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**Sunday 15 May 2022 to Sunday 22 May 2022**

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Sunday 15 May 2022

# Where’s Jesus?

by Pastor Tim Klein

**My children, I will be with you for a little while longer. Then you will look for me, but you won’t find me (John 13:33).**

Read John 13:31–35

‘Where’s Jesus? Where’s Jesus?’ This is part of an often-told story I’ve heard about a couple of mischievous brothers. Their mother becomes so exasperated with them that one day, after prepping her pastor, the mother sends them to the pastor. She has asked the pastor to attempt to get them to be less mischievous.

The first boy goes into the pastor’s study and sits down. The pastor stands up and asks, ‘Where’s Jesus?’ He continues to ask the same question over and over again, getting louder and louder, until the boy bolts for the door and runs away. His brother follows him. When they finally arrive in a safe place, the second brother asks the first, ‘What happened?’ The brother responds. ‘We are really in trouble this time. They think we have stolen Jesus!’

The same question is a good one for us today: ‘Where’s Jesus?’

For those first close years with Jesus, the first disciples, if they lost track of Jesus, would have to ask where he had got to. Somebody would be able to tell them he’s just gone on ahead – or whatever the situation.

Jesus knew that time was running short for that sort of relationship with him. He spoke of his arrest, crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension. He told them about it: the time will come when I’ll be gone, no longer here, but with my Father. You won’t be able to find me!

Even though those disciples listened to Jesus say, ‘you will look for me, but you won’t find me’, it wasn’t long until they heard the words, ‘I am with you always – even to the close of the age’.

Under this promise, we don’t need to ask, ‘Where’s Jesus?’ Jesus was present wherever those boys were – doing mischief or otherwise. He is with you and me in every situation of our lives.

Now, back to the pastor. The message I suspect he is trying to get through to the boys is this: whatever you are doing, wherever you are, remember where Jesus is. He’s right there with you.

**Lord, when I am tempted to sin and look away from you, prompt me with your word, forgive and call me back, remind me that I am your disciple, and refresh your command in my life to ‘love each other’. Amen.**

Monday 16 May 2022

# On the inside and the out

by Pastor Tim Klein

**Memorise his laws. Write down copies and tie them to your wrists and forehead (Deuteronomy 6:6,8).**

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–9

I've often seen people walking along the road with their iPhones plugged into their ears and jogging with their smartphones bound to their upper arms or a heart monitor strapped to their chest. Have you?

At first, it was a strange sight, but nowadays, I am getting used to the idea. My GP tells me that it is not a bad idea that I strap a heart monitor to my chest when I am riding to see what my heart rate is on the readout on my handlebars. Probably good advice for a person with the dicky heart and a pacemaker.

I'm not so sure, however, about taping verses of Scripture to my forehead and wrists. I suspect that people would look at me rather strangely and wonder what kind of person I was.

But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. The Pharisees wearing the phylacteries1 on their foreheads and wrists was an outward sign of something God had commanded for the inside. When God says ‘memorise these laws’, he's talking about internalising them – layering them down into our hearts and minds so that these life-giving words would strengthen our faith and prompt the good things on the inside to come to the outside in what we say, what we do and how we say and do it.

So, let all of us continue to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and strength. Let’smemorise his laws. Let’s tell them to our children over and over again. Let’s talk about them all the time, whether we’re at home, walking along the road, going to bed at night or getting up in the morning. As disciples of Jesus, what he has to say in our lives (and through us) is life-giving.

Robin Mann said it well, ‘Let your word fill my days, let your music fill my years, let your song fill my life now and evermore’2.

Maybe, after all, it would be a good thing to have a smartphone in our pocket and earbuds plugged in, speaking the word into our hearts and lives – modern-day phylacteries!

**Lord Jesus, prompt your Holy Spirit to keep on speaking your word into our hearts and lives so that we are so full of your word that it overflows from the inside out in faith and love. Amen.**

1 A small leather box containing Hebrew texts, worn by Jewish men at morning prayer (from the Oxford Languages Dictionary)

2 Robin Mann, Let your Word Fill My Days, 1976

Tuesday 17 May 2022

# Remember this

by Pastor Tim Klein

**People of Israel, you have only one Lord and God. You must love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:29,30).**

Read Mark 12:28–34

I've heard it said, and I've said it myself to my children and people I care for, ‘Whatever happens, remember this, your mum and I love you. You can call us at any time, from any situation in your life, and we will do whatever we can to help you as needed’.

There are important things in life that we should remember always. My wife and I certainly hope that our children never forget that we love and cherish them. These days, we pass that same message of love on to our grandchildren.

We hope and pray that they will continue to love us as much as we love them. With loving comes expectations of how they will live. For them all, we hope and pray that they will live lives of faith in God, trusting in Jesus in all the circumstances of their lives.

While it's important that our children remember that we love them, there is another thing they need to remember, and it's this commandment from Jesus: ‘You have only one Lord and God. You must love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength’.

So we might say to our children, ‘remember this, we love you’, but there is far greater advice we could give to them: ‘Remember this: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength’.

I'm not so sure how often this advice is given to our children these days, let alone to friends and neighbours or even people we meet, especially when they're going through times of struggle and uncertainty. Perhaps we all need reminding to love the Lord our God and that this is a holistic love: heart, soul, mind and strength.

How often do we remember how much the Lord has done for us and continues to do for us? How often do we recognise his love for us when time after time, he forgives us our sins and continually gives us fresh opportunities to live and love, laugh and revel in the life that he's given us? And even if our human lives aren’t all that flash in worldly terms: relationship struggle, poor health, financial challenges and the like. How good it is to truly love the Lord and be loved by him!

By loving the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength, we entrust our whole lives into his care, even his eternal keeping. By loving the Lord, we are to put him above all the other things that we attempted to idolise in our lives, the things that rust and perish and finally have no lasting blessing.

When we remember this, we open ourselves up to the full blessing of our wonderful God who loves us completely.

**Dear loving Heavenly Father. Prompt us with your Holy Spirit every day to remember that you are our only Lord and God and to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Encourage us to share this wonderful truth with our families, neighbours, friends and the people we meet along life's journey. Amen.**

Wednesday 18 May 2022

# Would you really die for me?

by Pastor Tim Klein

**Peter asked, ‘Lord, why can’t I go with you now? I would die for you!’ (John 13:37)**

Read John 13:36–14:3

We do not often talk about life and death in the usual run of our lives. We don't like to think about it, especially the thought of dying. However, in the middle of our lives, we are in death. There are situations all around us here and all over the world. Of course, the classic international example is what's happening in Ukraine. I vividly recall, perhaps you too, the images of men sending off their women and children at the railway station to safety while staying behind to defend their homes. They were prepared to lay down their lives for their loved ones and their freedom.

I've also heard this story of a little sister who was asked to give her blood to her older sister, who was dying. With her blood, her sister could live. After a little while, the sister agreed. The day came for her to give her blood to her sister. They lay down side by side, and the transfusion began. After a little while, the little sister asked her mum, ‘When will I die?’ The little sister was ready to die for her older sister.

Extraordinary love in the face of death.

Now, back to the story of Peter and Jesus. It turns out that despite Peter assuring Jesus, ‘I would die for you!’, he wasn’t yet ready to commit. Jesus knew that and confirmed it, telling Peter, ‘I tell you for certain that before a rooster crows, you will say three times that you don’t even know me’.

The irony of this account was that Jesus was the one who would really die – for Peter and for me, you and the whole world.

Ultimately, however, Peter was willing to die for Jesus. In AD 64, under the rule of Emperor Nero, Peter died – crucified and martyred for his faith in Jesus.

I don’t know how I would answer if Jesus asked me: would you die for me?

But I do know his answer if I asked Jesus: would you die for me?

He did!

Amazing love, how can it be
That you, my king, would die for me
Amazing love, I know it's true
It's my joy to honour you
In all I do, I honour you

–Billy J Foote, Amazing Love – You are My King, 1996, from worshiptogether.com songs (Admin by Crossroad Distributors Pty Ltd)

Thursday 19 May 2022

# Love between friends

by Pastor Tim Klein

**Servants don’t know what their master is doing, and so I don’t speak to you as my servants. I speak to you as my friends (John 15:15).**

Read John 15:9–17

Making friends these days can be as easy as clicking the ‘confirm friend request’ button on Facebook. Unfriending can be just as easy – just another click – but it can feel a tad brutal.

If only it was truly that simple. In real life, I have a few very close friends and then a wider circle of friends I share with my wife. Beyond that, I have many friends in congregations I have served – past and present. I also have a large number of Facebook friends.

So, I am wondering, what is it that makes a friend truly a friend?

Here’s what I think: it is someone who has shared significant times with me. Someone who will remain a friend even if I say or do something they disagree with. Perhaps someone I have grown up with who knows me well and cares about what is happening to me. And then there are those with whom I share a common interest. Sometimes friendships take a long time to grow. Other times, it’s pretty much an instant friendship. Some of my friends are people I haven’t seen or spoken to in years, but when we see each other again, it’s like nothing has changed – we take up where we left off.

For me, my friends are people for whom I will go the distance, and they will do the same for me. I recall times when friends have been there when I have suffered or struggled. Other times they are there to share the joys and celebrations of my life. I would say that good friendship is an expression of love for that other person.

I feel like I am waffling a bit, but this is probably the nature of friendship. It comes in many shapes and forms, and the different characters and natures of friendships are as many as there are friends.

A true friend is a wonderful gift from God. To be a true friend is equally a gift of God.

Now when I talk about me here, I am thinking about you. All of this leads me to my true best friend – not so much about what I have done for him but what he has done and continues to do for me. This is Jesus, who knows me from the inside out. Jesus, who cares for me no matter my circumstances. Jesus, who died for me and continues to forgive my sin. Jesus, who speaks for me into the presence of our Heavenly Father. Jesus, who shares with me everything that the Lord has for me. And he does it as a friend with my best interests at heart.

It's this Jesus and his friendship that helps me and you be the best friend we can be to all of our friends.

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pains we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

–Joseph Scriven, 1820–1886, LH 426

**Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are my friend. Thank you that you speak directly into my heart. Reveal what I need to know for life with you in your kingdom. Make me the best friend I can be for all those who know and care for me and for whom I care. I ask in the name of my best friend: Jesus.**

Friday 20 May 2022

# Keeping it real

by Pastor Tim Klein

**Real love isn’t our love for God, but his love for us (1 John 4:10).**

Read 1 John 4:7–21

I am wondering about this statement: real love is love that has its origins in God’s love for us.

This short section of 1 John 4 mentions love 27 times, and it’s all connected to the love that God has for us. This is the love that he commands us to express in love toward each other.

In verses 7 and 8, it is made very clear that true love – or what we might call ‘real’ love – has its origins in God: love comes from God; God is love.

In verse 10, John says it again and makes it clearer: real love isn’t our love for God but his love for us.

We all need to be loved. We all need to love for that sense of completeness and satisfaction. It seems to me to be an innate part of who we are as people. It has always been in me; has it been in you – to love other people? But do we always get it right?

It starts with God’s forgiveness in us that, in turn, in love, we can give to other people. Some people can get hard to love. How can we keep loving and forgiving those who reject our love, turn their back on us or even attack us? We need another source of love that will empower our love and capacity to forgive and serve other people. I can tell you from my experience of love that whatever real love I am able to give cannot be self-generated or sustained. If I try to love on my own personal ‘love batteries’, I soon run empty, and the unreal nature of my love is exposed.

What we all discover is that we all depend on being loved by God. Only, he loves us with such depth and passion that not only are we loved to contentment but loved to the brim in such a way that his love will overflow in us. Jesus is our source of real love, and we keep love real when we keep on loving others in his name.

I wrote this verse several years ago, referring to God’s love for us in Jesus:

He was grace on a journey, walking the road
With an eye for the broken – an ear for their cry
He said to the cripple, ‘Get up and go’
On the blind and the lonely, his love overflowed.

I am that person, crippled and blind
Struggling for reason, pretending I’m fine
Jesus – he heals me – tells me the truth
He tells me to ‘Love – as I have loved you’.

Now I’m living and loving – the old is now new
by the grace of the Lord, I’m living for you
till the journey is over – wherever I go
I’ll give, and I’ll serve – that his love overflows.

–Tim Klein, His love overflows, AT 638

**Lord, thank you for your love toward me. Thank you for the forgiveness you give and the ways in which you serve me in life. Keep topping me up with your love so that it will overflow from my life into the lives of others. Amen.**

Saturday 21 May 2022

# PTL – praise the Lord

by Pastor Tim Klein

**Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you (Psalm 67:5).**

Read Psalm 67

I know a person, though unable to speak, who praises God with loud cries.I know another who, when singing, sings with tear-washed cheeks.And still, another who sings with arms raised high, head lifted up, heart open and eyes closed, all attention on the Lord.I know another person who, at one point, would respond to every good thing, saying ‘PTL’!

We are all called to praise the Lord. We each praise the Lord in our own unique way, for our own reasons, yet our praise is shared. This word from Psalm 67 says it: ‘Let all the peoples praise you’.

In Revelation, chapter 5, John is given a vision of millions and millions of people praising God around his throne:

The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and praise.

And then there were more!

All beings in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and in the sea offer praise. Together, all of them were saying, ‘Praise, honour, glory, and strength forever and ever to the one who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’

Do you love to praise the Lord?

What are some of your memorable times of praising the Lord?

What are your reasons for praising the Lord?

Mostly, our praises to the Lord are carried in singing – from the classic hymn Praise to the Lord (LH 442) to Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus and Tim Tscharke’s Singing All Praises to Benjamin Hastings O Praise the Name (Anástasis).

Perhaps you might finish your time of reflection by calling to mind your reasons to praise the Lord and spending some time in praise.

**Lord, you are gracious to us and bless us. You shine your face on us. You judge the peoples of the earth with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Your earth yields more than enough for all the world’s needs. You have truly blessed us. And so, with all the nations, we praise you, O Lord. Amen.**

Sunday 22 May 2022

# Hearing the Father’s words

by Carolyn Ehrlich

**These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me (John 14:24b).**

Read John 14:23–29

In the first two verses of today’s reading, three words jump out at me: love, obey and hear.

If we love God, then we will obey the teaching of Jesus. To do this, we must hear our Father’s voice, the words he is telling us. Note that the words belong to the Father. God the Father spoke to God the Son through God the Holy Spirit (who descended on Jesus when he was baptised).

And how are we to hear God’s word? In verse 26, we are told the Advocate – the Holy Spirit – will remind us of everything. So, we can read God’s word and the words that Jesus spoke, but it is the Holy Spirit who reminds us.

It is important to read, understand and obey God’s instructions. And Jesus has given us these words. But how do we apply them in our daily life? To take an example from the current passage in John. In verse 27, Jesus says, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid’.

But what troubles my heart and the things that I am afraid of might be different for you. Or, the things that worry you today might not be the same things that troubled you last week. And what I might need to do to be obedient to this direction from God might be different from what you need to do.

Practically, then, how can we hear the words of God the Father through the Holy Spirit so that we can apply them in our daily lives? One way to do this is in your daily devotions, such as this one. But it could also be in other readings you do or in the sermons you listen to. Before, during and after your devotions, Bible readings or listening to sermons, ask God directly, ‘What are you saying to me personally, Lord?’ God has promised that his sheep hear his voice. Listen, hear, obey – all because you love God.

**Father God, the words I hear belong to you; they come from you. Thank you that you sent Jesus and your Holy Spirit – who dwells in me – so that I might hear and obey. Open the ears of my heart and spirit so that I might listen to what you are saying to me personally. You have promised as one of your sheep that I will hear your voice. Help me to hear. In Jesus’ awesome name, I pray, Amen.**