

## 07/03/10 Portraits of Jesus – Son of God

### The Son of God incognito

John 1:10 (NLT) He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognise him

John 1:26(NLT) right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognise

John 1:31 (NLT) I did not recognise him

John 1:33 (NLT) I didn't know he was the one

### How do we recognise the Son of God?

John 1:23 (NLT) Clear the way for the LORD's coming!

John 1:31 (NLT) I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed

### Scripture washes us and prepares the way

Eph 5:26 (NIV) cleansing the church by the washing with water through the word

John 17:17 (MsgB) Your word is consecrating truth.

## 14/03/10 Portraits of Jesus – Son of Woman

### From **John 2:1-12**

**John 19:26** (NLT) When Jesus saw his mother standing there... he said to her, "Dear woman"

**Rob Bell:** Some women are mothers, some aren't. Some run companies, some stay home. Some live out very traditional roles, others break all sorts of new ground. And it's all a reflection of the creativity, of the diversity, of the variety of the God who's bigger than any of our language.

**Matthew 23:37** (NIV) Jesus said, "...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings"

**Isaiah 49:15-16** (NIV) God says, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

**Isaiah 66:13** (NIV) God says, "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you."

**Rob Bell:** If you don't have her leadership, if you don't have her wisdom, her voice, her perspective, you're not just missing her, you're missing something central to the very core of who God is.

**Psalms 131:2-3** (NIV) But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

### **Questions:**

Have you ever considered God to be like a mother? Why or why not?

When difficult times come, would you look to God to comfort you like a mother?

## 28/03/10 - Portraits of Jesus - Bread of Life

from John chapter 6

**Genesis 3:17-19** (NIV) Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life... By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground.

**Deuteronomy 8:3** (NIV) God humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

**John 6:25** (NLT) I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again.

**Psalms 34:8** (NIV) Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**John 6:34** (NLT) "Master," they said, "give us that bread every day of our lives."

### **Questions:**

- When you think of Jesus as "bread", what comes to mind?

- Are you waiting on something to bring you satisfaction/peace/contentment? Maybe a change in job, a home, a spouse, a change in circumstances?

- Is there a shift in perspective or attitude required for you to find satisfaction in Jesus right now? If so, what?

- What steps can you take to ensure that you "eat" Jesus every single day?

## 04/04/10 – Portraits of Jesus – The Good Shepherd

GATE:

**John 10:7-10** (NLT): I am the gate for the sheep... Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures... My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

SACRIFICE:

**John 10:11** (NLT): I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**John 10:17-18** (NLT) I lay down my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I lay it down voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again.

EVERYONE:

**John 10:16** (NLT): I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

INVITATION:

**John 10:3-4** (NIV) The Shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

### **QUESTIONS:**

**Dallas Willard:** "The Lord is my Shepherd" is written on many more tombstones than lives. Is Jesus the Shepherd just a nice religious notion to you, or do you allow him permission to lead in your life – to direct, to determine, to decide? If you'd like this to be a greater reality, what steps can you take towards this?

## 11/4/10 – Portraits of Jesus – Light of the World

from John chapter 12

### **LIGHT**

**John 12:46** (MsgB) I am Light that has come into the world so that all who believe in me won't have to stay any longer in the dark.

**John 12: 35-36** (NIV) The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light

**John 1:4-5** (MsgB) What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

**QUESTION:** Can you identify where Jesus has brought illumination and clarity into your life? How did he do this for you?

### **CHOICE**

**John 1:5** (NIV) In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

**Woody Allen:** I'm afraid of the dark and suspicious of the light.

**John 3:19-21** (MsgB) This is the crisis we're in: God-light streamed into the world, but men and women everywhere ran for the darkness. They went for the darkness because they were not really interested in pleasing God. Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work it is.

**2 Corinthians 4:4-6** (NIV) The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

**QUESTION:** Effective sight requires the mind to add meaning to what the eye sees. Are you able to grasp and imagine the life of space, freedom and wonder that Jesus has come to bring you?

### **LIFE**

**Romans 6:5** (MsgB) Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country.

**1 Thessalonians 5:5** (MsgB) You're sons of Light, daughters of Day. We live under wide open skies and know where we stand.

**Ephesians 5:8-14** (NIV) For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible.

This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

**QUESTION:** What steps will you take this week to more fully enjoy living in the light?

## 25/04/10 Portraits of Jesus – The True Vine

From John chapter 15

### The TRUE Vine

**John 15:1** (NIV) I am the true vine

**Hosea 14:8** (MsgB) God says: 'Israel is finished with gods that are no-gods. From now on I'm the one who answers and satisfies him. I am like a luxuriant fruit tree. Everything you need is to be found in me.'

**Proverbs 11:28** (MsgB) A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump; a God-shaped life is a flourishing tree.

### Living IN the Vine

**John 15:5** (NIV) I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

**John 15:5** (Msg) I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant.

**Colossians 2:6-7** (NIV) So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

### A Fruit-bearing Life

**John 15:8** (NIV) This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**Proverbs 11:30** (MsgB) A good life is a fruit-bearing tree

**Isaiah 27:6** (MsgB) The days are coming when Jacob shall put down roots, Israel blossom and grow fresh branches, and fill the world with its fruit.

**Galatians 5:22-23** (MsgB) But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

## 02/05/10 – Portraits of Jesus – The Way

From John chapter 14

**John 14:6** (NLT) I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Way = hodos = Path, Road, Route, Journey  
Early church called followers of the "Way" (6 times in Acts)

### RECOGNISE THE FATHER

**John 14:7** (NIV) If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.

**John 1:10** (NIV) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him.

**John 5:23** (NIV) He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him.

**John 8:19** (NIV) "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

**John 8:42** (NIV) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? ... If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

**John 8:54-55** (NIV) My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him.

**John 17:3** (NIV) Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

**John 6:45** Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

**John 15:23** (NIV) He who hates me hates my Father as well

### REFLECT THE FATHER

**John 14:9-10** (NIV) Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

**John 5:19-20** (NIV) whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does

**John 5:24** (NIV) For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

**John 8:28** (NIV) I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

**John 10:30** (NIV) I and the Father are one.

### REVEAL THE FATHER

**John 14:8** (NIV) Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father"

**John 6:46** No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.

**John 17:6** (NIV) Father, I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.

**John 17:25-26** (NIV) Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you... I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known

## [09/05/10 Portraits of Jesus – Source of Joy](#)

From John chapter 16

### **JESUS' JOY**

**John 8:29** (MsgB) The Father sees how much joy I take in pleasing him.

**Luke 10: 21** (NIV) At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit...

**John 17:13** (NLT) I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy.

**QUESTION:** When you picture Jesus, do you imagine him as serious and sombre or happy and joyful?

### **OUR JOY**

**John 16:24** (Msg) Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks!

**John 15:11** (MsgB) I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature.

**Acts 13:52** (NIV) And the disciples were filled with joy

**Galatians 5:22** (NIV) the fruit of the Spirit is... joy

**Philippians 1:26** (NIV) your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow

**QUESTION:** Is your life marked by joy? Are you known as a joyful person? Consider the reasons for your answer.

### **EXPECTANT JOY**

**John 16:21** (NLT) It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labour. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world.

**Romans 8:21-25** (MsgB) Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens... the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

**Hebrews 12:2** (NLT) Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

**1 Peter 1:8-9** (NIV) though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy

**QUESTION:** Like the anticipation of an exciting event, does the expectation of a future with Jesus fill you with inexpressible and glorious joyful?

### **ENDURING JOY**

**John 16:22** (NLT) no one can rob you of that joy

**Colossians 1:11** (MsgB) We pray that you'll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul—not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy

**1 Thessalonians 1:6** (MsgB) Although great trouble accompanied the Word, you were able to take great joy from the Holy Spirit!—taking the trouble with the joy, the joy with the trouble.

**2 Corinthians 7:4** (NIV) I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

**QUESTION:** How do you handle troubles in life? Do you grit your teeth, or are you able to engage a deeper joy whatever the circumstances?

## **23/05/10 – Portraits of Jesus – King**

from John chapter 18 & 19

**John 19:1-3** (NIV) Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.

**John 12:15** (NIV) Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

**John 6:15** (NIV) Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

**John 18:36** (NIV) Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world... my kingdom is from another place."

**Eugene Peterson:** The metaphors Jesus used for the life of ministry are frequently images of the single, the small, and the quiet, which have effects far in excess of their appearance: salt, leaven, seed.

### **Mother Teresa:**

- In this life we cannot do great things, we can only do small things with great love.
- We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.
- If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.
- Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.
- God doesn't require us to succeed; he only requires that you try.
- It is not the magnitude of our actions but the amount of love that is put into them that matters.
- Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.
- Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.

**2 Corinthians 2:14** (NIV) But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

### **QUESTIONS:**

What did you do yesterday and last week to participate in the subversive kingdom work of our King?

What will you do today and this week to participate in the subversive kingdom work of our King?

### **30/05/10 – Portraits of Jesus – Fisherman**

from John chapter 21

#### **THE EXPERT FISHERMAN**

**John 21:6** (NLT) "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!"

**Isaiah 40:13-14** (MsgB) Who could ever have told God what to do or taught him his business? What expert would he have gone to for advice, what school would he attend to learn justice? Who do you suppose might have taught him what he knows, showed him how things work?

**Galatians 5:22-23** (MsgB) what happens when we live God's way? ...We find ourselves not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

**Matthew 11:29-30** (MsgB) Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

#### **QUESTION:**

Do you honestly believe Jesus knows best about EVERY part of your life? Your work? Your relationships? Your finances? Your family? Your dietary requirements? If yes, how is this demonstrated in your life?

#### **THE RESPONSE OF HUMILITY**

**Luke 5:5** (NIV) Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

**Psalms 127** (NLT) Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.

**Romans 3:27-28** (MsgB) What we've learned is this: God does not respond to what we do; we respond to what God does. We've finally figured it out. Our lives get in step with God and all others by letting him set the pace, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade.

**Romans 12:1-2** (MsgB) So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it

before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

**QUESTION:**

Do you see your life as a response to what the Master is already doing?

What steps can you take to work alongside the Master and enjoy his unforced rhythms of grace?