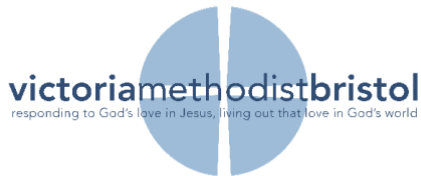


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# LENT KNIT-ALONG 2026

## WEEK 7

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**Pattern by Lyn Lloyd-Jones**  
**Reflections by David Deeks**

### Introduction

We are very grateful to David Deeks for writing the reflections to accompany our final week of the Lent Knitalong.

David is a supernumerary presbyter in the Bristol & South Gloucestershire circuit. He was brought up surrounded by knitting: his mother had worked in a wool shop and his sister was an inveterate knitter throughout her life; he has never knitted but enjoys painting with acrylics.

### Sunday, 29 March

*The great crowd of people coming up for the (Passover) festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. They took branches of palm and went out to meet him.... Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we would like to see Jesus.'*

— *John 12:12-13,20-21*

During Holy Week we put ourselves imaginatively in the shoes of those Greeks: 'We would like to see Jesus.'

The primary resources we have to help us are the four Gospels. So imagine you are in a portrait gallery with four pictures on the walls. The four Gospels are 'portraits' of Jesus, in words. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are rather like John Constable paintings: each expresses the artist's intense and careful observation of what Jesus said and did in his Palestinian setting, and also the meaning Jesus had given to their life. John's Gospel is

more like a Picasso painting: a radical, often perplexing representation of Jesus shot through with the author's own words. It is an attempt to reveal to Greeks (or Gentiles) the inner meaning of Jesus's own life.

### *To ponder*

When and how do you find time to read and mull over a short passage, even a single verse, from the Gospels? What resources or people help you to make sense of what you read? Or who might you ask for help?

Do you have a favourite verse or paragraph from any of the Gospels that you know by heart and treasure, because it sheds a bright light on what it means for you to be a seeker after Jesus or a believer? Have you shared such a 'golden' passage with anyone else? And listened in return to what crystallises their journey of faith?

## Monday, 30 March

*Jesus: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me...I am the Way; I am Truth and Life.'*  
— John 14:1,6

Every encounter with Jesus moves us to consider: 'Dare I throw in my lot with him? Do I desire to follow him?'

The promise of Jesus, which provokes these questions, has three aspects to mull over:

- i) Jesus is 'the Way': he leads us on a spiritual and moral journey. He guides us towards a life shaped by humility and selflessness, by love and the service of others, compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed; he nurtures in us the priority of offering forgiveness and mercy to any who have hurt us. The way of Jesus insists on our learning how to give dignity and infinite value to everyone we meet.
- ii) Jesus is not just a guide: he is always the substance of what we are learning and growing into – Truth and Life. So at any step of our journey, through the words of scripture or the insights of a Christian friend or indeed an act or comment from a complete stranger, we may be surprised by an inexpressible joy: we glimpse what it is like to be fully moulded in mind and character to be like Jesus. That is the goal of our discipleship.
- iii) Jesus assures us of his loving presence in our hearts at every moment of our journey – even if we have done or said something we deeply regret; or find ourselves facing the most appalling grief and distress; or are near to death. We may sometimes feel that our levels of fear and anxiety will never reduce. There is then this promise of Jesus: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled.' With the help of friends who will journey with us through thick and thin, we are invited to cling to Jesus, to trust his compassion, his patience and his care.

## Pray

Make this verse of a poem your prayer.

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:

Such a Way as gives us breath;

Such a Truth as ends all strife;

Such a Life, as killeth death.      *George Herbert (1593-1633)*

## Tuesday, 31 March

*If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will send you another Helper to be with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth ... . You know the Spirit because the Spirit dwells with you and will be in you.'*

— *John 14:15-17*

This is the first of two reflections on what God makes available to believers beyond Jesus's lifetime. Today: the Spirit of Truth.

In everyday use, 'spirit' refers to the wind or the air we breathe. In John's Gospel, 'Spirit' in its largest sense is a metaphor for God. It alludes to the energy of divine love that envelops us and is able to transform the human heart from within. We can no more control the divine Spirit than we can control the wind; God's Spirit is an ever-present gift.

The Spirit filled to overflowing the heart of Jesus. For us, the Spirit is the successor to the human Jesus. Both Jesus historically and the Spirit today may be labelled our 'Helper'. The Spirit within us is like a sensitive and caring friend, who, so to speak, holds our hand or gives us courage to confront everyday life with the love of Jesus. Unlike Jesus, our hearts are only partially imbued with Spirit; and daily life is full of unpredictable hazards, accidents and illnesses. Sometimes terribly hurtful things are done to us, and even by us, which leave bad memories for decades. But if we trust the Spirit, we can be sustained through it all, and hopefully grow towards the mind and character of Jesus.

## Pray

In the silence give thanks for the Spirit around and within you – the very Spirit of Jesus himself flowing up from hidden depths into your own heart. And pray for courage and consistency in practising love in every relationship you are involved with today.

## Wednesday, 01 April

*This is my commandment, that you should love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you... I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father.*

— John 15:12-15

Today we reflect on the church, God's second provision for disciples beyond the lifetime of Jesus.

The church is the community of Jesus's friends. All who seek to see Jesus and come to trust him are members of Jesus's friendship circle. 'Loving one another' is their catchphrase and their daily joy and obligation – loving, that is, with the depth and consistency of love that only Jesus could show (in his suffering and death) and can give. Jesus's love for us enables us to understand his words. Through Jesus we discern that love is the meaning of divine life; and it is given practical expression in mutual care, sharing and support among Jesus's friends.

To be schooled in such a fellowship is to be equipped to become agents of God's mission of love to wider society, to which Jesus refers in these words: 'I commission you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last' (John 15:16).

### *To ponder*

We are rightly sensitive to the church's many failures. We must surely correct them as urgently and thoroughly as we can. But are you able to discern in the less-than-perfect congregation you know best the kernel of mutual love among its members? If so, give thanks for your life together. If not, who will you talk to about what you perceive to be the obstacles, distortions or offensive actions that make you despair of the church?

## Thursday, 02 April

*Jesus got up from the table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wrapped round his waist... He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for so I am. If I, then, the Teacher and Lord, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.'*

— John 13:4-5,12b-14

An unforgettable practical demonstration of Jesus's mission! This is the truth of God: generously and humbly, indeed at the risk of humiliation, God's life and love are put at the service of all human beings. That's how God enables us to become friends of Jesus.

Each of us must relate, in a similar way to other disciples and to everyone we meet in daily life. But we must be willing to be served before we seek to serve others.

As a first priority, then, I must always be on the look-out to welcome practical help, friendship and criticism from the most unlikely of people. Second, on a daily basis, with the utmost respect for everyone I encounter, I must aim to set aside self-interest, forgive people who have hurt me and perform maybe menial tasks that can actually help another person. Finally I must seek out people in great distress or need, humbly to offer support and practical help.

### *Pray*

Ever-living Jesus, inspire us humbly to receive help and advice from others.

Teach us how best to serve others – at whatever cost:

the well and the sick;

the joyful and the grieving;

the contented and the resentful;

the friendly and the angry;

the young and the old;

the rich and the poor.

## Friday, 03 April

*'I have glorified you [God the Father] on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.'*

— John 17:4

*When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

— John 19:30

*The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who had been crucified with Jesus. When they came to Jesus, they saw he was already dead, so they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water.*

— John 19:32-34

Jesus' mission and ministry were abruptly and tragically brought to an end when he was executed on a Roman cross. But in John's Gospel the crudity and injustice of his death are

supplanted by an insistence that this dark and violent moment was full of meaning. In two ways:

i) John's Greek word translated 'finished' also means 'completed'; so, for Jesus, mission completed. What mission? To show everyone the indescribable depth and breadth, and the cost, of God's love for humanity. So John leaves us with an incomparable paradox: Jesus's humiliation and obscene death, in all its ugliness, is to the eye of faith, a revelation of God's glory, God's brightness and beauty – namely, God's glorious love, God's limitless, humble, self-giving love for everyone.

ii) Jesus's death released the inner spirit of Jesus, to become accessible to everyone who trusts in Jesus. Relying again on words that can be translated in two distinct ways, John described the moment of Jesus's death in the words, 'he gave up his spirit'. But we must also take that to mean: at the moment of his death, Jesus 'handed over the Spirit' of God which had uniquely filled his heart – handed it over to all who believe. Similarly, the 'blood and water' that came from the side of the dead Jesus when his corpse was lanced is not intended only as a physical observation; it refers also to the unique quality of life (eternal life), a spiritual reality, that flowed out freely from the crucified Jesus radically to transform the flawed, self-centred lives of Jesus's friends through all subsequent generations.

### *To ponder*

On this special day, find a place where in uninterrupted silence you can ponder this:

I will simply focus my imagination to look at Jesus on the cross;

I will seek to discern there the infinite love of God for me;

I will pray for the Spirit's help to welcome the inflow of divine love into the depths of my inner life, to purge and redirect my heart;

I will pray for the Spirit to help me to transmit the love Jesus hands over to me to everyone I meet this day.

## Saturday, 04 April

*Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus among the Jewish hierarchy, was joined by another secret disciple from the same stable, Nicodemus – who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about fifty kilograms. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. In the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. Since it was the day of preparation for the Jews and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.*

— John 19:39-42

For Jesus's friends and family, the Saturday after his death was a sabbath shot through with loss and grief. No pain compares with what we feel when someone close to us dies, that the bottom has dropped out of our world. The famous poem of William Wordsworth (1770-1850) gives vivid expression to 'the worst pang that sorrow ever bore, ... when I stood forlorn,  
knowing my heart's treasure was no more;  
that neither present time, nor years unborn  
could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

For days and weeks after a bereavement, as at no other time in our lives, we all need the caring support of family and friends. Their love may help us to cling to the conviction shared by Jews and Christians that when we are bereft of a loved one, the hidden, silent God is particularly close to us.

*The LORD is close to the broken-hearted, and will save those whose spirit is crushed*  
— Psalm 34:18

*Congratulations to those who are mourning – God will console them*  
— Matthew 5:4

John's Gospel boldly describes the truth that, after the death of a friend or partner who has loved us greatly, it is always appropriate, with what seems natural to us, to express in practical ways the devotion we continue to feel for the departed one, indicating our gratitude for all they meant to us.

Joseph and Nicodemus owed Jesus more than they could tell. They took responsibility for his burial in a way that was 'fit for a king', in full compliance with the best practice of their culture. It was as far away as can be imagined from what society at large assumed would be arranged for an executed criminal. They embalmed Jesus's body with a vast quantity of spices and laid him to rest in the best imaginable tomb – a new, unused (and therefore unsoiled) tomb in a garden, a place of beauty, a place where we know for sure that all life is predicated on death.

### *Pray*

Today, in your prayer, calmly and for an extended time, hold in your heart and mind someone you know and care about who is grieving. Praise the God of love who holds you and the person you are remembering in an eternal embrace.

**Sunday, 05 April**

*'Happy are they who find faith without seeing me.'*  
— John 20:29

Easter Day signalled something unutterably wonderful! The love of God for humanity, embodied and revealed so starkly in the crucified Jesus, is stronger than death! But everything was changing.

Jesus's disciples, predominantly separated from Jesus during his trial, sentencing and execution needed to be restored to fellowship with Jesus; and they needed to learn how to cope with no longer being able to see, touch or even recognise Jesus in the ordinary sense. Chapter 20 of John's Gospel tells several stories of how those formerly close disciples (from Mary of Magdala to Thomas) were drawn into a deeper faith, discovering how to live with Jesus as a spiritual presence that was real to them in the depths of their hearts. The disciples had to be helped to recognise the continuity in mind and character between the earthly Jesus and the spiritual Jesus. All their memories of walking and talking with Jesus would now illuminate the mission and fellowship of the church. Their responsibility for faithfully witnessing to Jesus and the Spirit of love was unique; the necessary foundation for the church's life. The Gospel of John is the fruit of memories of the earthly Jesus infused with the Spirit-filled experience of the church.

So, to the climax of the Easter stories in John 20: the attention shifts dramatically from the reorientation of the first disciples to all other believers – including ourselves. The final saying of the ever-living Jesus: *'Happy are they who find faith without seeing me.'* We have not seen or heard or met Jesus in the literal sense. But we form a picture of him in our minds as we read of the Spirit-filled Jesus in the pages of John's Gospel. And that enables us to trust in the truth and love of Jesus's spiritual presence with us and within us.

### *To ponder*

Ponder, in silence: What is the best way for you to celebrate this day? How have you learned to live with the spiritual presence of Jesus within you? Is there anyone you would like to share this with?

We wish you all a very Happy Easter, with love from all of us at Vic xxx

Compiled by Vicky Davies