

AFF – Advent 2022 The Gospel of John
Week 3 – Handout 3 (The Seven Discourses and the Farewell Discourse)

The Discourses

- Address issues of living a life of faith in a context where many things threaten faith
- Each Discourse speaks to followers in today's world as well
- Each Discourse follows a Sign
- All Discourses follow the same format:
 - 1) Jesus makes a questionable/controversial statement
 - 2) Leads to an objection or question indicating misunderstanding
 - 3) the Discourse follows

Discourse – 1: The New Birth (John 3: 1-21)

- Nicodemus (Hellenistic Jew) Pharisee and member of Sanhedrin
- Question of visiting Jesus at night
- Birth through the flesh and new birth through the Spirit
- Pneuma (Gk) and Ruah (Heb) = spirit and wind
- Nicodemus misunderstands and cannot yet respond
- Earthly mission of Jesus in 3:16 is part of the heavenly plan of the Father who displays the depth of his love through the sacrifice of his Son

Discourse – 2: The Water of Life (John 4:1-42)

- The woman of Samaria
- Judean (Southern) Jews versus Galilean (Northern) Jews (Samaria sat in between)
- Well was just outside Sychar (ancient Shechem)
- Woman is sarcastic and rude toward Jesus
- Jesus offers “living water”
- Samaritans await a Messiah: in Hebrew = Taheb = revealer
- Samaritan woman becomes both a follower and a missionary
- Vs. 19: perception of Jesus as a prophet
- Vs. 29: perception of Jesus as the Christ
- Vs.42: perception of Jesus as the Savior of the World
- Samaritans worshipped a combination of Jewish Law and pagan customs and idolatry

Discourse – 3: The Divine Son (John 5: 19-47)

- Immediately follows the healing of the man lame for 38 years
- All the Jews see is an infraction of a Sabbath rule
- Jesus uses term “work” twice because that is the issue
- Rabbis concede that God performs 2 types of work on Sabbath: judgment; creation of life. Jesus claims that he is doing the identical types of work
- Key Theme: Jesus is only doing what the Father has given him to do. Vs.20: Father loves the Son uses term in Greek: phileo
- Spiritual transfer from the curse of the Old Covenant to the blessing of the New

- Subject of Testimony and 4 types: 1) self-testimony; 2) testimony of John the Baptist; 3) testimony of God's work on earth that can be seen; 4) testimony of Scripture

Discourse – 4: The Bread of Life (6: 22-66)

- Disciples must learn to work for eternal food, not a free meal
 - Jesus says they must do the work God has given them to do and that work is to believe in him
 - Leads to misunderstanding that in turn leads to John's central motif in vs.34 "Sir, give us this bread.."
 - They don't want a Sign, but another meal...they want Manna
 - Heb. Participle MA = ?
 - Heb. participle NA = !
 - "...give us this bread" sets up a scandalous statement: I am the bread of life" The people misunderstand and what Jesus says becomes suspect. Three times he will make this statement
- Jesus moves into the heart of this Discourse at vs.35. Scholars interpret this in 2 ways:
- 1) "I am the bread of life" invites them to come to Jesus and believe in him for salvation
 - 2) Invitation to the Eucharist: to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink his blood
- These 2 ideas work in tandem: without faith we can neither be united with Jesus nor recognize his presence in the Eucharist. If eating is believing, then believing leads to eating
 - Vs. 53: "I shall give..." = future tense points both to the cross where Jesus surrenders his life for human sin and to the Eucharist/liturgy where Jesus offers himself as living bread
 - Word EAT= here John (Jesus) uses Greek Trōgō = to chew, gnaw
 - Gk literature uses this word to indicate eating by animals.
 - Prior to this point the word esthiō used for normal eating
 - Change in vocabulary marks a change in focus and emphasis from necessity of faith to consumption of Eucharist

Discourse – 5: The Life-Giving Spirit (John 7: 1-32)

- Leads to one of the most dramatic moments in Jesus' ministry
- Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth)
- Confusion and misunderstanding as Jesus is teaching and alludes to his leaving soon: total misunderstanding: 1) first going to teach somewhere else, 2) perhaps a hint of suicide
- Rabbis question him because of his lack of academic training
- This is a Discourse of total confusion
- Jesus declares that if the people will come to him, he will give them living water = the Spirit
- Vs. 22: Jesus' statement on circumcision
- Vs. 37: Jesus is the source of spiritual "water" that quenches our deepest thirst; the source of the Spirit that is poured out upon the world.

Discourse – 6: The Light of the World (John 8: 12-51)

- Jesus enlightens the world with Truth
- Jesus embodies divine Truth
- Jesus gives promises to his followers:
 - Promise #1: Jesus is the Light and he promises them that if they follow him they will walk in the illumination of that Light
- Jesus claims that his testimony is valid because he knows where he has come from and where he is going
- People question Jesus “Who are you?” They just don’t understand
- Promise #2: (Vs. 32) Jesus is the Truth and he promises them that if they hold to his teaching they will know the Truth and the Truth will set them free
- Jews claim to have never been in bondage, but Jesus proves them wrong (bondage to sin)

Discourse – 7 The Good Shepherd (10: 1-42)

- The people accuse Jesus of being obscure in his speech. He uses 2 different metaphors in this Discourse: He is both the Good Shepherd and the Gatekeeper to the fold
- Pharisees are presented by the images of: 1) thief, 2) hired hand
- Jesus points to the Gentiles as also being gathered into the flock. One flock/one shepherd alludes to the universal church...“that they all may be one”

Farewell Discourse (Chapters 14-17)

- Immediately follows the Last Supper
 - Discourse given to the Eleven (Judas has left)
 - 2 major themes in this Discourse: 1) glorification of the Father, 2) unity of the Disciples through love
- 1) “My peace I give you”
 - Jesus will go to the Father
 - Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to guide
 - Commands them to love one another and gives the New Commandment
 - 2) Allegory of the True Vine
 - Jesus is the Vine and the Disciples are the Branches
 - Warns of upcoming persecutions, “but you will have peace” (Ch. 16)
 - Meditation on Jesus as the source of life
 - 3) Preparation for coming life without Jesus’ physical presence
 - 4) Chapter 17: Farewell Prayer or High Priestly Prayer (5 petitions to the Father)
 - 17: 1-5 to glorify the Son
 - 17: 6-10 for the followers of Jesus
 - 17: 11-19 to make them One as we are One
 - 17: 20-23 for the world

- 17: 24-26 for those the Father has given to Jesus that they may be with him to share his love