**Twelve – Wk 5 – John: Apostle of Love**

**Ever known a grump became a loving, kind soul after Jesus?**

**We are walking in the disciples' footsteps - exploring standout moments with Jesus and what we can learn about being a disciple.**

**Luke 6:12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:**

**14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 and Judas the son (brother) of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.**

**They were not the most gifted or qualified, but God took these ordinary people and did extraordinary things.**

**THE TWELVE: All four gospels and Acts list the twelve.**

**The lists are slightly varied as nicknames and surnames were used.**

**1. Simon (Peter) - Son of Jonah / 2. Andrew (Simon's brother)**

**3. James - Son of Zebedee / 4. John (James’s brother)**

**5. Philip / 6. Bartholomew (Nathanael)**

**7. Matthew (Levi) / 8. Thomas (Didymus = the twin)**

**9. James / 10. Jude (Judas/Joses/Thaddeus)**

**11. Simon (the Zealot) / 12. Judas Iscariot (the traitor)**

**They were called as disciples and became Apostles.**

**\*\* Today, the most prolific Apostle – John**

**What we know:**

* **He was the younger brother of James and a son of Zebedee**
* **Raised in Bethsaida (like Peter & Andrew) moved to Capernaum**
* **Zebedee was married to Salom, Mary’s sister**
	+ **James and John were Jesus’ cousins**
	+ **Their parents also became followers of Jesus.**
	+ **Salome is listed as a woman who followed Jesus and cared for his needs. (Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:55-56)**
* **He was a former disciple of John the Baptist like his brother.**
* **He was a fisherman – and partners with Peter and Andrew**
* **He is one of the first four to follow Jesus. (Luke 5, Mt 4:21-22)**

**\*\* He was part of the “big three” inner circle.**

**He saw things the other disciples did not (miracles, teachings, Olivet discourse, transfiguration, taken to the garden with Jesus to pray, etc.)**

* **He sat next to Jesus at the last supper (John 13:23)**
* **He was the only Apostle at the cross. (John 19:26)**
* **He was entrusted with taking care of Jesus’ mother (John 19:25-27)**
* **He beat Peter in a foot race to the empty tomb (John 20:8)**

**When you think of John, many think of a young, tender-hearted, patient man – talking about love. But this was a quality he had to learn.**

**His personality:**

* **Like his brother, nicknamed “Boa-ner-ges,” = “sons of thunder.”**
* **Like his brother, he is described as brash, harsh, aggressive, assertive, intolerant, ambitious, and quick to jump to conclusions**
* **He wanted God to call down fire on the Samaritans (Luke 9:54).**
* **At first, he acted privileged and with exclusivity (Mark 9:38).**

**Tried to get Jesus to give him preferential treatment (Matt 20:20-23).**

* **He was a fisherman by trade and gruff by personality.**
* **He was narrow-minded and harsh.**

**John aged well: Once called “son of thunder,” aggressive & intolerant, He is later known for his love (wrote more about love than any other).**

**The “Son of Thunder” who became the “Apostle of love”**

**John a new Disciple – to – John the Apostle and pillar of faith**

**\*\* Once passively curious of truth – He became convinced of the truth**

**A follower of John the B – he was one who pursued truth in between his days at work and family.**

**He was curious and, with Andrew, was the first to ask Jesus questions (John 1). As a disciple, he listened and took notes.**

**Years later, when he decided to write a gospel version based on his accounts and the Holy Spirit's remembrances, he writes with a profound conviction and passion for the truth.**

**In his writings, he uses the word truth – 45X**

**In 2 John alone, he refers to the truth and God’s word 9 times in 13 verses.**

**John 8:31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

**John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

**Similarly, another favorite word of John's was witness. Used 70X.**

**He refers to the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of Scripture, the witness of the Father, the witness of Christ, the witness of the miracles, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and the witness of the apostles. In each case, they were witnesses to the truth. His love for the truth is unwavering.**

**His gospel is unique - nearly 75% new material – included behind the curtain conversations/teachings as an eyewitness.**

**He refers to events that he does not explain.**

**The truth that stood out and transformed John, he wrote about.**

* **Repeated clear and definitive declarations of the eternal divinity of Jesus.**
* **Rich and consistent references to the elect of God’s people.**
* **Repeated references to eternal life.**
* **Only John records the last meal conversations – the coming Holy Spirit, the apostolic authority, the washing of the feet.**
* **It is reflective of the resurrection – a looking back.**
* **It was to John that Jesus entrusted the prophecy of Revelation.**

**John penned some of the most quoted verses in Christianity.**

**The Gospel of John is profoundly theological.**

**He loved, pursued, preached, and called people to truth.**

**And knowing Jesus, the very embodiment of the truth.**

**He writes in his final letter - 3 John 4 - I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**

**\*\* Once lead by emotions – he became stable and unshakable**

**He was offended and ignited with an emotional desire to call down fire on the Samaritans (Luke 9:4).**

**But his writings show a changed man with a clear and stable mind. James 1:8 – a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

**He was not fickle or double minded.**

**He was clear and decisive in his letters – things are clearly black or white for John. He writes in absolutes. His words are hard.**

**1 John 2:4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,**

**1 John 1:6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

**His actions, though misplaced in the early years, became unique traits in Acts and his NT writing. He had a courageous, bold, determined, convicted, and convinced zealousness for Jesus.**

**2 John 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works**

**The words of Christ were established to him. No other options, he was not moved by opinions of others or popular influences.**

**Some of you need to move from emotion driven to Word driven.**

**\*\* Once hypercritical - he became grace and mercy directed**

**In his early days, he had unbridled passion without grace.**

**The only solo reference of John is when he rebukes someone for not following Jesus the way they are.**

**Mark 9:38 John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” 39 But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 For the one who is not against us is for us. 41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.**

**Mark 9 happened - Shortly after the transfiguration. We can have powerful Jesus experiences and still not know grace.**

**His attitude here seems like an unlikely person to be remembered as the apostle of love. But 3 years with Jesus and the infilling HS transformed him.**

**How about you – are you hypercritical of others?**

**They don’t worship like me – but do you hold tight to Jesus?**

**They don’t dress like me – but do they hold tight to Jesus?**

**They don’t read and journal like me – but do they hold tight to Jesus?**

**- This is not an allowance for false teachers, John has made it clear in this same letter – a warning of false teachers.**

**\*\* Once motivated by being right – he was soon motivated by love**

**John became known for his radical love – but retained his passion for the truth and disdain for false teachers.**

**He used the word Love 110X.**

**John taught that love was the mouthpiece of the truth.**

**John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

**Hanging on every word of what Jesus taught about love, this became the center of his message.**

**1 John 2:8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.**

* **Unity in the essentials (Believers)**
* **Liberty in the non-essentials (Believers)**
* **Love in all (believers and unbelievers)**

**In the Gospel of John, he later refers to himself as the Disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)**

**Perhaps referring to the fact that he was loved by Jesus, in spite of his attitude and foolishness. But look at me now!**

**John by the Holy Spirit learned -** The balance of Truth and Love

**1. Truth without love is ruthless**

**Truth without love can be brutal and abusive.**

**Sound doctrine without discernment can attack rather than heal.**

**1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (As Christ gave his life for our sake, we too give our life for others' sake)**

**1 Cor 13:1-3 One can be super spiritual, have great insight and understanding, and great faith… but without love I’m just a noisy gong and gain nothing. Facts without compassion are noisy symbols.**

**2. Love without truth is hypocrisy**

**Tolerance without truth leads to sin and passive acceptance of sin.**

**Let love be without hypocrisy - Romans 12:9**

**(God gives church leadership to hold the body to the Word of God) Ephesians 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ…**

**3. Love defined by God – is the only true love**

**Love wins – really what is love? The one who made it knows.**

**1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves (as God defines it) has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love (as God defines it) does not know God, because God is love.**

**(this is love) 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (wrath satisfier for our sins – love says you have a problem, but Jesus is the answer) 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.**

**Love defined by God through the scripture is true love, anything else is opinions and feelings based.**

**4. Truth defined by God - is the only truth**

**Every religion and perspective is not truth. Truth is not something that works for you. Truth is what the Word of God calls truth.**

**John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (one of 9 “I am” declarations)**

**I am the bread of life (6:35, 48, 51) - I am the light of the world (8:12; 9:5)**

**I am the door / gate (10:7,9) - I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)**

**I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)**

**I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6) I am the true vine (15:1)**

**2 John 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.**

**The truth is exclusive. It is not subjective. God defines it.**

**By nature, if something is truth, it is absolutely true – for all. Well, I have my own truth… well, then it’s not truth.**

**John 12:25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**

**To follow Jesus is to die to self in light of the truth of Jesus. Mark 8:34 - “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

**\*\*\*\* Jesus wants you to be you – but sanctified**

**John was absolutely transformed w/out compromising his personality. He retained his bold personality and layered it with love.**

**He was a son of thunder to the end, but what he cared about changed. He was thunderously intolerant to sin and compromise. Passionate about warning of false teachers – and an amazing conduit of God’s love and compassion.**

**What happened to John?**

**John was the only one to return to Jesus at the cross – his mother (Salom) was there with him.**

**John 18:15 – saw him beat - John 19:25-27 – at the cross - Every beating, every nail – the spear in his side.**

**Jesus trusted a man who wanted God to burn down a city to take care of his mom. Jesus saw in John who he was becoming and who he would be.**

**After the resurrection**

* **Filled with the Spirit of God - Acts 2**
* **Peter and John were powerhouses – doing miracles, getting arrested, and going back out on the street to preach. (Acts)**
* **Even after bearing the loss of his brother James who was beheaded – he was soon in the streets preaching.**
* **He wrote the Gospel of John, 1,2,3, John, and Revelation.**
* **By the time he writes portions of the NT – he is compassionate, gracious, loving, and deeply committed to Christ.**
* **He endured arrests, prison, beatings, and torture.**
* **The only Apostle to outlive all the others and die a natural death.**
* **The others suffered and died – while John suffered and lived.**

**One by one – they were killed. There were attempts on John.**

**But by God’s grace, he was spared.**

* **Exiled and Imprisoned on Patmos (Rev 1:9) – he never complained, he willingly embraced suffering for Christ's sake.**
* **After his release, he continued to preach the gospel. (Rev 10:11)**
* **He ended up as the senior elder of Ephesus.**

**Death:**

**The church father Irenaeus says that John died a natural death during the reign of the emperor Trajan (AD 98+) and was buried in Ephesus.**

**Jerome, in his commentary on Galatians, said that John was so frail in his senior years that at the church in Ephesus, where he was an elder, he had to be carried into church. It said that he greeted the church with “my beloved children, love one another, love one another, love one another”**

**That wildfire thunderous gruff fisherman – indeed became a fisher of men on a grand scale.**

**John’s is the story of how God took an opinionated, harsh man and turned him into a bold and loving Apostle. The amazement of seeing someone meet Jesus – who was radically transformed.**

**So many dynamic verses penned by John…**

**John 3:3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”**

**John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

**John 3:36 - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life. Instead, the wrath of God remains on him.”**

**1 John 5:12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

**1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**

**John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**