

# THE FIRST 15

Friday, June 7, 2024

Today is Friday, June 7 and we are completing our study of the Gospel of John.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I come to this quiet space at the dawn of a new day and seek your presence. I quiet my mind, center my thoughts and slow my breath. As I inhale, I breathe in your love, joy and peace and as I exhale I release any negative thoughts, worries or concerns. Come, show me how to live the Resurrection life. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. John 21:20-25***

## REFLECTION

As John writes his Gospel, he and Peter's paths continually entwine. They are both present at the Last Supper, in the court of the high priest, at the empty tomb and at the breakfast on the beach. Jesus predicts Peter will meet a violent death and invites him to follow him. Peter is physically following Jesus as a seemingly obedient response walking along the rocky Galilean shoreline. He turns back and sees that John is following them. He asks Jesus about John's fate. "Lord, what about him?" Jesus indicates that he will stay alive. Jesus chose John from the cross to care for his mother, Mary. When Jesus saw his mother standing beneath the cross and John standing nearby, he said to Mary, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother" (John 19:25-27). From that time on, John took care of Mary.

History tells us that the Apostle John lived to an old age, dying of natural causes in Ephesus sometime around 98 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Trajan. He was the only Apostle who did not die a violent death as a martyr. It is believed that during the time of persecution in Jerusalem, John brought Jesus' mother Mary to Ephesus to live in peace. Before his death he provided this Gospel account, an enduring record of his eyewitness experiences of Jesus the Messiah. His testimony was preserved since the beginning of the church, circulated among believers and passed down for generations as the true and accurate account of the life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of the Son of God.

With today's final reading, we complete our study of the Gospel of John. In early March we began our journey with John's prologue, the first chapter. Today we find ourselves at the completion of our journey in early June, three months later. This is a good time to consider how God's Holy Spirit has used John's Gospel to teach us, shape us, guide us and nourish us. I consider how God has spoken to me as I have read through John's testimony and I hope you will too.

**Ask:** What have I learned from the Gospel of John that I didn't know before? Have I fulfilled John's purpose for his writing - to believe in Jesus and have life in his name (John 20:30-31)?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, as John and Peter faithfully followed you so many centuries ago, I follow you too. Show me the future you have for me and the work you have prepared for me. Lead me to the people I am to love. Take me to the places where I am to serve. Give me a voice to tell of your truth. Fill my heart with compassion for the poor and needy. Strengthen me to grow in holiness of heart and life. You are my Lord and my God. I go to serve you. Amen.*