

# John

## Jesus in the Beginning Chapter 1:1-18



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. The word "Word" in Greek is "logos". Normally this actually refers to the spoken Word. Why do you think that Jesus is referred to as the "spoken Word"?
2. Activity: One great way to get to know each other is to have each person describe the 3 most influential people in their lives and why they are the most influential.

### Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

#### **Option 1:**

*Ask each person in your group, what is your favorite movie? Ask them how the movie begins.*

#### **Option 2:**

*Ask them to act out the beginning of their favorite movie.*

#### **Option 3:**

*Give them a mystery scenario. Mr. Mustard is laying dead by a knife in the kitchen (you could even play a little of the game Clue). Have them as a group write a beginning to the mystery novel.*

- ? What does a beginning do for a book or movie?
- ? Why is the beginning so important?

The beginning sets the tone for any book. We will look at the beginning of one of the 4 books describing the life of Jesus, and see the set up for his life.

### Diving In

*Read 1:1-18.*

#### **Verses 1-5**

1. The Gospel according to St. John is a story about the life of Jesus. Each of the 4 Gospels gives a different perspective on the life of Christ. The other 3 start out with Jesus' life or birth here on earth. John starts his account differently. What is different and why did he start here? What does this tell us about the emphasis of this Gospel?
2. What do we learn about the Word in these verses? What do we learn about His relationship with God? (both distinct and identical)
3. What was the Word's role in creation? In life? What does this show? (He is God)

#### **Verse 6-9**

1. What was John's role in this? (Note this does not refer to St. John, the author, but rather John the Baptist) Why does he digress here? (You could have someone look up Malachi 3:1, which talks of the need for a messenger before God comes, so it is more proof for Jesus' divinity)

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. John is the last Gospel written. He focuses uniquely on Jesus' claims to be God and on His miracles.
2. Remember, you don't have to read each and every question and go point by point. Think through your group's needs, your personality, and work to bring the text alive. Make sure that they experience a good discussion, not a lecture.

(Continued from page 1)

2. How does the author develop the theme of "light"? What does this tell us about the Word? (starts in v. 4)

### Verses 10-14

1. What are some things you learn about the Word in these verses?
2. Why did the world not recognize Him?
3. What does it mean "he came to his own, but his own did not receive him"? (Note: this does not refer to Israel, but to all of humanity. The very creatures whom He had created rejected Him)
4. What is the main message of vv. 12-13? How does the author summarize the Gospel here? The verses state clearly that we can become children of God. What does this imply we were before we met the conditions of the verses? How do we become children of God? How does the idea of adoption fit in?
5. What did the Word do? When did he do this? What are the implications of this? They could include the following:
  - a. God can forgive sins, because He became a man and a perfect man died for men.
  - b. God understands what life is like on earth.
  - c. We can know God through Jesus.
6. What does He mean by "One and Only"? How is God unique? How do vv. 17-18 help us understand this?

### In Summary

1. What would you say the essence of this passage is?
2. What is John setting up in his introduction?
3. What are the evidences John gives for Jesus' divinity here?
  - a. Word is God
  - b. Creation
  - c. John the Baptist as messenger
  - d. Glory

## Making Application

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If Jesus is God, it will change our life.

1. Do I believe intellectually that Jesus is God? How is this different from faith?
2. Am I a child of God? How do I receive Christ? How many times do I need to do this?
3. If Jesus is God, how should I worship Him? How does this affect my relationships? School? Future?

*Let's thank God for coming to earth as man.*

# John

## Jesus and the New Birth Chapter 3:1-21



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. The context of any story is very important. We skipped over John the Baptist telling his followers to follow Jesus in chapter 1, and Jesus' first miracle—turning the water into wine in chapter 2. Jesus also throws the corrupt moneychangers out of the temple at the end of chapter. 2. It was in this context that Nicodemus came to meet Him.

### Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

#### **Option 1:**

*Ask each person in your group to describe their favorite/strangest birthday present.*

#### **Option 2:**

*Throw a birthday party. Get a cake, ice cream, hats, and sing "Happy Birthday" to whomever has the nearest birthday.*

#### **Option 3:**

*(For women) Show a brief clip of the show "Baby Story".*

- ? Why do we love birthdays so much?
- ? What does a birthday represent?

Birthdays symbolize the beginning of our lives. A wise teacher came to see Jesus, to learn what He had to say. And Jesus talked about birthdays. Let's look in depth at their conversation.

### Diving In

*Read 3:1-21.*

#### **Verses 1-2**

1. Set up the scene. In any story you need to know who the players are, what they are like, etc. So ask your group to set the scene for you. Who? What? Where? When? How? Why? What do we know about Nicodemus?
2. Why do you think Nicodemus came at night?
3. What was Nicodemus' understanding about Jesus?

#### **Verses 3-8**

1. What do you think it means to be "born again"? What are some insights from the story about it?

*Note: Make sure that we take the time to separate any stereotypes of what society thinks it means to be "born again" and what the text says. Being born again is not being affiliated with a certain political party or denomination. It is a spiritual state based purely on placing your faith in Christ.*

2. Based on his religious credentials, how do you think Nicodemus felt when Jesus said he could not enter the Kingdom of God based on his deeds?

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. Who was Nicodemus? He was a member of the Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish ruling council. He was a Pharisee, a very devout Jew who followed a strict code of conduct. He would have been held in high esteem by the people.
2. There is more to your Bible study than content. Maybe you could ask each person how you could pray for them.

*(Continued from page 3)*

1. In verse 5, Jesus talks about being “born of water and of the Spirit.” This is probably a reference to Ezekiel 36:25-28, which every Jewish teacher would know. Have someone read and summarize that passage.

*Note: this does not refer to water baptism. Water and spirit are common symbols of the New Covenant, hence Jesus’ surprise at Nicodemus’ ignorance of a prominent Jewish Scripture expressed in v. 10.*

4. What does Jesus mean by the analogy of the wind and the Spirit?

### Verses 9-15

1. Why do you think Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus said? (vv. 11-12)
2. What claims does Jesus make about Himself in vv. 13-15?
  - a. Came from heaven
  - b. Must be lifted up
  - c. Gives eternal life
3. What is the analogy of the snake being lifted up?

*If time permits you may want to explore Numbers 21:4-9. Then ask how it parallels Jesus. Answers could include unbelieving people, people perishing, repentance and faith, lifted up = crucifixion.*

### Verses 16-21

1. What are our 2 possible destinies mentioned by Jesus?
2. What did God do so we could have eternal life and not perish?
3. Why did God make a way for us to have eternal life? What must we do to receive it? What happens to those who do not receive it?
4. What insights do we gain by the light and darkness analogy?
5. According to this paragraph, what is the truth that we should live by?
6. How would you summarize the Gospel message as presented to Nicodemus here?

### In Summary

1. What would you say the essence of this passage is?
2. Why the emphasis on “born again”?
3. Why does Jesus use so many Old Testament ideas here?
4. What unique claims does Jesus make about Himself here?
5. Why is this story so important?

## Making Application

If we must be born again, this has important implications for our lives.

1. How am I like Nicodemus? What is my religious resume?
2. Am I depending on my religious resume or have I placed my faith in the one who has been “lifted up” for me?
3. If this is true, this has huge implications for my friends. Who are a couple of friends I could talk to about this or possibly bring to Bible study next week?

*Let’s thank God for providing a way of salvation.*

# John

## Jesus is the Living Water Chapter 4:3-42



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for this story. Remember Jesus had His conversation with Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel. We skipped over a conversation with John the Baptist about belief in Jesus. Now Jesus leaves Jerusalem to go back to Galilee, and stops to have a conversation with a Samaritan woman.
2. Samaritans were descendants of intermarried Jews and Gentiles in the north. Because of this the Jews usually avoided them.

### Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

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#### **Option 1:**

*Do the "Pepsi Challenge". Blindfold a participant, and give him a sip of Pepsi and a sip of Coke. Then ask which quenches his thirst best.*

#### **Option 2:**

*Do something to make them thirsty. Exercise, eat salt, turn up the heat. Then pass out cold water. Ask why it refreshes so much.*

#### **Option 3:**

*Talk about prejudice. Who are people that we would not necessarily talk with? What causes prejudice?*

- ? What things do we thirst for?
- ? What barriers keep us from getting our thirst quenched?

*Jesus had no prejudice. He used a normal conversation about thirst with a woman at a well whom his friends would never talk with to get at the reality of her spiritual need. Let's take a look.*

### Diving In

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*Read just the group of verses before each set of questions.*

#### **Verses 3-8**

1. Set the scene. Who? Where? When? (sixth hour =noon)
2. Jews normally avoided traveling through Samaria. Why? Why do you think Jesus did not follow this practice?
3. What cultural barriers existed between Jesus and this woman?
4. What does Jesus risk in initiating with this woman?

#### **Verses 9-15**

1. How would you summarize their interaction in these verses?
2. Why is the woman surprised by Jesus' initiating with her?
3. How does Jesus respond to her surprise?
4. Put yourself in her shoes. How would you respond if a stranger told you that "whoever drinks my water will never thirst, but the water will become a spring leading to eternal life"? How did she respond?

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. What is Jacob's well? Jacob is the father of 12 sons whose descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel. He built this well. The well was also at the foot of Mt. Gerazim, the center of Samaritan worship.
2. What is the Messiah? The word means "anointed one" and refers to one prophesied who would restore Israel.
3. You could have each person share their story of their spiritual journey (one each week).

(Continued from page 5)

### Verses 16-26

1. How would you sum up the interchange in these verses?
2. Why did Jesus ask her to go get her husband and how did she respond?
3. What might she have felt when he asked that question?
4. How does Jesus demonstrate compassion in this conversation?
5. What does He teach her about worship?
6. Jesus is so rarely transparent about telling people who He is. Why do you think He told her He was the Messiah?

### Verses 27-30

1. How do the disciples respond when they return?
2. What does the Samaritan woman do? What was the message she shared with her village? (Notice it was based on her experience)
3. What does the village do?

### Verses 31-38

1. While the woman is at the village what do the disciples do?
2. What is the analogy Jesus shares? Why does He share this at this point in time right before the Samaritan villagers arrive?

### Verses 39-42

1. What was the response of the village? Why?
2. What role did the Samaritan woman play?

### In Summary

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. Would you have considered a woman divorced 5 times and living with another man to be open to the Gospel?
3. Why did Jesus risk initiating with her?
4. What unique claims does Jesus make about Himself here?
5. Why did the village respond so openly? What was the benefit of her sharing from her personal experience?

## Making Application

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If Jesus is the living water, then this affects our lives and the lives of everyone, even those whom we may not think are interested.

1. How can I look for those people "sitting by the well"?
2. How can I cross barriers to impact more students for Christ?
3. How can I share my story, my personal experience with others?
4. Who could I bring here next week?

*Let's thank Jesus that we never need thirst again.*

# John

## Jesus is the Bread of Life Chapter 6:1-51



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for this story. Jesus just became very controversial. He healed the royal official's son in ch. 4, then He healed the paralytic in ch. 5 on the Sabbath. This caused the Jews to persecute Him and He responds by pointing out witnesses to Him. After this He goes to the other side of the Sea of Galilee where we pick up the story.
2. A denarius was a day's wage. So Philip estimates 200 denarii, 8 months wages to feed everyone.

## Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

### **Option 1:**

*Eat a meal together. This could even be in the cafeteria. After you are finished, discuss how much food it takes to feed everyone in the dorm. Then talk about how much food it would take to feed 5000. How many loaves of bread? How many fish?*

### **Option 2:**

*Make bread together. Or make cookies together. Or go to Great Harvest Bread Company and get samples. Then talk about what it takes to make bread.*

### **Option 3:**

*Ask how would you prove to someone you were God. What kinds of things would you do? What signs would you give? Would everyone believe you? How would you make everyone believe you? Could you?*

- ? What things do we hunger for?
- ? What things would we do to draw a crowd?

Jesus was being persecuted for healing on the Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest. Let's see what He does as the crowds continue to follow Him.

## Diving In

*Read just the group of verses before each set of questions.*

### **Verses 1-14**

1. Set the scene. Who? What? Where? When?
2. Sum up the event. What happened?
3. What were the interests of the crowd who followed Jesus? (see vv.2, 14-15)
4. Jesus could have done all of this by Himself. Why do you think He involves the disciples so much in this miracle?
5. Why might there have been 12 baskets left over? (one for each disciple)

*Note: The Prophet referred to in v. 14 is the one foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15.*

### **Verses 15-21**

1. Set the scene. Who was there? What took place here?
2. How did the disciples feel when they saw Jesus? What happened when He got

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. What is manna? When the people of Israel left Egypt and wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, God miraculously provided a bread-like food called "manna". Jesus contrasts the manna with the "Bread of Life". Those who ate manna still died.
2. Make your Bible study more than an hour a week meeting of strangers. Eat dinner or play sports together.

*(Continued from page 7)*

in the boat? Why?

3. Within several hours the disciples witnessed Jesus feeding 5000 and then walking on water during a storm. What do you think these events taught them?
4. What do these miracles show about Jesus?

### **Verses 22-40**

1. How would you sum up what happens here?
2. What do you think motivated the crowd to go and find Jesus again? How did Jesus assess their motives? (vv. 26-27) Why were they wrong?
3. What two types of bread does Jesus compare in vv.27-33?
4. How is this similar to His conversation about living water with the Samaritan woman? How is it different?
5. What were the questions of the crowd? (vv. 25, 28, 30) What do these questions show about their hearts? Why do they ask for a miraculous sign? Wasn't the feeding of the 5000 enough? Why not?
6. What claims does Jesus make about Himself? What do these claims mean?
7. What promises does Jesus make to those who are drawn to Him?

### **Verses 41-51** *(If you are short on time skip this)*

1. Sum up what happens here. Who? What?
2. Suppose someone from your hometown claimed to have come down from Heaven, sent from God or even as God. How would you respond to that person? What problems do some of the Jews have with Jesus? Why?
3. What does Jesus say about one who listens and learns from the Father? Why?
4. How is Jesus' bread different from the manna? What is His point?

### **In Summary**

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. How does Jesus show compassion in what we read here?
3. What unique claims does Jesus make about Himself here?
4. Why was it so hard for the many to believe in Him?
5. What did Jesus teach the disciples through the two miracles?

## **Making Application**

If Jesus is the bread of life, then this affects my life.

1. The crowd had an overwhelming need for food. The disciples were stuck in a storm. What overwhelming needs or situations do I face?
2. Where do I turn to meet my needs? Where should I?
3. What promises of Jesus do I not believe in the way I live?
4. Who could I bring here next week to learn about the Bread of Life?

*Let's thank Jesus that He is the eternal bread of Life.*

# John

## Jesus is the Good Shepherd Chapter 10:1-33



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. The context of this story is important as we fast-forwarded a few chapters. Ch. 7 contains a debate about who Jesus is. In ch. 8 Jesus claims to be the "light of the world" and proves it by healing a blind man in ch. 9. Jesus closes the chapter by charging the Pharisees with being blind due to their sin.
2. Remember sheep are rather smelly and senseless animals. You could ask them to describe what sheep are like and tie it into the analogy.

### Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

#### **Option 1:**

*Ask each person what their parents do. What would be the most difficult occupation? Which one would require the most sacrifice?*

#### **Option 2:**

*Give them a list of claims. Some should be objective facts (like Moscow is the capital of Russia), some opinions (like My mom is the world's best cook). You could write them down on cards and have each person read one. Then ask if it is a fact or an opinion. What is the difference?*

- ? Why do we need direction? Why do we need someone to care for us?
- ? If someone made a drastic claim how would we know that it was true?
- ? What would be the implications if it were not true?

Jesus made some remarkable claims during His time on earth. Some were about who He was and others were analogies to what He does. Here He does both. Let's look at these claims and the implications they have for our lives.

### Diving In

*Read just the group of verses before each set of questions.*

#### **Verses 1-6**

1. Set the scene. What is the analogy that Jesus is setting up here?
2. Who are the two that enter the sheep pen? What is the difference? How do the sheep respond to each?
3. Remember Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, religious leaders. What was their response? (v. 6) Why?

#### **Verses 7-18**

1. How does Jesus change the message here? (He personalizes it)
2. In the analogy what claims does He make about Himself? What could Jesus alone offer? If Jesus is the shepherd, who are the sheep?
3. How does He contrast Himself to the enemies of the sheep? Who are the enemies? (v. 8)
4. How is the good shepherd different from the hired hands?
5. What are some things that Jesus does for the sheep?
6. How do you think the religious leaders felt when they heard this? How would

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. Jesus held this discussion during the Feast of Dedication, now known as Hanukkah. Solomon's colonnade was a long walkway covered by a roof on the east side of the temple. It served as a shelter from the heat and rain and was a great place for informal conversations with those present for worship.
2. Don't assume people will just come to Cru. Invite them to all meet and go over together this week.

(Continued from page 9)

you have felt?

*Note: the other sheep not of this pen refer to the Gentiles who would believe.*

### Verses 19-33

1. How would you sum up what happens here?
2. What were some of the opinions the Jews had regarding what Jesus said?
3. What do they demand Him to tell them? (v.24—note: Christ is Greek for Messiah) How did Jesus answer?
4. Why do you think that Jesus was so vague in His answer here when He was so clear with the Samaritan woman?
5. What are some of the characteristics of Jesus' sheep?
6. What claim does Jesus make about Himself? What does this mean? How did the Jews respond to this claim? Why?

*Note: the word "one" here means "one and the same in essence and nature". This verse is one of the clearest examples of Jesus' claims to divinity. This verse also shows that while Jesus is God, He is distinct from the Father. It is clear that the Jews understood what He was claiming, for they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy.*

3. If Jesus claims to be God, one of three things must be true. He either knew He was not God and therefore was a liar. Or He did not know He was not God and therefore was a lunatic. Or He was correct and was and is God and is therefore Lord. Which option did the Jews choose? Which option do most students today choose?
4. What implications are there on our lives if Jesus is really God? Does it make any difference in how we live?

### In Summary

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. How does Jesus show compassion in what we read here?
3. What unique claims does Jesus make about Himself here?
4. Why do you think some people do not want Jesus to be God, but just a good teacher?
5. Why did the Jewish leaders have such a difficult time with His teaching?

## Making Application

If Jesus is the Good Shepherd who is God, then this affects my life.

1. Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd. What is the Good Shepherd's role with His sheep?
2. How does Jesus care for me as a Shepherd? Are there areas of my life I do not want Him to shepherd? What are they?
3. If Jesus is God (and He is) what impact does that have on my life?
4. Who could I walk through the Liar, Lunatic, Lord argument with?

*Let's thank Jesus that He is the Good Shepherd who as God laid down His life for His sheep.*

# John

## Jesus is the Living Water Chapter 11:1-46



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for this story. Remember that Jesus had declared Himself as the "Good Shepherd" and equated Himself with the Father. The Jews wanted to stone Him for blasphemy. He then left the area.
2. Thomas demonstrated great loyalty here. Usually he is known for not wanting to believe in the resurrection until he put his fingers in the nail prints in Jesus' hands and his hand in His side. Hence the nickname "Doubting Thomas". (Jn. 20)

### **Introduction** *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

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#### **Option 1:**

*Take your group to a cemetery. Read some of the tomb stones. Then discuss what you see. Why are cemeteries such sad places?*

#### **Option 2:**

*Read a couple of obituaries. Discuss what families write in them. What do people focus on in times of death? Why does it feel so final?*

#### **Option 3:**

*Have each person describe their best friend. What makes them so special? How would you feel if your best friend died?*

- ? Why do people fear death so much?
- ? What would people do for a cure for death?

Jesus had several dear friends named Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Let's see how Jesus responded when he found out that Lazarus had died, and what He revealed about Himself in the midst of these sad circumstances.

### **Diving In**

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*Read just the group of verses before each set of questions.*

#### **Verses 1-16**

1. Set the scene. Who are the key players? Where? When?
2. How would you sum up the events?
3. Why do you think that Mary and Martha sent word for Jesus?
4. What did Jesus do when He learned about His friend's sickness? (make sure they pick up on v. 6, not just v 4—He stayed 2 more days) Why? What do you think Mary and Martha were feeling?
5. Why were the disciples shocked at Jesus' decision to go to Judea? (v.8)
6. Why do you think Jesus insisted that they go? (v. 9-15) Who was He concerned about?
7. What does Thomas' response show? (v. 16) What is Thomas usually known for? ("Doubting Thomas")

#### **Verses 17-29**

1. How would you sum up what happens next?

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. Mary, Martha and Lazarus are dear friends of Jesus. Martha is known for being the one too busy and worried about her activities while her sister Mary sat and listened to Jesus (Luke 10:38-42).
2. Remember in any Bible study what can kill a good discussion is the leader talking too much. When you ask a question do not be afraid of a pause or silence. Give them the time to think. Don't answer the question for them.

*(Continued from page 11)*

2. What was the situation when Jesus arrived?
3. How do you think that Mary and Martha felt?
4. What positive things could you say about Martha from this?
5. What does Jesus reveal about Himself in response to Martha's expression of faith? What does this mean?

### **Verses 30-37**

1. How would you describe what happens here?
2. How would you describe Mary's response?
3. Why did Jesus weep, especially when you realize that He knew what He was going to do next?
4. What does this tell us about Jesus?

### **Verses 38-46**

1. How would you highlight the events as the story concludes?
2. What do you think was the purpose of the miracle? (v.42)
3. What was the main concern of Martha when they went to the tomb? How does that differ from Jesus' concerns? (v. 39-40)
4. What did Jesus demonstrate with this miracle? How does that tie into what He revealed to Martha (especially v. 25)?
5. What must Mary and Martha have felt? What must the disciples have felt? What must Lazarus have felt?
6. How did the Jews respond? (v. 45-46)

### **In Summary**

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. Why did Jesus wait two more days? How must Mary and Martha have felt? How do you feel when God does not fix your problems quickly?
3. Jesus talked a lot about faith or believing. What are some things we can learn about faith in this story?
4. What do we learn about Jesus here? What unique claims does Jesus make about Himself? How does He show compassion?

## **Making Application**

If Jesus is the resurrection and the life, then this affects our lives and our deaths.

1. How do I respond in the "two more days", when I am waiting for a resolution of my struggles?
2. How permanent was Jesus' solution for Lazarus? (i.e. Did Lazarus die again?) How then does Jesus as the resurrection and the life impact us eternally?
3. How can I help others believe in Jesus as the only source of life eternal?
4. Who could I bring here next week?

*Let's thank Jesus that He is the life who has power over death.*

# John

## Jesus is the Only Way Chapter 14:1-31



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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

Here is the context for this story. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Jewish leadership sought to seize Him. Mary (Lazarus' sister) anointed Jesus with expensive perfume, then Jesus arrived triumphantly in Jerusalem in ch. 12. Chapter 13 described the Last Supper and Jesus predicted Peter's denial. Then comes the conversation we study tonight, still during the Last Supper.

### Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

#### **Option 1:**

*Suppose you wanted to go to Grand Rapids. How would you get there? What if I-96 were closed. How would you get there? Is there more than one way?*

#### **Option 2:**

*Bring in a box full of things like wire, hammers, screwdrivers, pop cans, etc. Suppose you wanted to build a mousetrap. How many different ways could you build one? Be creative.*

#### **Option 3:**

*Go to the main lobby. Explore together how many different ways you could get to the room of someone in the group.*

- ? Almost always there is more than one way to go somewhere or solve a problem. How do we feel when someone says there is only one way?
- ? How do we feel when someone says "I am right and everyone else is wrong"?

Many feel that Jesus did that exact thing. Let's look and see precisely what He said, and why people then and today react so strongly to it.

### Diving In

*Read Verses 1-15.*

#### **Verses 1-4**

1. Set the scene. What is the context for the conversation? Why might they be troubled?
2. How would you sum up the conversation?
3. Where should be the source of their strength and comfort?
4. What did Jesus promise about His Father's house?

#### **Verses 5-10**

1. What does Thomas' response show about the disciples' understanding of what was about to happen?
2. How does Jesus respond to Thomas' logical question? (v. 6)
3. How do you think this made them feel? Why do people today have such a hard time with this statement?

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. What about other religions? Could they be different ways of expressing the same truth? Look at their views of salvation. In Islam salvation is based on what you do, doing more good than bad. Modern Judaism is largely a code of ethics as well as there is no more sacrifice for sin. Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism believe in reincarnation. You keep living life in various forms until you are good enough. In Christianity you are never good enough for Heaven. This is a fundamental difference showing they cannot be the same.
2. The word Helper or Counselor in v. 16 in Greek is paracletos, a legal term indicating an advocate or counsel for the defense.

*(Continued from page 13)*

4. What does Philip's question show about their understanding?
5. How does Jesus respond to Philip's request to see the Father?

### **Verses 11-14**

1. What insights does Jesus give about His relationship with the Father?
2. What promises does He give to those who believe?

*Read 14:16-31*

### **Verses 16-31**

1. What is our response to loving Jesus? (vv.15, 21)
2. How would you describe the rest of the conversation?
3. How does Jesus describe the Holy Spirit? (vv. 16-17)
4. What promise does He give us for after He leaves? (vv.16-18)
5. What is at the heart of Judas' question? (v.22)
6. How does Jesus answer? How is this answer different than what he expected?
7. What more does Jesus explain about the Holy Spirit? (vv. 26-27)
8. What does Jesus promise when we are fearful? (v. 27)
9. Why is Jesus explaining these things ahead of time? (v. 29)
10. How does Jesus close before they go? (vv. 30-31)

### **In Summary**

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. What does Jesus claim about Himself?
3. What are some things that Jesus tells us to give us hope?
4. Why is it good that Jesus go?
5. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit?
6. How does Jesus show compassion here?

## Making Application

If Jesus is the only way, then this affects our lives and the lives of our friends.

1. The God who created you and knows you most intimately is preparing a special place just for you. What might that uniquely look like for you? How does knowing that your real, perfect home is with the Father affect how you view your imperfect home here on earth?"
2. How can I experience the peace promised?
3. Why do so many people object to Jesus being the only way? If Jesus is the only way, how does this affect my friends who do not know Jesus?
4. Who can I bring here next week?

*Let's thank Jesus that He is the way, the truth and the life.*

# John

## Jesus is the Vine Chapter 15:1-25



University of  
Michigan

### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

Remember, this passage is sandwiched between 2 major teachings on the Holy Spirit (ch. 14, 16). Here is the context. Having concluded the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples that one of them would betray Him and Peter would deny Him. Then He talked about the comfort of His Father's house and the Helper (Holy Spirit) who was coming. Jesus also told them that He is the only way to Heaven. At the end of Ch. 14 they left the room and started towards the Garden of Gethsemane where He would be betrayed.

### Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

#### **Option 1:**

*Bring in 2 electrical items, like 2 computers, or 2 toasters, or 2 radios, etc. Have one of them plugged in and do not plug in the other. Have them describe each one, then turn them on. Ask them to explain the difference. Both have same features, but the features only work when connected to the power source.*

#### **Option 2:**

*Talk about a garden or an orchard. What does it look like? What are things farmers do to help their crops grow and produce the most fruit? What are some things that hinder the plants from producing to their potential? You could even have them draw a picture of a garden with healthy, fruit-producing trees and non-healthy ones.*

#### **Option 3:**

*Brainstorm a list of famous underachievers, people with all the potential but who never fully realized it. What kind of situations, relationships make them under-achieve?*

- ? Why is it impossible for an appliance without power/ tree without roots to achieve its potential in bearing fruit?
- ? What are some things that prevent people from achieving their full potential?

Jesus had some concerns about achieving our spiritual potential. Let's see what He has to say that and about 3 key relationships that play a role in this.

### Diving In

*Read Verses 1 -27.*

#### **Verses 1-11 (Relationship with Jesus)**

1. Set the scene. What is the context for the conversation? How would you sum up what Jesus says in these verses?
2. What is the analogy? How would you explain the analogy? Who is referred to by each component in the analogy?
3. What is the job of the Gardener? (v.2)
4. What part does the vine play? (vv. 3-5)
5. What does it mean to "remain" or "abide" in the vine?
6. What happens as a result of "remaining" or "abiding" in the vine? What happens if you do not? What is fruitfulness? (look back at 14:12)
7. What are some things that keep us from "remaining" in the vine?

*Note: the point of this passage is to remain in the vine, so the life-giving sap can go into the branch. The sap did not come from the branch itself. So the key to fruitfulness is to "remain" in the Vine, that is rely solely on the power we have that comes from Christ and the Holy Spirit which enables us to live the Christian life, not on our own power. Don't let v. 6 get into a debate about losing salvation. That is not the main point of the text. The picture of burning the firewood is what happens on the farm, showing its uselessness ,not Hell.*

8. What are some practical ways Jesus gives for us to "remain in His love"? (vv.9-11)

## Hints and Highlights

God has given us the ability to live the Christian life in His power (often called the Spirit-filled life). The Spirit-filled life is really a life of abiding in Christ (compare 14:17 with 15:4). When we abide in Christ we allow God a controlling influence in every aspect of our lives through our obedience and reliance on the Holy Spirit's enabling power. The alternative is to rely on our own strength, which often results in sin and defeat.

When we sin we can restore our fellowship with God by confessing our sin to God and by again surrendering our lives to God's controlling influence.

You could pass out the booklet "Satisfied?" to everyone at the end of the study and talk through it personally.

9. How does obeying Jesus help us remain in His love?

### **Verses 12-17** (*Relationship with each other*)

1. How would you summarize Jesus' thoughts in these verses?
2. How does His emphasis shift here?
3. How were the disciples to relate to each other after Jesus left? Why would He focus on this in His last conversation with them before He dies?
4. What does loving each other look like? Why is it so difficult to do? How does Jesus model this love?
5. Why does Jesus call them friends? What does this friendship look like? How does this make you feel about your relationship with God?

### **Verses 18-25** (*Relationship with the World*)

1. What do you see as the main points of Jesus' teaching here?
2. How would you describe the disciples' future relationship with the world? Why? How do you feel about that?
3. How would you define the "world"? (Note: the word "cosmos" used here is not just geography, it refers to people and their system of living that is godless and opposed to God and His people)
4. Why does the world hate Jesus so much? Why do we so easily forget this fact and try to live as if the world does not hate Jesus?
5. How is the response of the world contrasted to the disciples' relationship with each other?

### **In Summary**

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. What do we learn about our relationship with Jesus from the analogy?
3. What do we learn about the Spirit-filled life (see side bar)?
4. What do we learn about what our relationship with each other should be? How is this different from reality?

What do we learn about our relationship with the world? How do I feel about being persecuted for what I believe? What could persecution look like?

## **Making Application**

If Jesus is the vine, the only source of nourishment and power to live our lives, then this should impact all that we do and how we do it.

1. In what ways do I separate myself from the Vine? How do I try to live the Christian life in my own strength?
2. How does Jesus produce His life within us?
3. What are my relationships with other believers like? How about in our Bible study?
4. Am I experiencing persecution? Why or why not?
5. Perhaps give them a few moments to make a list of known sin, then read 1 John 1:9 and tear up the paper. Have them ask God to enable them to remain in Christ and His power.

*Let's thank Jesus that He is the Vine giving us the power to bear fruit, love others and endure persecution.*

# John

Jesus will send the Spirit 15:26-16:33



University of  
Michigan

## Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

## Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for the passage. Jesus' final teaching continued while He and the disciples walk to the Garden of Gethsemane (where He will be betrayed). Having declared "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" and "I am the Vine, You are the Branches" Jesus switches back to the topic of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor or Advocate who will come.
2. Don't forget to pray for the people coming to your Bible study.

## Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

### Option 1:

*Play a quick game of "Who wants to be a Millionaire" or "Trivial Pursuit". Keep increasing the pace of the questions. Make sure to give some hard ones. How did you know the answers? When did the answers become confusing?*

### Option 2:

*Have each person share the most difficult thing they have ever done. What made it so difficult? What or who helped them get through it?*

### Option 3:

*Suppose your girlfriend/boyfriend were leaving Ann Arbor for the next few years. You had been planning on getting married and never being apart. How would you feel? What would you want him or her to say to you?*

- ? Why is life sometimes so difficult?
- ? Where do we look for answers/ assistance?

Jesus knew the disciples were going to be in for a difficult time after He left. Let's look at what He told them to prepare them for the rough road ahead.

## Diving In

*Read 15:26-16:15.*

### **Verses 15:26-16:4**

1. How would you describe what He is saying in these verses?
2. How is the Holy Spirit described? (15:26-27) How does He help the disciples? What is Jesus asking them to do? (Testify—tell others about Him!)
3. What will happen to the disciples? Why do you think Jesus is warning them about this persecution? How do you think they felt about what He said?

### **Verses 5-15**

1. What feelings did the disciples have regarding Jesus' departure? (vv.5-6)
2. Why will His departure benefit the disciples? (v.7)
3. What insights do we gain about the Holy Spirit from these verses?
4. What will the Holy Spirit do for the unbelieving world? (vv. 8-11) What does He mean by convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment?
5. What will the Holy Spirit do for the disciples? (vv. 12-15) What is His purpose?
6. How do you think the disciples felt when they heard all of this? How would you feel?

## Hints and Highlights

Remember that the Bible study is to be a “community within a community”. You want to encourage things like evangelism, community and prayer. Why not brainstorm with your group something you can do in each of these 3 areas? How could we share our faith with our friends and neighbors? What kind of an outreach could we do? Could we get together and pray for some of our friends? What could we do to have some fun? Maybe ask out another Bible study for a group date? Involve your group in the process and don't be afraid to ask one of them to give leadership to one of these ideas.

Read Verses 16-33.

### Verses 16-24

1. How would you sum up what happens next?
2. How do the disciples react to Jesus' words? Why were they confused? (vv.16-18) How did Jesus respond to their confusion? Why did He react this way? (vv. 19-20)
3. What does He predict will happen? What analogy does He use for this? Explain the analogy. (v. 21)
4. What things does Jesus promise them? (vv.22-24)
5. Why will their experiences be so different? (vv. 21-24 versus vv. 16-20)

### Verses 25-33

1. How would you describe what Jesus says here?
2. What does Jesus plainly state? (v. 28)
3. What did the disciples conclude about Jesus? (v. 30) How much of what was about to happen did they understand?
4. What else does Jesus promise them? (vv. 31-33) How does this make you feel?
5. History shows that except for Judas all of the disciples were martyred for their faith in Jesus (except John who was boiled in oil). What do you think kept them going through all of this?

### In Summary

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. Why do you think that Jesus waited until right before His death to tell them these things?
3. Jesus talked a lot about faith or believing. What are some things we can learn about faith in this discourse?
4. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit? Why is this important?

What do we learn about prayer here?

## Making Application

If Jesus is sending the Spirit of Truth after His resurrection, this obviously changes the way we live today.

1. Each of us faces difficulties right now. Take a moment to think of where you are struggling right now. Where do you turn for help? How might the Counselor, the Spirit of Truth help you?
2. How much of my life have I turned over to the Spirit's control? What are some areas I have not? (relationships, future, etc.) Give them a moment to consider this.
3. What are some things we can ask the Father for?
4. How would my life look if I really believed Jesus has overcome the world?

*Let's thank Jesus for sending us His Spirit.*

# John

## Jesus' Prayer Chapter 17:1-26



University of  
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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for the passage. Jesus finished His final teaching to His disciples, focusing on the Holy Spirit and enduring persecution. Just before He arrives at the Garden of Gethsemane (where He would be betrayed) He prays this prayer, after having declared "I have overcome the world."
2. Make a list of those who have come once or twice or said they would come to your group. Pray for them and stop by, see how they are doing, and invite them again to come.

## Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

### Option 1:

*What was dinner time like in your family? Did everyone eat together? How often? Did you pray before each meal? Who prayed? What did they pray?*

### Option 2:

*Let me give you a list of activities we do on campus. Rate them on a scale of most exciting to least exciting (10 being most, 1 least): Cru, fall retreat, Barn Dance, Christmas conference, prayer meeting, Barn Dance, parties. Pass in the numbers and have someone average them out. Which ones were lower? (I'm betting prayer will be). Why?*

### Option 3:

*Ask them to agree or disagree with the following statements, then say why: 1. I pray as often as I want 2. I know how to pray 3. I feel prayer is very important 4. My schedule reflects how important prayer is*

- ? Why is prayer sometimes so difficult?
- ? When do I tend to pray the most? The least?

Jesus very often took time to pray. It is only fitting that right before His betrayal He would pray for Himself, His friends, and future believers. Let's take a closer look at what He prayed.

## Diving In

*Read 17:1-26.*

### **Verses 1-5 (Prayer Concerning Himself)**

*Note: Although we have categorized this first part as prayer for Himself, this is not in the self-seeking way we normally understand this. Jesus really prays that the Father would glorify Him as He does the Father's will by dying on the cross.*

1. How would you describe what Jesus is praying for in these verses?
2. What does Jesus mean by the phrase "the time has come"? (v.1)
3. What will happen if Jesus is glorified? What does this mean? (vv.1, 4-5)
4. How would you describe eternal life as Jesus sees it? (v. 3) How is this different from the average UM student's view of eternal life?
5. What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with the Father here? (vv. 1-5)
6. What do we learn about Jesus before He came to earth? (v. 5) How could this be true?
7. What do we learn about Jesus' purpose or focus in life? (vv. 4-5)

### **Verses 6-19 (Prayer for the Disciples)**

1. How would you describe Jesus' prayer for His disciples?
2. How does Jesus describe His disciples? What do you see about His relation-

## Hints and Highlights

1. The word “sanctify” means “to separate” or “set apart”, usually for service or special use. So there is a separation to holiness for those in God’s service as they minister to the world.
2. What is unity? The example He uses gives a clue - the Father and the Son. It must not mean complete uniformity and everyone together in the same group doing the same thing. Why? Because the Father and the Son, while one, are distinct, doing different things. So, if it does not mean one church in every town and one Christian group on every campus what does it mean? We are unified in purpose, for evangelism, “that the world may believe.”

ship with them? How would you describe Jesus’ heart for them?

3. What did He do for them while He was here? (vv.6-8, v. 14, 18)
4. What are some of the things Jesus specifically asks for them? (vv.11-12, 14-17) How does He ask? (v.9)
5. What impact would Jesus’ words eventually have in their lives? (v.13)
6. What would their relationship with the world be like? Why? (v. 14)
7. How does Jesus pray about this problem with the world? Why does He not want them taken out of the problem? How is this different from what we normally pray in a difficult time? (vv. 14-15)
8. How would Jesus’ disciples be sanctified in the midst of their ministry to the world? (vv. 17-19)

### **Verses 20-26** (*Prayer for Future Believers*)

1. How would you describe Jesus’ prayer here? Who does He include in His prayer? Why do you think Jesus expands His prayer so broadly?
2. What are some things He prays for future believers?
3. What do you think His primary desire is for believers? (vv. 21-23)
4. What does He mean by unity? Why do you think He focuses on this? What are some of the different examples of oneness and unity He describes?
5. What will Jesus do for all who believe in Him? (v.24) Why is that significant?
6. How does He conclude His prayer? (vv. 25-26) Why?

### **In Summary:**

1. Why do you think John included this prayer?
2. What do we learn about each group of people for whom Jesus prayed?
3. How would you describe Jesus’ heart based on this prayer?
4. What are some principles or ideas about prayer that we can learn from Jesus here? What are some key themes He prayed about?

What do we learn about unity and its purpose? What about evangelism? How are they interrelated?

## Making Application

Jesus prayed, and He even prayed for us. That should impact how we live and how we pray.

1. How does it make you feel to know that before He died on the cross, Jesus prayed for you? How does that affect your life and how you live it?
2. When I pray for myself how different are my prayers than what Jesus prayed for Himself? How should I pray differently?
3. How well do I sanctify myself, set myself apart for ministry?
4. How well am I doing in two key areas that Jesus prayed for, being one with other believers (unity) that the world may believe (evangelism)?
5. What one thing am I going to do differently in my prayer life tomorrow?

*Let’s thank Jesus for praying for us and for showing us how to pray.*

# John

## Jesus' Death Chapters 18-19



University of  
Michigan

### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for this passage. Having had the Last Supper, given His final instructions to His disciples, and prayed for them, Jesus arrives in the Garden of Gethsemane. There He is betrayed and arrested, and soon thereafter is put to death.
2. This lesson will cover a lot of verses. The main goal will be to familiarize your group with the events of Good Friday. Don't get too bogged down in every minute detail.

## Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

### **Option 1:**

*What is the hardest thing you have ever done? Have each person (or most) share. What made it so hard? How much sacrifice was required?*

### **Option 2:**

*What is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for you? Have each person (or most) share. What about it was nice? What did it cost the person who did it?*

### **Option 3:**

*What are some universally recognized symbols of Christianity? What does each one mean or represent? Why do people wear crosses? How is the cross regarded by the following people who wear them: Madonna, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Billy Graham?*

- ? Why do people view the cross so differently?
- ? What was it that made what Jesus did on the cross so hard? What made it nice?

Most all of us have heard that Jesus died on the cross. But how much do we really know about how it all happened? Let's take a look and see how the events unfolded.

## Diving In

*Read each section of Scripture right before each set of questions.*

### **18:1-11**

1. How would you summarize the events of these verses?
2. Who was in the arresting party? (v.3) How must that have felt to be betrayed by one of His disciples, men He spent years developing?
3. What are some ways Jesus maintained control over His own arrest? (vv. 4-11)
4. How did the arrestors respond to His statement, "I am He"? (v.6) What do you think this shows about Jesus? What does this show about His arrestors?
5. How does Jesus' response contrast with Peter's? (vv. 10-11, see also Luke 22:49-51)

*They then arrest and bind Jesus and take Him to Annas, a former High Priest and father-in-law of the current High Priest, Caiaphas. Peter denies Jesus before a slave girl. Now we pick up the story...*

### **18:19-23**

1. How would you describe what happens here?
2. What is at the heart of Annas' questions? (v. 19) Why is He concerned with not just what Jesus taught, but how big Jesus' following was?

## Hints and Highlights

1. Who are the players in this drama?. Annas was a former High Priest, the one who offered the sacrifice for the people's sin. Normally the job was for life, but the Romans (who had conquered Israel) made them switch often so no one would become too powerful. Caiaphas was Annas' son-in-law and served as the current High Priest. Pilate was the Roman governor.
2. What is the Passover? When Israel left Egypt, the last plague killed all the first-born, except those whose families had marked their doorposts with the blood of a lamb. There the angel of death "passed over". How ironic that the Jewish leaders killed the "Lamb of God" in haste so they could celebrate this holiday.

3. Jewish Law requires that witnesses produce evidence to convict someone of a crime. In light of this, how did Jesus respond to their question? (vv. 20-23)  
*Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas, and Caiaphas sent Jesus to Pilate. In the meantime Peter denied Jesus two more times, and the rooster crowed, just as Jesus predicted would happen.*

### 18:28-40

1. How would you describe the events of these verses?
2. What is so ironic about their zeal to be holy in regard to Jewish law? (v. 28)
3. What caused Pilate to hear the case? (vv. 29-33) How would you describe his dialogue with Jesus? (vv. 33-40) How did Jesus answer Pilate's questions? (vv. 36-37) What kind of a man do you think Pilate was?
4. How did the Jews respond to Pilate's proposal of amnesty? (vv. 38-40) Why?

### 19:1-22

1. How would you describe what happens next?
2. How did Pilate try to appease the Jews? (vv. 1-5) What caused Pilate to question Jesus again? (vv. 7-9) How did Jesus respond to Pilate? (vv. 9-11)
3. How did the Jews try to coerce Pilate into a death penalty? (vv. 12-15) What did Pilate write? (vv. 19-20). What was the significance of it? How was it received? *The soldiers then gamble for the clothing that Jesus wore, fulfilling a prophecy in Psalm 22:18.*

### 19:28-42

1. How would you sum up the concluding verses?
2. How did Jesus die? (vv. 28-30) Why did the Jews want the bodies off the cross? (v. 31) What does John point out about Jesus' death? (vv. 35-37)
3. What do they do with Jesus' body? (vv. 38-42) Who asked for the body? What does this tell us? (remember John 3)

### In Summary:

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. What do we learn about the nature of man? About religious hypocrisy?

As we think about the worst in human character, what does this tell us about the character of God? Jesus could have stopped this. Why didn't He? How do you think He got through this?

## Making Application

Jesus died, and He died for you and me. That should change how I live.

1. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus could have stopped this at any point and did not?
2. Why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn't He have just taught us how to live? How is this idea different than what some of my friends believe?
3. How does this impact my view of God? How do I view Him differently?
4. Who are some friends who do not understand this or I am not sure if they do? When will I talk to them and can I invite them next week?

*Let's thank Jesus for dying for me.*

# John

## Jesus' Resurrection Chapters 20-21



University of  
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### Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Here is the context for this passage. Jesus was arrested, tried and crucified. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Jesus in a nearby tomb just before Passover began.
2. Who is Mary Magdalene? Jesus had cast several demons out of her. She followed Jesus from town to town and helped care for His needs. She even followed Him to the cross, showing her incredible devotion. It is ironic, that she, not one of the disciples found the empty tomb.

### **Introduction** (choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)

#### **Option 1:**

*What are some movies that deal with the supernatural? (like Blair Witch Project, Sixth Sense, the Exorcist, the Green Mile, etc.) How do they depict the supernatural? Why do you think our society is so preoccupied with this kind of theme?*

#### **Option 2:**

*Do a card trick. Oh I know you probably can't, that's the point. Have them pick a card, look at it, put it back in the deck, shuffle it, then pick one and say "Is this it?" It won't be. Repeat several times. Why are card tricks so difficult to do?*

#### **Option 3:**

*How did your family celebrate Easter? How does the average American family celebrate Easter? What does it mean to them? To your family? How far have we strayed from the true meaning of Easter? Why?*

- ? Why do we yearn for evidence of the supernatural? Why should Easter be a big deal?
- ? Why is the resurrection such a big deal? What would have happened to our faith if Jesus had not risen from the dead?

Our faith rises and falls on the resurrection of Christ. If He did not rise again everything we believe is in vain. Let's look in detail at this most important foundation of our faith.

### **Diving In**

*Read all of Chapter 20.*

#### 20:1-9

1. How would you describe the events and details of these verses?
2. Who finds the empty tomb first? Why might this be significant? (v. 1)
3. What is the response of Peter and John (the "other disciple")? (vv. 2-8) How would you describe the tomb?
4. How would you describe the faith of Mary, Peter, and John as shown here? What did they still not understand? (v. 9)

#### 20:10-18

1. How would you describe what happens here?
2. What seems to be Mary's state of mind? (vv. 10-14) How would you describe her experience? (vv. 15-18) How is it different from the disciples' experience?
3. How did Mary know it was Jesus? (v. 16) What does He ask her to do? (v. 17)

(Continued on page 24)

**Hints and Highlights**

Who took the body? If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then someone must have taken the body. It could have been the Jews, the Romans or the disciples. But both the Jews and the Romans persecuted the Christians for saying Jesus rose from the dead. If either of these 2 groups had taken the body they would have produced it and stopped Christianity at its beginning. So it only makes sense that the disciples could have taken the body, right? Except history shows that all of them died (or in the case of John was boiled in oil and lived) for saying that Jesus rose again. Would 12 men die for a lie? No way. So with no natural explanation we must choose a supernatural one. Jesus must have risen from the dead!

(Continued from page 23)

How must she have felt? How would you have felt?

**20:19-23**

1. How would you describe the events of these verses?
2. How would you describe Jesus' first meeting with His disciples? (vv. 19-20) What kind of atmosphere was there?
3. What does He ask them to do? (both in v. 21 and v. 23) What does this mean?  
*Obviously only God can forgive sin, so Jesus must be sending them out to proclaim a message of forgiveness. All who proclaim the Gospel are in effect giving or retaining forgiveness, depending on whether the person who hears believes.*
4. How does Jesus equip them to do this ministry? (v. 22) Why?

*Note: The disciples needed the Holy Spirit to effectively proclaim God's message of forgiveness. After Jesus ascended into Heaven they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost once and for all (Acts 2). Believers today receive the Holy Spirit the moment they place their faith in Christ (Ephesians 1:13).*

**20:24-31**

1. How would you describe what happens next?
2. Why did Thomas respond the way he did? (vv. 24-25) How did Jesus meet his need for evidence? (vv. 26-28)
3. How is the typical UM student like Thomas? How is he/she different? Who is most blessed? (v. 29) Why?
4. Why did John choose to write the stories and signs He chose? (vv. 30-31)

**21:1-14, 25 (leave this out if short on time)**

1. How would you sum up these verses?
2. What did Jesus do here? (vv. 4-14) What do we learn about Peter through his actions and John through his words? (v. 7)
3. What impresses you about Jesus here? Why did Jesus appear to the disciples several times before He ascended to Heaven? What if He had not?

**In Summary:**

1. Why do you think John included this story?
2. The word "believe" occurs here a lot. What do we learn about faith?
3. Why does biblical Christianity fall apart if the resurrection is a lie?
4. What do we learn about Jesus in His appearances after His death?

**Making Application**

Jesus rose again from the dead. That is the foundation of all that we believe and should impact how we live

1. How is my faith like Mary, Peter and John? How is it different?
2. How am I like Thomas? How does this impact my relationship with Christ?
3. How do I live out my responsibility as one sent out with the message of God's forgiveness through Jesus?
4. Who are some friends who do not understand this or I am not sure if they do? When will I talk to them or can I even invite them next week?

*Let's thank Jesus for rising from the dead.*