

JOHN 12-21



Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

JOHN II: HOLY WEEK

(10 BIBLE STUDIES)

EXAMINATION APPLICATION

BIBLE STUDIES

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THE SMALL PRINT

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THESE STUDIES

Your Commitment

I would encourage you to make a commitment to attending your group regularly. I realise that sometimes there are things that get in the way, but do prioritise studying the Bible with other. This will involve sacrifice, and effective use of your time, but I really believe that in doing so you will get the most out of studying the Bible and praying together in your small group.

Your Contribution

What you put into the group is going to determine what you get out of the group. I encourage you to contribute honestly to the discussion and workings of the group. I understand people come from different backgrounds with unique personalities & life experiences. But, we all have a big part to play, so I encourage you to be fully present and take ownership of your group.

Your Preparation

These materials are primarily for use in preparing and/or leading group discussions, but they will also be useful in keeping your thoughts together in one place. The materials provide you with the passage so that you can identify and highlight recurring themes and note down your own thoughts and questions. Also, the materials include questions designed to provoke thought, and help you reflect on what the passage meant, both at the time it was written, and also what it means for us now.

I would encourage you to make good use of these materials, as doing so will help you contribute and get the most out of the group discussions. The materials are, however, only “tools” – they are there to help you, and not to restrict you, or force you to think in a certain manner. I want to see God speaking to you through these passages, and if the questions or notes don't help you, simply don't use them!

I have also included within these materials an introduction to the book. Make of this what you will, but I hope that it is helpful in getting you started with these studies!

Your Leadership

Here are some useful pointers in how to lead your Bible study group. Be aware that included in this study guide are more questions than you can possibly ask and/or answer in one session. They are not designed to be used rigidly, and there will rarely be a need to ask every question! Make sure that you spend some time praying at the start and ensure you read & re-read the passages as much as possible. In relation to the passages, then consider the suggested questions with an open mind. There is rarely “a single right answer” and I would encourage you to share your thoughts with your group.

I have also included a number of quotations from relevant Christian literature, most of which are readily available online if you want to do further thinking or study. My prayer is that as you study together you would grow to love Jesus and experience Him more deeply.

I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to make these materials even better!

*Steve McClure
Spring 2019*

I really like Leon Morris's comparison about John's Gospel that it is a "pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim" (The Gospel according to John, Grand Rapids). Whilst being incredibly accessible John's gospel is also a rich treasure trove from which we will never tire. John says at the end of his gospel that he was written it so that we may believe in Jesus and have life in His name:

*³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. **John 20:30-31***

The gospel does not identify its author but refers regularly to the disciple who Jesus loved (13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 24 & 21:7). We know that John, the son of Zebedee was one of Jesus' inner circle among the disciples. The fact that he is not mentioned by name gives strong evidence that he was the author of this gospel. Historically of course the gospel has been attributed to John who was a key eye witness and certainly would have had the kind of perspective required to write in the way that he does!

The dating of John's gospel places it somewhere between 85-95AD (the traditional view) and sometime between 50 and 70AD (more modern view). John 5:2 says there *is* a pool near the Sheep Gate but given that Jerusalem was destroyed in 70AD this may give some weight towards an earlier date although as you would expect there are counter arguments on that as well. Chances are that John wrote the gospel from the major city of Ephesus (modern day Turkey) and he was writing to both Jews and Gentiles.

The central theme of John's gospel is of course Jesus Christ. Indeed the gospel begins by telling us that Jesus is *the Word* and *the Word* is God (1:1, 14). John records what he calls *signs* as well as a host of *witnesses* to help us to see that Jesus is the Promised Messiah. There is also a huge theme centred on the trinity. We see Jesus talking about He is working with the Father and the Spirit to reveal the Godhead to a needy world and bring Salvation. John's gospel is clear that Jesus' death and resurrection are the foundations of our salvation. Eternal life can be ours through believing in Jesus Christ and all that He has done on our behalf. John's gospel is also very mission-orientated as John calls us to continue the mission of Jesus through our everyday interactions with those around us.

I have divided my studies in John's gospel into two sections: John 1-11 and John 12-21. There is a verse in John 16:28 which sums up well these two sections of John:

I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.' **John 16:28**

Firstly in John 1-11 we see Jesus described (and describing Himself) as the Christ. He is the Son of God sent by His Father to reveal Himself to us. Then in John 12-21 we see the emphasis on Jesus' return to His Father. In this first series we move from John 1 (describing the incarnation) into the essence of Jesus' ministry. We see key encounters with people like Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman and the blind man. The first volume includes all seven *signs* (miracles) which were significant events which come with clear teaching points or meanings:

1. Changing water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11)
2. Healing the royal official's son in Capernaum (John 4:46-54)
3. Healing the paralytic at Bethesda (John 5:1-15)
4. Feeding the 5000 (John 6:5-14)
5. Jesus walking on water in (John 6:16-24)
6. Healing the man blind from birth (John 9:1-7)
7. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-45)

You will probably also be familiar with the so called *I Am* statements. Back in Exodus God met Moses through a burning bush. God told Moses that He was *I Am*. John makes use of this by illustrating His points by using the *I Am* statements of Jesus to show who Jesus was. John helps us see how Jesus was the embodiment of things such as Bread, Light, Gate, Good Shepherd, Resurrection & Life, Way, Truth & Life and Vine. Here are the seven *I Am* statements

1. I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35)
2. I am the Light of the World (John 8:12)
3. I am the Gate (John 10:9)
4. I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
5. I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25-26)
6. I am the Way, the Truth and the life (John 14:6)
7. I am the Vine (John 15:5)

As well as the seven *signs*, five of these statements also came in the first section of John's gospel! There are only two *I am* statements in this second section of John's Gospel. This incredible gospel is loaded with inexhaustible depth. My prayer is that as you work through these studies you will begin to understand what it meant for Jesus to be crucified and resurrected for us and the implications of why He had to return to His Father so that He could send us His Spirit.

*But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **John 16:7-8***

Every blessing,

Steve McClure
Spring 2019

STUDY 1 – JOHN 12 – THE HOUR HAS COME

INTRODUCTION: News of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead soon spread until it reached Jerusalem. It left people wondering if this is the Messiah who would deliver Israel from the Romans. The Jewish authorities saw Jesus as a criminal and wanted to arrest Him (11:55-57). In John 12 Jesus is anointed, before entering Jerusalem with some pomp. He goes on however to predict His death!

SETTING THE SCENE: Think about a favourite (or popular) celebrity or sports personality: what are the dangers of expectations regarding this person who you think you know lots about but whom you have never met? What were the expectations in Jesus' time about the promised Messiah?

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JESUS ANOINTED (v1-11): What do you think motivated Mary to do what she does for Jesus (v3)? Can you identify with Judas over the sense of extravagance (v4-6)? What do we learn about Jesus and why He had come (v7-8)? How do you account for the contrast between those clamoring to see Jesus (v9 & 11) and the Chief Priests desire to see Him killed?

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TRIUMPHANT ENTRY (v12-19): Why do you think Jesus is now happy to ride into Jerusalem amidst public acclaim (contrary to 6:15)? What does this scene tell us about what people were expecting from the Messiah? Zechariah 9:9-13 is referenced in v15: what does this have to say about the kind of King that Jesus would be?

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THE HOUR HAS COME (v20-23, 27-29): Why does the request from the Greeks (who asked to see Jesus in v20), lead to Jesus' response that the *hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified* (v23)? What does it mean to be *glorified* (v23, 27-28)? What is it that brings "glory" to the Father and the Son?

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PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLICATION (v24-26): How do you see this principle of death bringing multiplication demonstrated both in the life of Jesus and in all who have followed Him as disciples? What might it mean for you to 'die' in order to see the gospel advance? What does Jesus mean when He says *whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be (v26)*?

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LIFTED UP (v30-36): Despite hearing the voice from Heaven (for their benefit), the crowds clearly do not understand Jesus words about being lifted up (v32 & 34): how we do see the clash of expectations here about why Jesus had come? What does Jesus mean here about walking in the light (v35)?

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RESPONDING TO JESUS (v37-50): Why did these Jews refuse to believe in Jesus despite all His signs that pointed to who He was (v37-41)? Why in contrast do you think others (even some leaders) believed in secret for fear of reprisals from the authorities (v42-43)? What do you make of Jesus' last public words that He shares with those who had rejected Him (v44-50)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: How do you think the disciples reconciled in their minds, Jesus' triumphant arrival in Jerusalem with His subsequent predictions about His death? What is it that most impresses you about Jesus' sense of purpose and commitment to His mission here?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Pray for one another as you follow Jesus and embrace the kind of self-sacrifice that Jesus demonstrated for you. Pray that God would glorify Himself through your life and that many would come to know Him through you.

MEMORY VERSES: JOHN 12:24-25

STUDY 2 – JOHN 13 – LOVE AND BETRAYAL

INTRODUCTION: Chapter 13 is the beginning of Jesus' Upper Room Discourse. Turning to those the Father had given Him Jesus now shows them His love as He takes the place of a servant to wash their feet. This is the first stage as He uses this time to prepare them for His departure.

SETTING THE SCENE: What is the most sacrificial thing anyone has ever done for you or that you have done for someone else? What made the love demonstrated in your example so extraordinary? What impact do you imagine that such a selfless act would have on others?

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SELF-SACRIFICE (v1-17): What would have gone through your mind had you been one of the disciples? How would you have felt? What do you think it would have been like to witness this event?

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DEMONSTRATING LOVE (v1-5): What is love? What does John mean when he says that Jesus *loved them to the end* (v1, NIV2011) or *showed them the full extent of his love* (v1, NIV 1984)? Why does Jesus wash His disciple's feet?

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WASHED CLEAN (v6-11): Why would Jesus not wash *all* of Peter's body when he asked him to? In what ways can we be like Peter in this respect? What important lesson did Jesus teach in response to Peter's interruptions? What did washing their feet symbolise?

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SETTING AN EXAMPLE (v12-17): What does it mean that *no servant is greater than his master* (v16)? Jesus set them an example that He wants them to follow: do you think that we should we wash each other's feet today? Why or why not? What might be an equivalent act of self-sacrifice?

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BETRAYAL & DENIAL (v18-38): The second part focuses on the failure of two of the disciples, Peter and Judas: what must it have been like for Jesus to see two of His 12 disciples fail Him in this way?

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JUDAS' BETRAYAL (v18-30): How do you think the disciples would have responded to Jesus' assertion that one of them would soon betray Him (v18-22)? What was Judas' significance in the working out of God's plan (see Psalm 41:9)? Do you think that all the disciples heard John's question and Jesus' reply (v25)? How does that help to understand what was going on here?

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GLORIFIED (v31-35): What do you think Jesus means when he talks about being glorified? When are/were the Father and the Son glorified? What calibre of love should we show to others? To what extent do others know we are disciples by the way we live (v35)? Why is it a 'new' commandment (v34)? In what sense does the love we show in our own lives evidence our faith in Christ?

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PETER'S DENIAL (v36-38): What similarities and differences are there between Peter and Judas? If we can and indeed do fail God what other scriptures can we take comfort in (e.g. 6:37-39)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: What has been your experience of the love of God's people either positively or negatively? How have you seen the quality of this love impact others for Christ?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Think together about what such self-sacrifice for others might look like today. Pray that the quality of our love for one another would show that we are Jesus' disciples.

MEMORY VERSES: JOHN 13:34-35

INTRODUCTION: Jesus meant everything to the disciples and a future without him was not easy for them. Jesus responds to their troubled and anxious hearts with faith. He presents himself as the object of faith and explains how His departure will bring much blessing.

SETTING THE SCENE: Twice in this passage Jesus tells the disciple's not to let their hearts be troubled (v1 & 27): what is it that causes us to be anxious and troubled in heart? What do you think it was about Jesus' departure that was such a big deal for the disciples?

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PREPARING A PLACE (v1-4): How might these words have been a comfort to the disciples and what does Jesus mean when he says that He will come back for them (v3)? In what ways is our destiny secure because of what Jesus has done for us? What does Jesus mean when he talks about preparing a place for us and that His Father's house has many rooms?

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THE WAY TO THE FATHER (v5-11): Why is Jesus the only way to God (v6)? Does that mean that other religions are of no value? Why or why not? In what ways do you understand Jesus to be *the way*, *the truth*, and *the life* (v5)? What is your experience of Him as such?

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What does the passage say about Jesus and His relationship to the Father? To what extent can we relate to Philip's plea to Jesus to show them the Father? How do you understand Jesus' response that if they have seen Him then they have seen the Father?

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GREATER THINGS (v12-14): What are consequences of Jesus' return to the Father (v12)? Specifically what are these *greater things* Jesus mentions (v12)? What sort of prayer is talked about and what is its purpose (v13-14)? How does answering prayer allow the Father glorify the Son?

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I WILL COME TO YOU (v15-20): Why is it so important that Jesus does not leave us as orphans (v18)? Why can't the world see the Spirit (v17,19)? What do these verses teach us about the Spirit and why is He called the *Spirit of truth*?

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LOVE AND OBEDIENCE (v21-24): What is the relationship between love and obedience (v21 & 23-24)? How does Jesus answer Judas' question (v22)? In what sense will the world see Jesus even though he is gone? How can the eyes of men be opened to see the Spirit?

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THE ADVOCATE (v25-31): What is the Advocate's role (v25) in bringing peace and comfort to their troubled hearts? What is different about the peace Jesus offers (v27) and how would this be a comfort to the disciples when they lose Jesus? Do you think they could really be glad at His going (v28)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: In what ways has this study strengthened your convictions that Jesus is the only means of coming to the Father? What has been your experience of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Talk together about your anxieties right now and think about how the encouragements of this passage might speak into those things. Commit one another to Jesus and ask Him to minister to your hearts through His Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 14:21

STUDY 4 – JOHN 15 – I AM THE VINE: REMAIN IN ME

INTRODUCTION: Jesus now addresses the heart of the mission He's calling the disciples to give their lives to when He leaves them; He wants them to be fruitful and lay down their lives for others even in the face of strong opposition. To do so they must remain connected and dependent on Him.

SETTING THE SCENE: Who are the people that you are closest to and what does it mean for you to draw on their strength and resources? In the same way how would you define intimacy with Jesus and what does it mean for you to draw on His strength and resources?

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EFFECTIVE MISSION (15:1-17): How do you understand the illustration of the vine and the gardener? Why is Jesus the true vine (see also Psalm 80:8-16, Isaiah 5:1-7)? What is the role and purpose of each element (branches, vine, the gardener)? Why are the branches so dependent upon the vine?

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CUTTING AND PRUNING (v2-3): What does pruning and cutting look like? What kind of pruning / cutting is God doing in your life? How is this pruning necessary for effective mission? What does he cut off and clean up (see also Romans 12:1-2 & Heb12:11)? How do we bear fruit?

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REMAINING IN THE VINE (v4-8): What do you think that it means to remain (some translations *abide*)? What is the fruit that we are to bear? Do you think that it is primarily about 'being' or 'doing' (see also Galatians 5:22-23)? What does Jesus say is dependent on remaining? In what ways does our *remaining* bring glory to God and show that we are Jesus' disciples?

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LASTING FRUIT (v7-16): What does Jesus mean when He says He calls the disciples friends rather than servants (v14-15)? Why is praying in Jesus' name (v7, 16, James 4:2 & 1 John 5:14) and love for fellow one another crucial for fruitfulness (v9-10 & 12-17)?

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OPPOSITION TO MISSION (15:18-27): For what reasons did people hate and persecute Jesus (v18 & 25)? What does Jesus mean by His comments about whether we belong to the world or not? What are the implications either way (v19)?

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INEVITABLE (v20-25): To what extent do you think opposition is inevitable for us if we believe in Jesus? In our society and spheres of influence where might the opposition come? How does Jesus encourage the disciples that they can endure suffering with His help? What might this look like for us?

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THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (v26-27): In what ways does Jesus promise that the Advocate will continue Jesus' ministry when He is no longer with them? What is your experience of the Spirit of truth testifying about Jesus in or through your own life?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: What kind of picture is Jesus building for the kind of distinctive lives He wants us to live as we draw on Him and the Spirit He has sent us? What steps can you take to develop a more intimate relationship with Jesus whom you can draw close to during times of opposition?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Share with one another about your relationship with Jesus and where you are at with Him right now. Pray for one another that God would make your lives fruitful and help you to stand firm amidst opposition and persecution.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 15:5

STUDY 5 – JOHN 16 – GOD’S RESOURCES: SPIRIT AND SON

INTRODUCTION: The disciples are again in need of encouragement especially in light of His departure and His words in v1-4. Their deepest concern is still Jesus’ departure. We can broadly distinguish two aspects of God’s resources to encourage us – the Spirit and the Son.

SETTING THE SCENE: Think of a time when you felt desperately in need of the help and encouragement of others: how was this need met? What people and/or resources were involved?

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STANDING FIRM (v1-4): How might Jesus’ words across previous chapters have encouraged the disciples not to fall away? Why does Jesus want to warn them about the opposition they will face?

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GIFT OF THE SPIRIT (v5-15): Why does Jesus talk so much here about his “coming” and his “going” in this passage? Why can the Advocate not come unless Jesus goes away (v7)?

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MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT: What do we learn here about the Holy Spirit and the role He plays? How does the Holy Spirit convict us in our lives (v8-9)? How does the Holy Spirit testify to the truth (v7)? What is the nature of the Spirit’s counselling (v7)? How does the Spirit guide us into all truth (v13)?

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EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT: What is your experience of the Holy Spirit and how does it fit with what we learn about him in this passage? How does the Holy Spirit bring glory to Jesus (v14)? What does this look like in practice?

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GIFT OF THE SON (v16-33): The disciples seem confused: what does Jesus mean by his reference to a *little while* (v16)? What was Jesus’ promise here and how might it bring them joy (20-22)?

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WHATEVER YOU ASK (v23-24): It would appear that unanswered prayer is (and always has been) a thing: in the light of that how do you understand Jesus words here? Why is praying in *Jesus name* so important (v23-24) and how does it *make our joy complete*?

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THE FATHER'S LOVE (v25-28): The disciples have struggled with Jesus figurative speaking but He now promises a time when He will speak plainly: how do you think Jesus' words about how the Father loves them would have been an encouragement? What is your reaction to the fact that we are able to come to the Father in the name of Jesus (v28)?

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OVERCOMING THE WORLD (v29-33): Jesus predicts a time when each of them will be scattered to their homes (v32): how will hearing these words enable them to have peace and to see that Jesus has overcome the world (v33)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: If you were one of the disciples how might you have felt when you heard these things? In what ways do you think Jesus' words encouraged the disciples? How are you challenged by the persecution we will face and encouraged by the resources God gives to us?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Thank God for the gift of His Holy Spirit who ministers to us, to those we are seeking to help (He is the real evangelist) and who shares with us Christ Himself. Pray that God would convict you of sin, teach you and guide you into all truth over the coming week.

MEMORY VERSES: JOHN 16:13-14

STUDY 6 – JOHN 17 – JESUS' HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

INTRODUCTION: Before they leave the Upper Room Jesus prays that His Father would accomplish his plan; (1) through the completion of His ministry, (2) through the completion of His apostles' ministry and (3) through the impact of ALL believers ministry.

SETTING THE SCENE: What significance is there that Jesus' prayer is recorded at this point? What kind of things cause us to pray and what do we pray about? In this prayer identify what Jesus prays about; 'Himself', 'His disciples' and 'other believers'?

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PRAYER FOR HIMSELF (v1-5): What impresses you about what Jesus is (and isn't) asking God for in relation to Himself? In what ways do the Father and the Son glorify one another (v1-2, 4-5)? How do you respond to Jesus' definition of the source and nature of eternal life (v3)?

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PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES (v6-19): In what ways had Jesus had revealed the Father to the disciples (v6-9)? What does Jesus mean when He says the disciples have brought Him glory (v10)?

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SPIRITUAL PROTECTION (v11-15): Why do you think that Jesus focuses so much on the need for protection (v11-12)? Why do you think Jesus puts such an emphasis on praying for *protection*? What were the threats that they needed protecting from (esp. v12, 15)?

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IN OR OF THE WORLD (v15-16): What is the difference between being *in the world* (v15) rather than *of the world* (v16)? What would a healthy and an unhealthy balance look like in this?

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SANCTIFIED BY THE TRUTH (v17-19): Why does Jesus pray that the disciples would be sanctified (*made holy or set apart*) by the truth (v17)? In what way does Jesus' sanctification enable them to be sanctified (v18-19)? What steps can we take to allow the truth to have that kind of impact on us?

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PRAYER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS (v20-26): How do you respond to the fact Jesus is praying future generations of believers (including us)? How might we (or indeed should we) model this in our prayers for others?

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THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY (v20-23): Why do you think Jesus puts such an emphasis here on unity (v20-23)? Why is *unity* (or lack thereof) so important as we seek to reach a lost world (v23b)?

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TRIUMPHANT CONCLUSION (v24-26): Jesus ends His prayer with some inspiring words about the Father: how will the Father's love for the Son be seen in us (v26) and Jesus Himself be in us (v26)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: Why do you think that Jesus prays the things that he does? What can we learn about what our priorities should be in prayer? What steps can we take to learn from Jesus and put into practice some of those lessons?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Using Jesus' prayer as a model, pray for one another and those whom God is giving you as labourers and all who might believe through them. Ask God to give you move of a heart to pray and to allow your prayers to be shaped by God's perspective.

MEMORY VERSES: JOHN 17:15-16

INTRODUCTION: Having spent time with the disciples in the Upper Room it is now time for Jesus to be arrested (18:1-15), put on trial (18:19-24 & 18:28-40) before being sentenced to death and handed over to be crucified (19:1-16). In the midst of all that we observe a whole bunch of responses to Jesus.

SETTING THE SCENE: What would it be like to be on the receiving end of false testimony which landed you at the mercy of the authorities? In what circumstances might people conspire against someone else in such a way that puts their life on the line?

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JESUS' ARREST (18:1-15): The garden (v1) was a well-known meeting place for the disciples: what do you think it would have been like to have been there in the garden that night (v1-3)? How do you react to Jesus' awareness of what was happening and His willingness to go with the soldiers (v4-8)?

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Why do the soldiers fall to the ground (v6)? What can we learn from Peter's eagerness to act (cutting off the ear of the High Priest's servant in v10) and Jesus' subsequent rebuke? What did it mean for Jesus to drink the cup the Father had given Him (v11)?

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BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST (18:19-24, 28-32): Jesus' interaction with the High Priest result in Him being on the receiving end of a slap in the face: to what extent do you think He was disrespectful? Having been questioned by Annas and Caiaphas why do they send Jesus to Pilate (v28-33)?

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PETERS DENIAL'S (18:16-18, 25-27): Jesus predicted Peter's denial of Him back in John 13:38: what do you think caused Peter to deny being one of Jesus' disciples (v17, 25 & 26)? How do you think Peter felt when he realised what he had done (no detail in John but see Luke 22:60-62)?

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BEFORE PILATE (18:33-38a): In what sense is Jesus a King and what did Jesus mean when He said that His Kingdom is not of this world (v33-37)? What does Jesus mean when He says He had come to testify to the truth and that everyone on the side of truth listens to Him (v37)? What do you make of Pilate response to Jesus, *what is truth*? How would you answer that question?

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HANDED OVER (18:38b-19:16): Why are the crowds so bent on seeing Jesus killed that they would rather have a violent revolutionary, Barabbas (meaning Son of the Father) released instead? What other attempts does Pilate make to try and release Jesus in these verses (v4, 6, 12, 14 & 16)?

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Why does Jesus offer such little defence (e.g. 19:9-10) when questioned by Pilate? Jesus responds to Pilate's claim of power over His life: in what ways does this encourage you that God is ultimately in control? Why does Pilate hand Jesus over even when he could find no basis for a charge (v16)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: How does the imagery that John uses in this passage help us to understand what happened at the cross: consider things like the crown of thorns (see Gen 3:18) & the purple robe, Jesus' silence (Isaiah 53:7) the example of Barabbas and Jesus's physical suffering?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Thank Jesus for His death in our place at the cross. Worship Him for the way that the gospel is seen all over this account (inc. the symbolism). Ask God to help you better understand all that Jesus achieved for you at the Cross.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 18:38

INTRODUCTION: Pilate has handed Jesus over to be crucified and soon we see the details of His death being worked out for all to see. The big idea here is the death of the creator of the Universe at the hands of sinful men. Why? Jesus suffered in our place so that we might be made right with God.

SETTING THE SCENE: How do you think today's media would have covered Jesus's death and resurrection? What are your initial reflections on what is a familiar passage? Is there anything new that strikes you, something you did not expect?

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THE ROAD TO CALVARY (v16-27): John records lots of details for us here about what happened after Jesus had been handed over to be crucified: how would you imagine this scene through the eyes of the various people present (i.e. the soldiers, Jews, Pilate, the chief Priests & the two Mary's)?

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Why do you think John records some things while leaving out lots of other things (e.g. the pain)? Specifically what symbolism is there in the fact that Jesus was crucified by two others (v18 & John 17:1) and that they cast lots for his clothing (v23-24 & Psalm 22:18)? What does the fact that even on Cross Jesus was thinking of His mother tell us about Him (v26-27)?

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THE DEATH OF JESUS (v28-37): What is the significance of Jesus' final cry *It is Finished* (v30 & 17:4) spoken before He gave up His Spirit? Why is the detail about the flow of blood and water from Jesus' pierced side such an affirmation that He did really die?

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Again what symbolism is there here in the fact that none of Jesus bones were broken (v36, Exodus 12:46 & Psalm 34:20), that He was pierced (v34 & Zechariah 21:10), that He was given wine to drink (v28-30 & Psalm 69:21)? In what ways should the fulfilment of scriptures encourage us?

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THE BURIAL OF JESUS (v38-42): Why do you think Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (remember John 3) have to operate secretly? What do their actions (note the 35kg of myrrh and aloes) tell us about how important Jesus was to them?

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REASONABLE? There is little mention of the disciples in this chapter: where do you think they were while all this was happening (see John 16:32)? What would it have meant for them to lose Jesus, their master and Lord? To what extent do the details included in John's account (which we will continue next time) of Jesus burial help us have confidence in what actually happened?

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YOUR RESPONSE: Which character do you most identify with and why? What is the stand out lesson from this passage which encourages you to believe that Jesus really did die for you on the Cross?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: What do we learn about what the good news is all about? Why was the Cross so necessary? Why couldn't Jesus just come down from the Cross so they could see and believe? Who would you say is responsible for Jesus' death?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Thank God the Father for sending Jesus to die in your place on the Cross. Ask God to give to a deeper understanding of all that happened and of what that means for us today. Pray for two friends who you are seeking to share about this with your friends

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 19:30

INTRODUCTION: In this passage we see Jesus' followers move from a place of unbelief and doubt to a place of faith. It's a faith that transforms built on the weight of evidence of the empty tomb and His appearances with them. Included is the example of doubting Thomas who Jesus challenges to stop doubting and believe. Jesus says blessed are we who have not seen and yet believe.

SETTING THE SCENE: Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important that the Apostle Paul would write that "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15)? At the outset of this study what are your convictions about the evidence for the resurrection?

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THE EMPTY TOMB (v1-10): What can we learn from the details that John records here about the empty tomb? What can we learn from Mary Magdalene, Peter and John's response to the empty tomb? Why do you think that the disciples had not grasped that Jesus had to rise from the dead (v9)?

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APPEARANCES #1 (v11-18): Why doesn't Mary immediately recognise Jesus (v14-15)? What might that moment of recognition have felt like for Mary? What do you make of the apparent confusion about the women at the tomb (v1 *Mary Magdalene*, v2 *we don't know*, see also *Matt 28:1 & Luke 24:10*)?

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APPEARANCES #2 (v19-23): What do you think it would have been like to be in that locked room when Jesus appeared amongst them? What is the significance of Jesus breathing on them and telling them to *receive the Holy Spirit*? How does this link to what happened at Pentecost?

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FAITH AND ITS OBJECT (v1-23): What evidence is there that the resurrection really happened? Did they have the right tomb (see Mark 15:47) and was the tomb really empty (v1, 5 & 8)? Is it possible

that Jesus was not really dead (*swoon theory*) or that others (e.g. *Disciples, Jews, Romans, grave robbers*) took the body? Could it have all been a hallucination (1 Cor 15:6)?

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FAITH AND DOUBT (v24-28): Why do you think that Thomas is slow to believe? What does Jesus mean when he tells him that *blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*? To what extent can you relate to Thomas either in his doubt or his expression of faith *My Lord and my God* (v28)? Jesus says *stop doubting and believe*: what do you see as the role of doubt?

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FAITH AND BELIEF (v29-31): To what extent do you think seeing leads to belief (e.g. Israel building a Golden Calf at Sinai)? What does Jesus mean when He says that *blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed*? In what ways have we seen that John wrote this account so that we might believe that *Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God* and by believing *have life in His name*?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: How does this chapter help us believe that Jesus is the Christ and we can have life in His name? To what extent can you identify with those featured in this account? How do you think that they would have felt as these events unfolded?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Share together about your doubts regarding your faith in Jesus. Thank God for the weight of evidence included in this chapter and ask God to grow your faith in Him. Pray for opportunities to share this with those around you who don't know Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 20:29

STUDY 10 – JOHN 21 – PETER’S RESTORATION

INTRODUCTION: The disciples are back fishing and they have caught no fish! There is a certain familiarity about the final appearance to the disciples. Jesus helps them catch a big haul and then cooks them breakfast. Peter had denied Jesus three times: after eating Jesus gently restores him by asking him three times if he loves Him and he commissions Him to care for His people.

SETTING THE SCENE: Think about some relational conflict that you have been involved with: what was the reason for the conflict? What steps needed to be taken to facilitate reconciliation between you and the other person? What was the situation at the start of this chapter between Jesus and Peter?

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A RETURN TO FISHING (v1-3): What do you think made Peter (along with five other disciples) go fishing that night? What should we conclude from this apparent return to what they know?

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A FAMILIAR MIRACLE (v4-6): What differences & similarities are there between this miracle and the one Jesus previously performed in Luke 5:4-11? Why do you think they failed to realise that it was Jesus? This is no coincidence: what was Jesus trying to remind them of?

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'IT IS THE LORD' (v7-15): When John realises that it was Jesus, Peter jumps in and swims to shore (v7-8): why does he do this? What do you think it would have been like to be at this breakfast meal? Why does John record the exact number of fish (153) and that none of them dared ask *Who are you?*

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DO YOU LOVE ME? (v16-19): What do you think is the significance of Jesus asking Peter three times if he loved Him (v15, 16 & 17)? What was the nature of the commission that Jesus gave Peter (notice the slightly different responses each time)?

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What can we learn from the way Jesus restores Peter before predicting how he would suffer for Him (v18-19)? How would you go about restoring a friend who had also messed up in some way? What do you understand Jesus to mean when He then calls Peter to follow Him? What kind of impact might this have had on the other disciples?

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WHAT ABOUT HIM? (v20-26): Why after Jesus' words is Peter so concerned with what will happen to John (v20-21)? What are the dangers of comparing ourselves with others? What can we learn from the fact that Jesus again repeats His instruction to Peter to follow Him (v22)?

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What is your response to John's comment that he has only included a small number of all the things Jesus had written (v26)? What conclusions can we draw from what John did and didn't include?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: How significant do you think this encounter was for Peter as Jesus said to him: (1) Do you love me?, (2) Feed my sheep and (3) Follow me? What significant encounters have you had with Jesus that have helped you understand what God is asking of you?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Thank God that He uses messed, failed and broken people for His purposes. Say sorry to God for times when you have denied Him or let Him down over the past week. Ask God to help you to work out the calling God has laid on your heart to invest in the lives of others.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 21:16

MEMORY VERSES

STUDY 1: JOHN 12 – THE HOUR HAS COME

²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **John 12:24-25**

STUDY 2: JOHN 13 – LOVE AND BETRAYAL

³⁴ 'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'
John 13:34-35

STUDY 3: JOHN 14 – I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.' **John 14:21**

STUDY 4: JOHN 15 – I AM THE VINE: REMAIN IN ME

⁵ 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing **John 15:5**

STUDY 5: JOHN 16 – GOD'S RESOURCES; SPIRIT AND SON

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. **John 16:13-14**

STUDY 6: JOHN 17 – JESUS' HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. **John 17:15-16**

STUDY 7: JOHN 18:1-19:16 – TRIED AND CONDEMNED

³⁶ Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.' **John 18:38**

STUDY 8: JOHN 19:17-42 – DEAD & BURIED

³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:30**

STUDY 9: JOHN 20 – FAITH THAT TRANSFORMS

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' **John 20:29**

STUDY 10: JOHN 21 – PETER'S RESTORATION

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.' **John 21:16**