.
- Look at v1-2 - Nicodemus recognised God at work in Jesus, but came to see Jesus at night, hidden from the sight of others the religious authorities. What stops people from expressing interest in Jesus and discovering more about him today? What part might the church play in this?
- Look at v3-8 - What do you understand by being "born again"? Has it become too much of a catchphrase for some Christians? Is a one-time moment, or something that the Spirit continues to do in our lives?
- v16 is one of the most famous verse in the Bible. What does it teach us about God's heart for people?
- In v16, the Greek word for "world" is "cosmos". What does this say about the scope of God's salvation? Have we been too people focused? How might we need to see it differently in an age of climate change?
- Look at v17-19 - Jesus came to "save the world". What does that mean to you? What does it mean to people beyond the church? Is this language a help or hindrance today in helping people to understand the Christian faith?
- Look at v20-21 - Do we recognise what is described here at work in our own lives. What part does repentance play in becoming a Christian and growing in the Christian life?

#### **Prayer Focus**

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet
- Pray for the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow, meeting over the next two weeks. For the nations to work together to bring God's peace to people and creation.
- Pray that we would be people who draw people into Jesus.

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