

Gospel of John

The Passion

Structure

- Prologue (1: 1-18) - Above
- Book of Signs (Chapter 2 – Chapter 11) – Coming Down
 - Each sign is followed by discourse
- **Book of Glory (Chapter 12 – 20) – nearing the Climax, then going back above**
 - **The Passion/Death - Chs 18-19**
- Appendix (Chapter 21) – Appearances; ‘other things not written’

Themes from Above

The Kingship of Jesus

- Sovereignty, control – to conquer the World (sin/death/satan)

The Freedom to embrace the cross

- He chooses it – Free gift of love; not a helpless victim

The Father's love & mercy

- Jesus' death is God's victory over death/sin
 - Suffering/Triumph are blended
- Understood only when seen w/ the eyes of faith

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Abrupt transition from the Upper Room (no plotting)

Jesus & Disciples go to a 'garden' – recalls the Garden of Eden

Judas betrays Him (no Agony depicted)

- In a place of friendship, intimacy
- With all of humanity in tow (Jews and Gentiles, friend and foes)
- 'with lanterns and torches' – in darkness, false light
 - They brought weapons to confront God

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Jesus commands the situation – The beginning of The Victory

- As The Lord
 - “I Am He” – OT response – falling to the ground
 - They were incapable of anything in front of Him – freedom to lay His life down
- As The Good Shepherd
 - He meets the aggressors head on, did not flee
 - “I Am He...” – commands His men be let go
- As the Willing Sacrifice
 - Peter cuts off the servant’s ear - evil cannot confront evil
 - “Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

Jesus and Peter

The structure alternates between events with Jesus and Peter at the High Priest's house

****Truth vs Falsehood; Strength vs Weakness****

Crisis Shows the Truth

- Jesus is taken to Annas, the former High Priest
- His opponents have already decided his fate

Peter & The Other Disciple

- Peter and 'another disciple' enter the courtyard
- 'other disciple' known to the high priest
- Symbol of faithful discipleship in crisis
- Followed Jesus as far as he could go
- Brought Peter closer

Peter's First Denial

- Human reaction, frightened by the crowd
- Overestimated his strength without Christ

He denies being one of Jesus's disciples

- Peter finds light & warmth with the false light

Jesus and the High Priests

- Story does not dwell on the details of the accusations
- Jesus has spoken the truth openly
 - “Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them”*
- A guard strikes him
 - “..if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”
 - Total rejection of the truth
- Jesus is taken to Caiaphas, but nothing more is said
 - The story isn't about the opponents' arguments, but about Truth vs. Falsehood, Light vs. Darkness

Peter's 2nd and 3rd Denials

- Peter is not an opponent, but surrounds himself with opponents
- Warms himself at the fire – false light

He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

- The zeal and courage he had by Jesus' side is gone
- Denies Jesus even in front of a witness
- Threefold denial is complete denial

Jesus before Pilate

The structure of the story

- Irony throughout
 - That which is mockery is actually revealing truth
 - Those who are judging are the ones truly being judged
- Pilate is quite the character
 - Story oscillates between Jesus and the Jewish authorities
 - ...between arrogance and fear, power and powerlessness
 - Looks to serve himself –faceplants at the biggest moment of his life

Jesus before Pilate

The Kingship (the Truth) revealed

- Jesus was born to be a King
 - To reveal the ultimate truth of God's love for the world
- Kingdom not of this world (not bios, zoe)
 - Kingship has the power to give life
 - Service, complete self-gift – not like kings of this world
- All that happens is to fulfill what He has said

Jesus before Pilate

It was 'early in the morning'... true light is about to return to the world

Are you the King of the Jews?

– *who's asking?*

I'm not a Jew, don't know what's going on here

– *It's not the kind of kingdom you are imagining*

- Jesus reveals the truth – What is truth?
- Pilate dances for power instead of truly engaging Jesus

Barabbas

Pilate looks for a way out *for himself*

-Clever solution – exchange the King of the Jews for Barabbas!

‘a revolutionary’

- The type of person the Jews were hoping for
 - Fighting for the cause of freedom
 - In the bios, could not bring life
- The opposite of Jesus, who is self-giving
- ‘Son of the Father’ - ironic

Small Group Questions

- Why do you think God chose the Cross for our redemption? Couldn't He have found another way?
- How should we respond to our own 'Peter Moments' in our lives?
- What do you think about the situation Pilate was put in between the Truth and the religious authorities?
- Are we sometimes looking for a Barabbas (revolutionary to fix this world) of our own?

Jesus is Condemned

Pilate has Jesus flogged, Crown of thorns

- The King is crowned, hailed as king – in humiliation
 - Cruelty, mockery
 - ‘Hail’ – used for Caesar
- First the Jews rejected him (temple guards) now the gentiles (roman guards) – rejecting the truth
- Where did the purple robe come from?
 - Purple is for royalty, very expensive
 - Seamless tunic was priestly

Jesus is Condemned

“We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

- ***Scary claim***
- Power moves between Pilate & Jesus
- Pilate tries again
 - – gloating, power moves crumble to fear, powerlessness
 - Pilate’s option for the crowd was false – ‘crucify him yourself’

Jesus is Condemned

Pilate tries to release Jesus – ‘seated on the judge’s bench’

- Noon on the day of Preparation for the Passover
- Caesar is pitted against Jesus – choose your king
- Once again, the crowd pressures to choose against Jesus
- All choose Caesar, Pilate won’t release Jesus on his own authority

He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

The Climax has arrived – Jesus carries the cross by himself

Jesus is being 'lifted up', completion of His mission

- Returning to the Father

It's enthronement, He is king on the cross

- Revelation of God's glory

Seamless tunic – garment of the High Priest, the tunic not torn

Jesus' Final Words

“Woman, behold your son. Here is your mother”

- Only John mentions Mary at the cross – ‘at the foot’
 - ‘Woman’ – Wedding at Cana/ Foot of the cross
 - New Eve, Mother of Zion (Is 66:7-8)
- A new family of God is born, symbolized by this bond
 - Father/Son relationship extended to humanity/the Church
 - Mary becomes the mother of all believers

Jesus' Final Words

“I thirst” – Drinks from the final ‘cup’

- Hyssop – used at Passover, part of the Temple ritual sacrifice
- Thirsting for souls (Think back to the Samaritan woman at the well)
- Fulfills the final drink of the Passover

“It is finished” – His mission is complete

- He loved His own until the very end
- Death has been destroyed by Love

Jesus Dies

Very serene death, given the circumstances especially
Jesus is in control, fulfilling all of the prophecies
“one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and
at once blood and water came out.”

- Legs not broken
- Water and Blood (Jn 6:53-56; Jn 7:37-38)

Water to Wine – Wine to Blood – Blood and Water

Is 42:1-6
Zech 12:10
Ex 12:46
Zech 13:1
Joel 4:18
Ezek 47

The Burial of Jesus

Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus

- No longer afraid to admit they were followers
 - Joseph was a secret follower, Nicodemus came at night
- Immediate effects of Jesus' death - courage & generosity

Myrrh & aloes – truly dead, Myrrh is oil of anointing

The passion narrative begins and ends in a garden

Small Group Questions

- After reading about Jesus' death, what comes to mind? Are you encouraged? Did you learn anything new because of John's description?
- What can we learn from Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus? What does it teach us about how Jesus' death impacts people?
- "Behold your mother..." – What do these last words of Jesus on the cross tell us about Mary and the Church?