

What are You Looking For – Questions from the Gospel of John

2nd Session: “The Passion Death and Resurrection”

Scriptures that reveal themes for this week’s film & discussion

Chapter 18

“Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me”

This reminds us that Jesus is not going to his death as a helpless victim, but rather he sees his dying as the final act in a life of self-gift, and as an act that reveals his love for his Father.

“Again, Peter Denied it. Immediately the cock crowed.”

This cock crow should be seen as an “awakening” for Peter of the reality of his human weakness. This painful acceptance of this reality in his life allowed him then to seek and find forgiveness, which happens in Chapter 21.

“So, you are a king?”

Here we come to one of the central themes in John’s Gospel. Did Jesus come to bring a divine power that is just another version of the power of the wealthy and the influential; or did he bring a radically new kind of power -- the power of love, of self-gift?

Chapter 19

Pilate said to them, ‘Here is the man’” (19:5)

Pilate is making a statement whose implications are boundless. This is the cost of true love. It is very likely that the community of John sees itself in this representation of Jesus. (Could we do the same?)

“There they crucified him” (19:18)

It is clear that the emphasis is on the lifting up of Jesus in crucifixion. Just as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness.

“Now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top” (19:23)

It may be a reference to the seamless garment worn by the high priest. Or, it could represent the importance of unity in the Church.

“Woman, here is your son, Here your mother” (19:26-27)

A pivotal scene in the crucifixion. The “Beloved Disciple” represents all faithful Christians and is told to accept Mary just as the faithful disciple of today must look to Mother Church for spiritual nourishment.

Chapter 20

“He (John) saw and believed” (20:8)

The Beloved Disciple outruns Peter, but he steps aside and allows Peter to enter ahead of him.... The relationship between Peter and the Beloved disciple is very similar to that of the king and the prophet in the Old Testament.

“I have seen the Lord” (20:18)

When Mary tells the disciples, I have seen the Lord she is voicing the Johannine ideal of personal and mystical experience of God in human life. Mary is afforded so much attention precisely because John sees in her a model for all Christians.

Chapter 21

“The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord.’”

Once again, this does not mean that he is challenging Peter’s leadership role; it is intended merely to highlight the special mystical intuition of the Beloved disciple.

“Simon Son of John, do you love me more than these?” (21:15)

Peter must accept this humbling experience to make amends for his previous infidelity.

Session #3

Next week we turn to the farewell discourse of Jesus, 13:31 – 17:26. Its over after years of pondering it that this community discovers the real meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus.