

Bible Reading Notes

September 2020 – John 13-17

How to use these Bible reading notes

These Bible reading notes are a resource to help you feed on God's word a little and often and allow it to change your life. If you miss a day (or several!), don't feel guilty or try to catch up; just pick up wherever you left off – it doesn't matter if it's the wrong date.

Here are some tips on how to get the most out of this:

1. Find a time and place where you can be quiet but awake. Maybe set an alarm on your phone to remind you each day.
2. Pray: ask God to help you understand what he says.
3. Use the notes to help you think about the passage (use a good translation of the Bible like the NIV).
 - 'Read' tells you which verses to read
 - 'Apply' shows how it affects you
 - 'Pray' suggests ways to talk to God about it
4. Pray about what you have read. You might also like to use the Church Prayer Diary.
5. Look for a chance to share with someone what God has been saying to you.

These notes are easy to install on most phones or tablets. Install the 'PrayerMate' App and you'll find it under 'Add Subject → Church Life → UK Churches → St.Philemon's → Bible Notes'. You can also find them on our website: www.stphilemons.co.uk. If you have any problems, email miriam@stphilemons.co.uk.

Tuesday 1st September

We're going to spend this month looking at Jesus' final hours with his disciples before his death. We start by seeing more of what Jesus is like through a famous but unusual activity.

Read John 13:1-5

Foot-washing was reserved for servants, and we can assume that Jesus washed even the feet of Judas, who was about to betray him.

- What do Jesus' actions show us about him?
- The 'so' in v4 shows us that Jesus did this *because* of what he knew in v3. What makes this surprising?

Apply

- Why are we usually afraid of people who have loads of power?
- How is Jesus different from those people?
- How will seeing this about Jesus lead you to worship him?

Wednesday 2nd September

While Jesus is washing the disciples' feet, we get a frank conversation that shows us the deeper meaning of what Jesus was doing.

Read John 13:6-11

- Peter's reaction in v6 and v8 is strong! Why is it understandable?

The reason Jesus replies as he does in v8 is because the foot-washing was pointing forward to his death for his disciples.

- What does this firm reply tell us about our need for Jesus' death?

Apply

- Have you confessed your need for Jesus' death for you?
- In what ways are you tempted to think or act like you don't need it?

Thursday 3rd September

We come to the end of the foot-washing scene with a final, new lesson.

Read John 13:12-17

- What kind of relationship does Jesus describe between himself and his disciples?
- How does Jesus use this to teach his disciples about how they're to serve each other?

Apply

Here we find that the foot-washing is a symbol of serving others. In v17 Jesus speaks about the difference between knowing this and putting it into practice.

- Why do we find it hard to serve others sacrificially?
- How could you serve someone else today?
- How will these verses help you put this into practice?

Friday 4th September

Jesus is about to be betrayed by Judas. Let's look at how he speaks about it.

Read John 13:18-20

Jesus quotes from Psalm 41, which is about being betrayed by a close friend.

- What does this tell us about what Judas will do? (Note: 'lifted up his heel' is similar to 'turned his back on')
- Why would telling them all this give the disciples confidence about who Jesus is?

Apply

We discover that even Judas betraying Jesus is all part of God's plan.

- How does this give us confidence that God's purposes will come to pass?
- What do you find hard to believe about this today?

Saturday 5th September

In these verses we are shown something intimate about what Jesus was going through.

Read John 13:21-25

- What does this description of Jesus' emotion tell us about his relationship with the disciples?
- The disciples couldn't work out who Jesus was speaking about. What does this show us about how Jesus must have treated Judas?

Apply

God's plan of salvation was not something he did from a distance. Rather, he got 'up close and personal'.

- How does this affect the way we think of God?
- How might this bring comfort when our circumstances make us think that God is cold and distant?

Sunday 6th September

In these verses we reach a climactic moment in the events leading up to Jesus' death.

Read John 13:26-30

- What details give a sense of the urgency and speed of the events which lead to Jesus' betrayal?
- What details suggest that Jesus is still the one calling the shots?

Apply

The powers of darkness are at work. Satan is using Judas, and the scene ends with nightfall. But remember John 1:5: "*the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.*"

- Where, or over what, does it seem like the powers of darkness have the upper hand in the world?
- What hope do these verses offer?

Monday 7th September

In the face of darkness, Jesus shows us more of what God is like, and how his disciples were to imitate this.

Read John 13:31-35

- What does it show us about God that his glory is revealed *at this point* ('now'), as Jesus is betrayed to death?
- What should Jesus' disciples' love for each other look like? What impact does Jesus say this kind of love will have?

Apply

Think of someone you know:

- What is holding you back from loving them in this way?
- What could you do today to love them?

Tuesday 8th September

Another frank conversation between Jesus and Peter shows us more of the importance of what Jesus is about to do.

Read John 13:36-38

- What is Peter confused about in v37? What does he not understand about what Jesus is about to do?

Jesus' prophecy about Peter happens in John 18:27, but he still dies for Peter and reinstates him after his resurrection.

- What does this show us about Jesus' attitude towards Peter?

Apply

We find ourselves in a similar position to Peter.

- In what ways do you feel you have 'let Jesus down'?
- What difference does it make knowing that Jesus died for you *knowing* that you would let him down?

Wednesday 9th September

Ahead of the agony that had caused him deep distress earlier, Jesus is at pains to comfort his disciples.

Read John 14:1-6

- How does Jesus assure them of their future? (v2-4)
- How is it that the disciples already know the way? (v5-6)

Apply

At the heart of following Jesus is not knowing something but knowing someone.

- How should this affect the way we grow as Christians?
- Why does the fact that Jesus is *the* way, *the* truth and *the* life give us confidence that we have all that we need in him?

Thursday 10th September

Jesus assures his disciples of what they have in him and why his leaving is good.

Read John 14:7-14

- How would you summarise what Jesus says here about his relationship with the Father? (v7-11)
- What does Jesus say will be the effect of his going to be with the Father? (v12-14)
- What is the goal of Jesus answering their prayers? (v13)

Apply

Jesus assures his disciples that they have what they need in him, and shapes how we should think about prayer.

- How might you pray differently knowing that you can have such confidence when praying?
- How might you pray differently knowing that Jesus wants to bring glory to God?

Friday 11th September

Jesus continues to give assurance to his disciples by promising the Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:15-17

An advocate is one who stands with us, appearing on our behalf.

- What do we learn about the Advocate that Jesus promises?
- What do we learn about the Advocate's relationship with Jesus, and with the disciples?

Apply

Although Jesus is going to leave, he promises another who is like him and who will be with his disciples forever.

- Why would this comfort a follower of Jesus who feels isolated from other Christians?
- How might this help you value the Holy Spirit today?

Saturday 12th September

In giving assurance to the disciples, Jesus paints a picture of their relationship with God.

Read John 14:18-24

- In what way does Jesus describe the link between the disciples, Jesus and the Father?
- What is the relationship between love and obedience?

Apply

We are given an intimate picture of being joined to Christ and being loved by the Father.

- Is that how you think of yourself? How does this description of a Christian make you feel?

Love and obedience do not earn this relationship, but characterise it.

- What does loving Jesus look like for you today?

Sunday 13th September

Because he is leaving soon, Jesus expands on what the Advocate will do.

Read John 14:25-31

- What do we learn about what the Spirit will do? What does Jesus promise? (v26)
- How does Jesus encourage his disciples? (v27, v30-31)

Apply

The promise about the Spirit is primarily directed at the first disciples, who will later write down the New Testament.

- How do these verses give us confidence when reading the Bible?
- Given what Jesus says the Spirit will do, where should we go to learn more about Jesus?

Monday 14th September

Jesus uses the image of a vine to describe what it looks like to live a fruitful life.

Read John 15:1-4

- How does Jesus make the point that being fruitful is important?
- What is the secret to being fruitful according to v4?

Apply

Jesus will expand on this in the next verses, but already we see Jesus calling his followers to remain connected to him.

- How does the image of being connected to the vine help us understand what it means to follow Jesus?
- To what extent is this how you picture your life as a follower of Jesus?

Tuesday 15th September

Jesus repeats the image of the vine to make his point even clearer.

Read John 15:5-8

- How would you summarise the contrast between remaining and not remaining?
- From these verses, what can you piece together about what it looks like to remain in Jesus?

Apply

The image of the vine helps us see that Jesus is talking about more than just knowing his words. He's talking about absorbing them.

- What could you do to have Jesus' words remain in you more?

The result (the fruit!) is a life of vibrant prayer.

- How would you like to respond to Jesus?

Wednesday 16th September

Jesus promises joy, fruitfulness and the privilege of being called his friends as he calls his disciples to remain in his love.

Read John 15:9-17

- How we are to remain in Jesus' love? (v10)
- What is Jesus' command? (v12, v17)
- How does Jesus' command help us understand what it means to bear fruit? (v16)

Apply

- How can you bear fruit by loving others today?

Jesus sets his own love for us as the pattern to follow.

- How does his love for us also give us the power to follow his example?

Thursday 17th September

Jesus warns his disciples about the suffering that will come to those who follow him.

Read John 15:18-25

- What reason does Jesus give his disciples for why the world would hate them? (v18-21)
- How does Jesus explain the world's rejection of him in the first place? (v24-25)

Apply

- How might this bring comfort to someone who is facing opposition for belonging to Jesus?
- How could you use these verses to encourage someone facing this kind of opposition?

Friday 18th September

Jesus encourages his disciples even though they will face suffering.

Read John 15:26-16:4

Help is coming!

- What will the Spirit do? How will this help the disciples in their task? (v26-27)
- What reason does Jesus give for telling them these things? What does he hope they will do when things are difficult? (v1-4)

Apply

Jesus is up front in telling his disciples what to expect.

- Do you expect to face opposition from people who are against Jesus and against those who follow him?
- What could we do to make sure that we're not surprised or taken off-guard by it?

Saturday 19th September

Once again Jesus emphasises why his leaving is good for his followers.

Read John 16:5-11

- What reason does Jesus give for why it is better that he leaves? (v7)
- How does Jesus add to what he has already said about the Spirit's role? (v8-11)

Apply

It is not that the Son and the Spirit can't get along in the same place! Rather, according to God's plan for the world, it is after Jesus dies, rises and goes to the Father in victory, that the age of the Spirit will begin. This is the age we live in!

- Praise God for the gift of his Spirit in you. Pray that He would continue to reveal the truth about sin, righteousness and judgment to you and others you know.

Sunday 20th September

In Jesus' final description of the Spirit's role we have a close look at what God is like.

Read John 16:12-15

- What does Jesus emphasise about the Spirit's work here?
- What do these verses show us about the closeness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Apply

- With this in mind, what does it make sense to pray for ourselves and for others?
- In what way would you like to grow in your understanding of the truth and your knowledge of God?

Monday 21st September

Jesus speaks of his death and resurrection in v16 and clears the disciples' confusion (v17-19) with an illustration in v20-21.

Read John 16:16-24

- How does the illustration about giving birth help us understand what Jesus is saying about grief and joy?
- What does Jesus promise in relation to joy and prayer in v22-24?

Apply

Jesus does not promise comfortable circumstances, but he does promise that the life of those who follow him will be marked by joy.

- How does this compare with what you expect as a follower of Jesus?
- With this promise about prayer in mind, how would you like to grow in your prayer life?

Tuesday 22nd September

Jesus tells his disciples about a significant turning point in the future and speaks about what this means for them.

Read John 16:25-28

- What does Jesus say will be different at this future time? (v25-26)
- In particular, what does Jesus emphasise about the disciples' relationship with the Father? (v27)

Apply

The turning point which Jesus is speaking about was his death and resurrection, which means that this also applies to us!

- How does it affect your view of God to know that the Father himself loves you?
- Knowing that you have this intimate relationship with God, how do you want to pray in response?

Wednesday 23rd September

Even though the disciples will fail him dramatically before the next day, Jesus gives reasons for peace in the midst of trouble.

Read John 16:29-33

- What does Jesus predict about the disciples? (v31-32)
- What does Jesus promise to these very same disciples (and all those who believe in him)? (v33)

Apply

- What are you facing now that is robbing you of peace?
- How do the things that Jesus has said in this chapter, including the fact that he has overcome the world, give you peace?

Thursday 24th September

Jesus' prayer in chapter 17 is packed with treasure, so we'll spend a whole week looking at it.

Read John 17:1-5

- What does Jesus pray for? (v1, v5) For what purpose? (v1)
- 'The hour' refers to Jesus' death, but instead of asking for this hour to pass by, Jesus asks the Father to glorify him *through it*. What makes this surprising?
- In these verses we also see the pattern of the Father and Son glorifying *each other*. What does this show us about what God is like?
- Eternal life is more than simply living forever. How does Jesus explain what it is? (v3)

Apply

- How does Jesus' description of eternal life compare with what we usually think of?
- Do you know God? Is this what you know God to be like?
- Praise God that part of his glory involves giving eternal life to those who know him, and that eternal life begins now!

Friday 25th September

Jesus prays for his disciples and starts with a description of what makes them his disciples.

Read John 17:6-8

- **Who** has given **what**, and **to who**? (v6-7)
- How does Jesus describe the way his disciples have responded? (v6, v8)

Apply

- How do these descriptions help us understand what it means to follow Jesus?
- How would knowing this give comfort to someone who is finding it hard to follow Jesus?

Saturday 26th September

Jesus gets more specific about who he is praying for.

Read John 17:9-11

- How does Jesus define who he is praying for?
- What does the language of belonging show us about how Jesus thinks of his disciples?

Apply

Before leaving, Jesus prays tenderly for those who *belong to him*.

- Do you consider yourself as someone that the Father has given to Jesus? As someone who *belongs* to Jesus?
- How might this be of comfort to someone who feels like they have been rejected by the world?

Sunday 27th September

Jesus prays for his disciples' as they live in the world.

Read John 17:11-16

- How would you summarise what Jesus wants for his disciples?
- Why would Jesus' words in v12 be a confidence booster?
- What is the disciples' relationship with the world to be like?

Apply

Some have summarised this as 'being *in* the world but not *of* the world'.

- How does this compare with how we usually think about relating to the world?
- What do you find hardest about being *in* the world but not *of* the world?

Monday 28th September

Jesus turns to his disciples' mission.

Read John 17:17-19

To sanctify is to set aside for a particular purpose. Jesus is now speaking about his disciples' mission.

- What does Jesus have in mind for his disciples?

Jesus was sent into the world to save people.

- In what ways is the disciples' mission similar/different to Jesus' mission?

Apply

Jesus not only *saves* his people, but he also *sends* them on mission. This is something we are all part of! We can't save people, but we can tell them about the Jesus who can.

- What opportunities are there around you to tell others about Jesus?
- What holds you back from taking these opportunities?

Tuesday 29th September

Jesus ends his prayer by praying specifically for *all* believers, which includes us!

Read John 17:20-23

- Try to put into your own words what Jesus prays for those who follow him (especially v20-21).
- What is supposed to be the impact on the watching world? (v23)

Apply

- How will Jesus' prayer for unity shape that way you think about church? And the way you relate to other people in your church family?
- God the Father loves us as He loves God the Son! How might that impact your day today?

Wednesday 30th September

At the end of his prayer, Jesus prays that believers will gain a deeper experience of knowing him.

Read John 17:24-26

- What does Jesus want believers to see about himself?
- How does Jesus describe the Father's love for him?
- What does he want for believers in v26?

Apply

Jesus is praying for the most intimate connection between God and those who follow him.

- How does this compare with what we usually think Jesus wants for and from us?
- How does it make you feel to know that this is what Jesus prayed for on the night before he was crucified?