

**THE UPPER
ROOM
DISCOURSE**



BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 4 2018

Week commencing		Reading Plan	Page Number
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 St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda

ST LUKE'S
2020
VISION

Imagine a church:

Where delight in God
overflows into all of life

Where enduring truth
inspires courageous witness
and a heart for the nations

Where the lost surrender
to the mercy of Christ

Where a hunger to
know, love & serve Christ
renews every season

Where the broken find
a family and the outsider
is embraced

Regarding the study structure

The studies in this series have been written following the “COMA” method. COMA is an acronym for “Context, Observation, Meaning and Application”. It’s just a means of formalising four important ways that we can approach a text when we want to think about it properly.

CONTEXT: As we approach a text each week, it’s important to ground it in the bigger picture, namely God’s plans for his people throughout history. We also need to ground this text in the context of first Century Israel and, most importantly, in the context of the conversation that has happened in preceding chapters.

OBSERVATION: You’ll note that the first observation question is the same for each study. *“Read through the passage. What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?”* While a great deal of time and care are put into the creation of these bible studies, it is highly likely that as your bible study group sits down and reads, that particular words or ideas will stick out. If you observe something that fascinates you as a bible study, feel free to spend some time exploring your observations. The goal of these bible studies is for people to grow in their knowledge and love of God and their appreciation of God’s word. If you are wrestling with your own thoughts and observations and never make it to the ‘official’ questions, that’s fine as long as you feel it’s fruitful for you as a group.

MEANING: In the ‘meaning section’ we’ll hopefully dig a little deeper and consider not only what Jesus said, but what the implications of his statements might have for his listeners. You might see this as a matter of plugging Jesus’ specific statements in a passage into the bigger matrix of God’s word as a whole.

APPLICATION: The goal of bible study is not just to *know* more about God, his nature and character, but to *grow* more in our Christian faith and to *be* more like Jesus. Not every passage in the bible will contain a call to action, or a specific application for our lives, but we should always ask the question *“What does this mean for my life and faith? How does this challenge my thoughts and actions?”*

Introduction to the “The upper room discourse”

There are a number of big differences between the “synoptic” gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and the gospel of John. One particularly striking difference is the focus that they put on the “last Supper”. While the synoptics (so called because they provide a ‘synopsis’ or summary of Jesus’ life) focus on Jesus teaching about the “Lord’s Supper”, John barely makes mention of the meal itself, instead devoting four chapters to Jesus’ final words to his disciples before his death.

Chapters 13-17 provide a sort of “summary statement” for Jesus’ teaching throughout the gospel, not unlike the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. Some commentators view these chapters as being a collection of statements that Jesus had made, drawn together into one narrative group to achieve the end of preparing the reader for the crucifixion and resurrection that is to come. The primary argument for this is that, in comparison to the synoptics, John has shown that he is less concerned with providing a strict chronology for Jesus life and actions than maintaining a narrative flow that points towards Jesus the “Word of God”. That said, there is no compelling reason to see this episode as being anything other than a retelling of an eyewitness account.

Key Themes

The immanence of Jesus’ crucifixion really sets the framework for this text. Key themes include the call for Jesus’ disciples to self-sacrificially love and serve each other, to have confidence that Christ will return, and that his Spirit will be sent in the meantime. There are also themes around perseverance under trial and bearing fruit as Christians.

STUDY 1 - CHAPTER 13

Intro Question: If you knew that tomorrow was to be your last day on Earth, what are some final things that you'd want to do?

CONTEXT

1. Jesus and his friends are gathering together for a Passover meal. What was the significance of such a meal? (Have a look at Exodus 12 to see some of the back story)

2. Looking at John 12:23-28, what do you think Jesus' gathering the disciples together for this big meal is about?

OBSERVATION

3. Read through John 13 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

If you had to break this chapter up into sections, how would you do it?

10. Read v.36-38. Judas plays a clear role in our narrative as the chief betrayer of Jesus, bringing about his arrest and crucifixion. How does Jesus' prophecy at the end of Chapter 13 act as a corrective for us if we're tempted to paint Judas as a sinner, but the other disciples as saints?

APPLICATION

11. Looking at the list of ways Jesus displays his love in question 8, how might we put some of these ways into practice this week

12. (This question is more for personal reflection than public sharing). Looking again at v.36-38, are there areas of your Christian life where you are publicly confident, but privately you know that you struggle. Pray to God that he might grant you both the confidence to acknowledge your failings and his strength to overcome them.

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as Focus Pastor of the 8am congregation and as Pastoral Care Minister for St Luke's. Pray for Jennie's Pastoral Care ministries, especially in her work in visitation and Bible Study in our local retirement villages.

Missionaries

Pray for Matt and Lauren, Ezra and Joanna Thomas and their mission work with OMF in South East Asia.

Community

Pray for our Church Wardens: Colin Adams, Jack Normand and Joel Garlato. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Laurie Davidson, Amanda Garlato, Angela James, Nathan Pollock, Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer) and Kath Telfer. Pray for our Parish Nominators: Michael Easton, David Francis, Amanda Garlato, Louise Parkes, and Lloyd Zietsch. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.

Local Mission

Thank God for the many and varied resources available to us as a parish. As we seek to witness to the goodness of God daily, pray that we might make the most of opportunities to invite people we know to events at church. Pray that God would be preparing the heart of people you could invite to an upcoming event.

STUDY 2 - CHAPTER 14:1-14

INTRO QUESTION: Can you think of a time when someone has said don't get upset/angry/worried but..... before dropping a bombshell guaranteed to do that very thing?

CONTEXT

1. Casting an eye over the last couple of chapters (12:23-25 for example) why do you think Jesus might be encouraging his disciples "*Do not let your hearts be troubled*"?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 14:1-14 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. On your observation of life in general, how effective is it to tell people "don't let your heart be troubled"?

4. How does Jesus describe the relationship between himself and God in v.2, 6-7, 10-11?

5. How might Jesus' promise of a place prepared for them with God be a helpful corrective to the disciples and their very earthbound expectations?

a) Given that Jesus has been speaking to his disciples about his death, how do v.1-4 act as a corrective to the disciples' fear that Jesus is leaving them?

6. What do you think it means to "Believe in God, believe also in me"?

7. What does Philip's statement in v.8 say about the state of his belief?
Why is Jesus' response such a profound one?

8. What is one purpose for his miracles that Jesus outlines in v.11-14

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Pray for Brett as Focus Pastor for 10am. Pray for Brett as he heads up our Ministry profile for St Luke's through the training program MTS and as he serves us as Acting Senior Minister

Missionaries

Pray for Shane and Ruth, Kye, Joel, and Finn Sparks and their mission work with Pioneers in Gijon, Spain.

Pray for Pastor John and Jodi, Gemma, Amber, Zoe, Jasmine, Claudia and Elias Lovell and their work with CMS in the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church in Valencia, Spain.

Community

Pray for our Prime Minister Scott Morrison, and his government. Pray for our state and federal members, Eleni Petinos, Mark Speakman and Scott Morrison. Pray for our Premier, Gladys Berejiklian and her government. We pray also for our local government including our Mayor, Carmelo Pesce.

Local Mission

Thank God for his loving provision in drawing us to him and making us his children and heirs. Pray for members of your family and those close to you who do not know Jesus and Lord and Saviour. Pray for both wisdom and boldness in how to share the good news we have with those who are nearest and dearest to us.

STUDY 3 - CHAPTER 14:15-31

INTRO QUESTION: If you had to explain the Holy Spirit to someone, what do you think you'd say?

CONTEXT

1. If we look back to last week's study, how do you think it might be a helpful foundation to an introduction to the Holy Spirit this week?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 14:15-31 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. Look at the personal pronouns in verses 15-16 & 23-24. How do they change and what do you think the significance of this might be?

4. What are the hallmarks of those who love Jesus? (v.15, 21, 23, 28)

a) Given questions from Thomas and Philip in Chapter 14 (v.5 & 8) and Peter in Chapter 13 (v.37) why do you think it's helpful for Jesus to remind his disciples that they ought to express their love for him by keeping his commands?

b) How is this a struggle for us also?

5. What does Jesus say he is going to do when he returns to heaven?

a) What does the rest of Chapter 14 tell us about this counselor?

MEANING

6. Why should the news that Jesus is returning to the Father cause the disciples to rejoice? Why do you think we get the impression of the opposite reaction?

7. What do you think Jesus means when he says in v.27 *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives"*

8. What do you think Judas (not Judas Iscariot) is getting at when he asks *"But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"*

APPLICATION

9. How does Jesus say that we can recognise the presence of his Holy Spirit within us?

10. How is, or should the promised presence of Jesus, through his Holy Spirit, be an encouragement to us in our day to day lives?

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Russ Denten as Focus Pastor for JNR Church and undergoes his ministry traineeship; that his ministry and studies would bring glory to God.

Missionaries

Pray for John-Francis and Anup Wallace and their mission work in Indore, North India.

Community

Pray for those who serve to protect our country. Pray for health and safety for the service men and women and their Chaplains both here and overseas. Pray for their families waiting at home.

Local Mission

Pray for the wide range of outreach opportunities that we have with local schools. That our scripture teachers would be diligent and loving as they teach classes, that our school chaplains would effectively model Christ in the way they love and support the school community and that St. Luke's Miranda North would continue to build a healthy relationship with the school we meet in. Pray for the breakfast club at Miranda Public and Port Hacking High School.

Upcoming Event

Pray for Square one camp (9-11 November) for kids in years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

STUDY 4 - CHAPTER 15:1-17

INTRO QUESTION: Who is one of the most influential people who has shaped who you are as a person (it doesn't have to be a Christian)

CONTEXT

1. One big characteristic of John's gospel is the "I Am" statements of Jesus. Look at John 2, 4, 6, 10 and 11. Is there a big theme that goes along with these "I Am" pictures?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 15:1-17 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. Take a look at some of the following Old Testament passages that use vine metaphors. Why would this have been a powerful image for Jesus to use? Psalm 80:8-16, Isaiah 5:1-7; 11:1-2, Ezekiel 15:1-8; 17:5-10; 19:10-14.

4. How is v.10 a model for how Jesus has been calling his disciples to follow him in Chapters 14 and 15?

MEANING

5. What does it mean to bear fruit? Is it just a matter of Galatians 5:22-23?

- a) What does it mean to be an unfruitful branch? If you feel unfruitful, should you worry that you're not truly 'saved'?

6. What is the difference between a servant and a friend? Why do you think Jesus goes to the trouble of stating their change in status?

7. How do we make sense of v.7? Does this feed into an "ATM" view of God, where we can ask and God ought to deliver whatever it is we want?

APPLICATION

8. Where are some areas of our church life where you feel you/we are 'bearing fruit'?

- a) Are there any areas that you feel you could commit to prayer for more growth?

9. Pastorally speaking, how might we explain a verse like v.4 to a non-Christian, particularly one who sees this as a suggestion that you can't be a "fruitful person" unless you're a Christian? (see also v.16)

10. We know what it is to "*lay down one's life for one's friends*"(v.13) in a grand sacrifice; something Jesus himself was preparing to do as he spoke. What might it look like for us to make this sacrifice a day at a time?

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Tim and Shona, Annika, Hamish, Edward and Hugo Goldsmith. Pray for Tim as he leads Miranda North and Church at 5. Pray for Tim as he heads up our Local Mission profile for St Luke's and focuses on outreach and evangelism.

Missionaries

Pray for Andrew and Adele, Isaac, Lucy, and Finn Southerton and their church plant in Wellington, New Zealand. Continue to pray for Isaac's health.

Community

Pray for peace and wise leadership in our world, specifically in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Sudan and South Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan, Mexico, Libya, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Ukraine. Pray that there would be opportunities for Christians to share the love, peace and saving grace that Jesus offers to all.

Local Mission

Pray for Kerry Brissenden and her craft leaders as they encourage and support the craft community. Pray that God would soften the hearts of this community as they listen each week to devotionals about the love that Jesus has for them.

Upcoming Event

Pray for the upcoming Men's breakfast (November 17)

STUDY 5 - CHAPTER 15:18-16:4

INTRO QUESTION: Can you think of an experience you've had in life where it's been very clear that you didn't 'belong' where you were?

CONTEXT

1. Have a one minute flick through the gospel of John and look at the chapter headings. Should it have surprised the disciples that following Jesus would prove to be difficult?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 15:18-16:4 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. Looking through Chapters 13-15, how much has Jesus focused on love so far? Particularly the love the disciples have for him and each other?

a) Why do you think Jesus might have made this such a core theme in his "final speech"?

4. What does Jesus tell his followers to expect? (15:18-19, 16:1-2)

MEANING

5. Who/what do you think Jesus is referring to here when he speaks of "the world" hating?

a) Why do you think Jesus uses a term like this? (See also Romans 8:18-25)

9. How might a passage like 16:2-4 shape how we respond when we encounter opposition or even persecution today?

10. How might clear and even aggressive opposition provide better opportunities for sharing the good news of the gospel?

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy and Lois Morton. Pray for Sam as Focus Pastor of Night Church. Pray for Sam as he heads up Youth Ministry at St Luke's – coordinating our youth groups on Friday nights and high school Scripture in our local schools. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Young Adults ministry and Young Adults Bible Studies.

Missionaries

Pray for Sarah Prabhakar and her work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Community

Pray for English as a Second Language classes each Friday. Give thanks for Marina and her team as they teach and encourage those who come along.

Upcoming Event

Pray for the Thanksgiving & Memorial Service (November 26)

Pray for the Womens Christmas event (November 24)

STUDY 6 - CHAPTER 16:5-15

INTRO QUESTION: Can you think of an important life lesson that you've had to be taught repeatedly because of stubbornness, or hard-heartedness?

CONTEXT

1. This passage includes three big themes that Jesus has already mentioned. The disciples' grief at losing Jesus, the role of the Holy Spirit in the world and the fact the disciples won't be able to take all of this in at the moment. Where do these themes appear in Chapters 13-15 and why do you think Jesus might be bringing them up again?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 16:5-15 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. Read 16:5 and then 13:36 & 14:5; is Jesus simply mistaken, or do you think he's getting at something else?

4. According to Jesus, why is it good that he is going away? (v.7)

a) Why is this so important? (v.8-11)

b) What do you think it means when it says the Spirit will "convict" the world? (v.8)

7. Look again at 14:17, 15:26, and now at verses 13-15 of Chapter 16. What do these three passages affirm about the Spirit?

a) Verse 15b delivers a particular picture of the communication between the three elements of the Trinity and believers. What is the order and why is it important?

APPLICATION

8. Jesus challenges his disciples that they are too focused on the 'here and now' and not looking at what will happen after Jesus returns to the Father. We are in a different situation, post-resurrection, nevertheless, how do we tend to get caught up in the 'here and now' and not take a heavenly perspective?

9. Conservative evangelicals often struggle to work out how to approach the Holy Spirit. With Jesus unpacking the Spirit's purpose in 'convicting' believers, what are some practical ways that we might pray for the Spirit's work in our lives?

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Cam, Katrina and Peyton Harte. Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Alive (lunch-time Christian group at Miranda North Public School), Homework Club, Children's Thursday night programs, and Kids' Clubs.

Missionaries

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland and their work with AFES (Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students) in Wollongong University's ECU (Evangelical Christian Union), Sydney.

Community

Pray for our Scripture Teachers, Kids Hope Mentors, and the School Lunch program leaders as they go into the schools in our Parish in outreach to children and youth.

Upcoming Event

Pray for the Christmas Carols to be held at Port Hacking High School (December 2)

STUDY 7 - CHAPTER 16:16-33

INTRO QUESTION: Ever found yourself in a situation where you're struggling to understand something, but you've been too shy, or proud to admit it?

CONTEXT

1. Why are the disciples troubled? Remind yourselves from 13:21-22, 13:26-14:1, 27-28, 16:5-6

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 16:16-33 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. What do you think Jesus is referring to when he says "you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

a) How does this very straight-forward explanation of the physical reality of what is about to happen provide a counterbalance to what is about to be a very graphic and painful experience?

4. Why do you think that the disciples struggle so much to understand what it is that Jesus is saying (v.17-18)? Why do you think that we might find things much easier to interpret than the disciples at the time?

5. Does Jesus directly answer their question? Why do you think he chooses to answer in the way he does? (v.19-24)

- a) What might we have to learn from Jesus' approach here when we are caring for those around us, particularly those who are not yet Christian, or new to their faith?

MEANING

6. What do you think is significant about Jesus' statement that "*You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy*"? How does Jesus' illustration of childbirth build on this?
7. What promise does Jesus give in v.23-24? Why is that significant?

8. What "light-bulb" moment do the disciples have in v.29-30? (See also John 1:43-50 for a hint). What does that say about how much they really understand?

9. How does v.31-32 temper the disciples' enthusiasm?

APPLICATION

10. How might v.33 inform our lives, both as a source of comfort and a source of realism about the Christian life?

11. Are we sometimes guilty of similar naivety to the disciples, expecting the Christian life to always be clear, simple and comfortable?

12. How might we embrace both the grief and the joy of Jesus' death for us more fully this week?

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Sarah Evans as she looks after music at St Lukes.

Missionaries

Pray for Kylie Zietsch and her work at Johannesburg Bible College, South Africa.

Pray for Elisha and Eleanor Bililiza and their church, Holy Trinity Church, in Bukoba, Tanzania.

Community

Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus and that this would be a great witness to the wider community.

Upcoming Event

Pray for the Lessons and Carols Service (2pm December 9)

Pray for the Confirmation and Baptism Service (6pm December 9)

STUDY 8 - CHAPTER 17:1-19

INTRO QUESTION: What Book, Movie or TV show do you wish could keep on going forever and never be brought to completion?

CONTEXT

1. Flick back to Matthew 6:9-13, to the "Lord's Prayer". Read through it a couple of times. After you've completed question 2, come back & see what similarities you can find between this prayer and that in Matthew?

- a) Are there any differences between the two prayers that stand out to you?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 17:1-19 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. If you had to break up 1-19 into sections, where would you make the breaks? What headings would you pick for the different sections?

4. What specific things does Jesus ask of the Father?

MEANING

5. How is it that the Father and the Son will be glorified in the coming suffering and death of Jesus? (see also 12:23-24, 13:31-32)

6. What sense do you get from this prayer of the relationship between Jesus and the Father? What of that between Jesus and the disciples?

7. How does v3 define eternal life? How does this stand in contrast to how we might usually define it?

APPLICATION

8. Compare Jesus' prayer for himself to how we might usually pray for ourselves. How do his prayers provide an encouragement/corrective?

9. Look at verse 15 (and maybe Philippians 1:21-24), what does this say to the Christian who is tempted to live in a "holy huddle", separating themselves from the world around them?

10. Reflecting on v.17, what do you think "Sanctification" looks like to the modern non-Christian world? What do you think it looks like according to this passage?

11. Read through Jesus prayer again, how might his focuses inform, or even change how we pray this week (and beyond)?

WEEKLY PRAYER

Staff

Pray for Sharyn and Lisa as they deal with the day to day running and administration of St Luke's.

Missionaries

Pray for David, Kathryn and Reuben Luis and their work with AEFS at the Geelong Campuses of Monash University.

Community

Pray for Miranda North; that there would be many opportunities to connect with the local community through school and other activities.

Local Mission

Pray for the everyday outreach that the church has through ministries such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. For those who are involved and for those who attend who don't yet know Jesus as Lord. Pray that the staff would be wise in their presentation of the gospel, that they would be thoughtful in their interactions with people and that they would be eager to make the most of every opportunity to speak of Christ the King.

Upcoming Event

Pray for Kids Club (20 December) and the team of leaders.

STUDY 9 - CHAPTER 17:20-26

INTRO QUESTION: Do you have any peculiar traits or habits that you've inherited from a parent/family member? Any that you've passed on to others?

CONTEXT

1. Read through the first 17 verses of Ch.17 again. What were the two primary foci of Jesus' prayer last week? How does this final section of his prayer build on that?

OBSERVATION

2. Read through John 17:20-26 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

3. V.21 maps out a relationship between Father, Son and the Christian community. What does it say? What is the intended goal of this relationship?

a) What additional evangelistic goal is laid out at the end of v.21

b) The Father and the Son are mentioned here, what place is there for the Holy Spirit in all of this? (See also John 14:15-17)

MEANING

4. These opening verses have laid out a call to unity. What does it say about the nature of that unity which is important to remember in a modern world that often preaches unity for unity's sake?

5. V.22 speaks of Christ giving believers the glory that the Father has given him. What do you think this might mean? (The good *and* bad news is that the jury is out on this one, so feel free to throw out multiple suggestions!)

6. What is Jesus asking for as he prays that his disciples would be "where I am"? Is there another section of the "Upper room discourse" that this statement reminds you of?

APPLICATION

7. Some would argue that the early church anticipated Christ's return within a very small time frame. How might v.20-26 speak into that expectation?

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