

TWELVE STUDIES IN JOHN 12-21

# THE LIFE IN JESUS

**A Study Guide for Use by  
Individuals or Groups**

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## **The Life in Jesus by Gracia Rinden**

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## THE LIFE IN JESUS

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## INTRODUCTION

Jesus came to reveal the truth from God. He not only spoke the truth but claimed to be the truth — He told His disciples, “I am the way, the *truth*, and the life.”

To live the life of the child of God, we need the truth. We need to know that what we live and base our existence upon is correct teaching; we must believe the truth as stated in the Scriptures.

Something else is necessary, however, besides knowing and believing the truth as it is found in Jesus. In order that our living on this earth has purpose, we need truth *plus* the power of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus prepared to leave His disciples and return to heaven He knew that simply knowing the truth and believing it was not enough. In order to bear fruit, which included introducing others to the person of Jesus, the disciples needed to experience what it meant to have the living Christ *within* them.

In the last days before His death and resurrection, Jesus took time to teach His followers about the Holy Spirit, the gift of God that would be given to them after He Himself had returned to His Father. He told them that it was to their advantage that He go away because in doing so He would send another Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to be with them forever.

It may be that some of you as you read these words know the truth in Jesus but have not as yet recognized the power of God at work within you through the Holy Spirit. It is my prayer that as we read and study John 12-21 we will be given a fresh glimpse into *The Life in Jesus*.

## LESSON 1

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS NEW FOCUS FOR LIVING

*John 12:1-26*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus is Anointed by Mary (John 12:1-11)

II. Jesus Rides into Jerusalem (John 12:12-16)

III. Jesus Chooses the Cross (John 12:17-26)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Everyone has a hero. Who do you look up to?

### MEDITATION

When Jesus was on earth He lived with a consciousness of His Father's purpose for Him. He said, "*I came not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me.*" This determination to be obedient to the will of God was always Jesus' focus for living. And this clear focus resulted in confidence and freedom.

As we begin this study, looking at the most important book in the world, take some time to worship Jesus. Thank Him for living a perfect life for us, for dying for our sin, and for giving us the record of His life in the book of John. Ask for His wisdom and insight. Ask for His help in making the right choices and in using time wisely.

## INTRODUCTION

In the eleven chapters preceding this one, John, the fisherman who liked to describe himself as “the disciple that Jesus loved,” tells the story of the public ministry of Jesus. Out of the many miracles that Jesus performed, John chose seven; these miracles or signs pointed to the truth of who Jesus was. Jesus was (and is) the Son of God, the “Word made flesh,” equal to the Father. His purpose in coming to this earth was to fulfill the work God had given Him to do.

John had a specific purpose in mind in writing this book. He wanted his readers to believe in Jesus and in that belief find eternal life. We notice the various responses of the people to His ministry. Large crowds followed Him. They came for different reasons. Some came because He healed their sicknesses and gave them food; others came out of curiosity; some came and found a new way of life as they heard and responded to Jesus’ words.

In spite of all the good He did, Jesus had bitter enemies. As more and more people followed Him, the religious leaders determined to put a stop to Jesus’ ministry. They were intent on killing Him.

With this chapter, John 12, we begin the second half of the Gospel of John. These chapters contain the private ministry of Jesus to His disciples and the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection. In studying these chapters we will learn more about the *life* in Jesus — we will see what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

1. Read John 12:1-26 taking note of the basic outline at the beginning of this lesson. Use the space below to record your initial observations and impressions.

2. Which verse or verses would you choose as a theme for verses 1-26?

**I. JESUS IS ANOINTED BY MARY (JOHN 12:1-11)**

It is now the last week of Jesus' life and He is the guest of honor at the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany. We know that at least 17 people are present; the 12 disciples, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Simon, and Jesus. These people are together and want to show appreciation to Jesus. They don't know that this could be called a going-away party; Jesus will be with them only a short time.

3. Considering what you remember about the three family members, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, how does their position in this incident go along with what we have seen them each do earlier? (See Luke 10:38-40 and John 11:17-35.) Make a comment on each: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, to answer this question.

4. Take some time to examine the accounts of this same incident in Matthew 26:6-18 and Mark 14:3-9. What do you find of interest?

5. Mary seems to have a particular sensitivity toward what will take place in Jesus' future. How do you account for her intuition?

6. Jesus had high words of praise for Mary's action. In the space below copy His words in Matthew 26:13. What does this verse mean to you?



7. Think about Judas' attitude and words at this dinner. What lesson can you learn from his life?

It is sin that always gets in the way of our relationship with Jesus. In Judas' case it was the love of money or greed that finally destroyed him. In verse 10 notice that the chief priest made plans to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus because of the response of the people to Jesus' raising him from the dead. In this case it was their jealousy and their refusal to submit to Jesus' authority that lead to further guilt and estrangement from God.

## **II. JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM (JOHN 12:12-16)**

When we examine the prophecies of the Old Testament we become aware of the reason the Jews were disappointed in Jesus as their Messiah. The Jews looked for a Messiah who would reign as King. They didn't understand that He must die. They weren't able to see that the coming of Jesus was in two parts. The Messiah's second coming, the time when He reigns as King of all the world is still to be fulfilled.

8. Only two events in the ministry of Jesus before His death are recorded in all four Gospels. These are Jesus' feeding of the five thousand and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Why do you think the Holy Spirit singled out these particular events (out of the many others that could have been chosen) to tell about in four different ways?

9. The other records of this event are found in Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; and Luke 19:29-44. Read these sections. What further information do these other writers give you?

10. We are told that this procession of Jesus into Jerusalem was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Look up Zechariah 9:9 and copy that verse in the space below. Circle the words that describe the coming King.

11. Notice what John says about the disciples in verse 16. Can you think of any example from your life when something happened and then later you understood in a new way the significance of that event?

### **III. JESUS CHOOSES THE CROSS (JOHN 12:17-26)**

What the crowds of people in Jerusalem had in mind and what Jesus knew must take place were two different things. Jesus allows the people to honor Him. He is anointed in Bethany, and is the subject of mass adulation on the road into Jerusalem.

After receiving these honors, however, Jesus turns to what has been His Father's purpose all along — He deliberately chooses the cross.

12. In verses 17-22, various groups of people are mentioned. As you read the verses, describe the reaction of each of the following to Jesus:

a. The crowd (verse 17)

b. Many people (verse 18)

c. The Pharisees (verse 19)

d. Some Greeks (verses 20-21)

13. Andrew and Philip came to Jesus with a request from some Greeks. They said, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Think about their words. What does this phrase mean to you?

14. Jesus' answer to these men was, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (verse 23). Earlier, Jesus had made reference to "the hour" (see John 2:4; 7:6, 30; 8:20). What do these other verses teach you about "the hour?"

15. Read verses 23-26 again. Make a list of what Jesus said. Try to express in your own words the principles Jesus wanted to teach His followers.

16. Which promise of Jesus in this section is especially meaningful to you? What are the conditions of that promise?

## **CONCLUSION**

The most natural thing in the world is to live as though the world revolves around ourselves — to judge each circumstance, each person, each decision on the basis of how this will affect us. Jesus shows us something different. His focus for living was not himself; it was God.

Having ambition and goals is healthy and good. It is not wrong to be ambitious and to work hard. From time to time, however, we are given opportunity to evaluate the source of our ambition. Is our heart's desire to please God or is it to make a name for ourselves? What has this chapter taught you about your life in Jesus?



## LESSON 2

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD

*John 12:27-50*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus Makes His Last Appeal to the Crowds (John 12:27-36)

II. The Jews Fail to Believe (John 12:37-43)

III. Jesus Describes a True Believer (John 14:44-50)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Describe what you think it is like to be a celebrity.

### MEDITATION

We must always remember that we don't become children of God by trying to do good things, but by the gift of faith in Jesus.

Once we know what salvation is all about, what are we to do? We are to serve Him. And why do we serve Him? We serve because we love Him.

Jesus said, *"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me"* (John 12:26). Read this verse over again to yourself. Make it personal by putting your own name in place of "my servant." Take some time to think about this promise of Jesus to you.

## INTRODUCTION

Try to imagine the situation Jesus was in at this time. After three years of public ministry He had become increasingly famous. People from many places heard about Him and walked miles to see for themselves this famous person who did such amazing things.

At this time Jesus was a celebrity; a person people talked about, discussed, and evaluated. Think of all the dinner conversations, the whisperings at public meetings, discussions at the market, on the roads, in the synagogues that centered around this unusual man from Nazareth. News spread by excited people who had witnessed miracles.

Don't you think that Jesus, God and yet truly man, might have been tempted to get sidetracked by all this attention? Wouldn't it have been easy to be flattered by people's words? Wouldn't it have been simpler for Jesus to do what they liked; to continue to remove the difficulties in their lives, to keep on helping those who were ill or hungry or mentally ill?

Jesus may have been tempted to seek for the fulfillment of personal ambition, to be somebody, to be admired, understood, respected. Instead He chose obedience to the will of His Father.

1. Read John chapter 12. Make a list of all the honors given to Jesus during this time; all the events or circumstances that could have been appealing or flattering.

2. Which verses in John 12 have reference to Jesus' relationship to His Father? Where do you find the topic of obedience?

**I. JESUS MAKES HIS LAST APPEAL TO THE CROWDS (JOHN 12:27-36)**

Because Jesus was not only man but God, He could see into the future. He knew He would die and He knew what going to the cross would mean. The greatest suffering ahead was not the physical agony, but rather the spiritual torment involved in carrying the awesome weight of the sin of the whole world. Jesus would be completely alone, forsaken not only by His followers, but by the Father Himself.

3. In your own words, try to describe Jesus' attitude or feelings in verse 27.

4. What can you learn from Jesus' response to trial (verses 27, 28)? What lesson is there in the way in which He reacted to what He knew was ahead of Him?

5. In response to Jesus' prayer, a voice came from heaven. Copy the words that were spoken (verse 28). How would you interpret this statement?

What does verse 30 tell you about God and His dealings with people? Here Jesus said that the voice was not for His benefit but for the benefit of those who heard it. It is God's will, it is His purpose that we know Him. God always wants to convince us of His presence. He wants us to know that He is, that He exists. He desires that our relationship with Him will be personal.

6. Jesus had made the announcement that the "hour had come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (verse 23). What did He say would now take place (verses 31, 32)? Can you find three different events?



7. Read verse 34. What two questions did the crowd have? How did Jesus answer their questions?

## **II. THE JEWS FAIL TO BELIEVE (JOHN 12:37-43)**

After making His appeal to the crowds, we are told that Jesus left and hid Himself from them. As Jesus spoke to the people, He could see into their hearts and the unbelief He saw must have grieved Him. I like to think that when Jesus hid Himself from them, He was doing this for the purpose of retreat for fellowship with His Father. He needed to be strengthened so He could go on. The unbelief could have crushed Him. Notice that when He next spoke or came back He "cried out" (verse 44); He had boldness. Personal communion with God leads to confidence.

8. What do verses 37-43 show you about the reasons for people not believing in Jesus?

9. Read verse 37 again. Someone has said, "Faith is not determined by the amount of a person's exposure to the miraculous." Discuss why you agree or disagree with this statement.

What convinces you that God is real? Is it miracles, answers to prayer, visible evidences of God's presence, or is it something else?

The Bible says that God hardens hearts and blinds eyes (see John 12:40). There is a sense in which this is a mystery and is difficult to understand. This seems to be out of character for a loving God.

We do know that God is merciful. His compassion and patience is beyond our comprehension. It is His will that no one perish, that no one miss out on the splendors of the life beyond this one.

We must remember, however, that God is not only perfect in His love, but also in His justice. The hardening of God comes as a result or as a consequence of human decision to reject who God is and what He has done for us in Jesus.

10. How are verses 42 and 43 a warning to us? What do we do that shows that we also love praise from people more than praise from God?

These verses reveal a marked contrast between the unbelieving Jews and Isaiah. The Jews had witnessed many great miracles. They had seen the recovery of sight to a man born blind and the restoration of life to a man who had been dead for four days. In spite of all they had seen, they did not believe; yet Isaiah, 700 years before Christ was born, saw His glory and believed!

### **III. JESUS DESCRIBES A TRUE BELIEVER (JOHN 12:44-50)**

One of the great themes of the Gospel of John is believing. This word is used nearly 100 times in the twenty-one chapters of this book. John states his purpose for writing in John 20:30, 31: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

11. Read verse 44-50 again. What words does Jesus use to describe His Father?

12. In verse 46 Jesus states the purpose for His life. Copy that verse in the space below. Underline the word *stay*. What does this verse mean to you?

13. What did Jesus say about the importance of His words, in the present, and in the future?

14. According to these verses, how would you describe a person who has belief that leads to eternal life?

### **CONCLUSION**

Unbelief is a great sin. We can think about these Jews and how they responded or rather failed to respond in the right way to Jesus. Yet aren't we often guilty of the same sin?

Believing is obeying. We are living the life of Jesus when we do what God says and we trust Jesus for salvation, for forgiveness of a specific sin, for purpose, for wisdom, and for guidance and strength. Whenever we do this, we are walking in obedience to the will of God.

15. What has obedience to the will of God meant to you in your life recently?

## LESSON 3

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS LOVING EACH OTHER

*John 13:1-38*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples (John 13:1-17)

II. Jesus Makes the Announcement of His Betrayer (John 13:18-30)

III. Jesus Gives a New Commandment (John 13:31-38)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Discuss one way that you show your love to a special person.

### MEDITATION

The Bible is the word of God to His children. In this book we find our instructions about how to live a life that pleases God. The beginning of this life is believing that He has told us the truth. God sees our hearts and He is looking for faith. We are told in Hebrews 11:6 that *“without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

An encouragement for those of us who often fail to believe is found in Philippians 2:12, 13. Look up these verses and take a few minutes to think about the truth that God, through His Spirit, is *within* us when we belong to Him. He is able to make us willing to do His will when we would rather go our own way.

## INTRODUCTION

How do we know that someone loves us? Do we know it by hearing them say the words, "I love you," or do we know it more by the way they treat us, by the way in which they respond to our needs?

Is it possible to love someone without showing them? Yes. But they will never really believe it; they will never be helped by our love unless we "tell them" by our actions.

In John 13, we see Jesus demonstrating to His dear followers the love He had for them. We can learn more about living the life in Jesus as we observe Him washing their feet, telling them the truth even when it was painful, tenderly instructing them in order to prepare them for the future.

1. In I John 4:19 we read that "we love because he first loved us." What do the following verses have to say about God's love?

a. Romans 5:8

b. Ephesians 3:17-19

c. Ephesians 5:1, 2

d. I John 4:16-18

e. Romans 8:38, 39

The next five chapters, John 13-17, contain the last words of Jesus to His chosen disciples. Jesus spoke these words in the last hours before His arrest and crucifixion. Last words of a loved one are always treasured by those left behind.

In dealing with His beloved disciples, Jesus first gave a visible demonstration of what love is all about. Then He spoke words of comfort, instruction, and farewell. After this Jesus prayed for them (John 17).

Should not this be a pattern for us to follow in living the life in Jesus? As we seek to be of help to others, should we not look for opportunities to do good to them; then, should we not speak words of encouragement (especially the words of Scripture)? After this we can pray for them.

Prayer was important in the life of Jesus. He prayed all night before choosing these twelve men to be with Him. Should prayer be less important to us? Can we truly help anyone unless we not only speak to them, but also speak *of* them to our Father?

### **I. JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES (JOHN 13:1-17)**

Matthew, Mark, and Luke also record events of this evening when Jesus and His disciples were together. You may want to read Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; and Luke 22:7-30 to fill in the picture of the things that took place during these hours.

We know that Jesus had looked forward to this evening. He had arranged ahead of time for a meeting place. Peter and John had been sent to find a "large upper room, all furnished" (Luke 22:12). As they met together Jesus said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

2. Read John 13:1-17 and as you read, take a close look at Jesus. In verse 13 He calls Himself Teacher and Lord.

a. Where do you see Jesus' lordship in these verses?

b. In what way does He demonstrate His ability as a teacher?



## **II. JESUS MAKES THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS BETRAYER (JOHN 13:18-30)**

By washing the disciples' feet Jesus was demonstrating His great love for them. Love means being willing to serve; to forget ourselves in seeking to fulfill the needs of others. Being willing to sacrificially serve is one aspect of loving each other. To serve in love in the midst of betrayal and rejection is a further test of love. Our natural inclination is to turn away or to retaliate when we are mistreated. Jesus shows us a different way.

8. How did Jesus show Judas that He loved him?

Jesus' enemies had wanted to get rid of Him for a long time. He *could* have been simply arrested by the Jewish leaders and gone to His death in this way. Jesus' suffering included the rejection of someone close to Him.

9. Does it surprise you that the other disciples never seemed to suspect Judas? What does this tell you about him?

10. At some time in our life we may have to face the rejection of a personal friend. This happened to David. Take a few minutes to read Psalm 55:12-23. How does David describe his problem? What comforts him?



11. Only God knows the future; only He can be relied upon to fulfill every prediction as well as every promise He has made. (See Joshua 23:14-16.) List the truths Jesus shared with His disciples in verses 18-21.

12. Why was Jesus troubled (verse 21)?

Is it safe to say that Jesus is always troubled by those who turn away? Doesn't He know more than anyone the consequences of such an act?

13. Jesus did not name the betrayer. What effect did this have on the disciples (verse 22-25, see also Mark 14:17-19 and Matthew 26:20-22)?

14. Why do you think the disciples did not comprehend Jesus' answer to John's question?

15. What lesson do you learn as you observe Jesus' dealings here with Judas? Where did Judas go wrong?

### III. JESUS GIVES A NEW COMMANDMENT (JOHN 13:31-38)

Jesus wanted His disciples to know that He knew them better than they knew themselves. Jesus loved these men and He knew that they loved Him. Jesus' love would never fail. The disciples, however, despite their good intentions, would soon leave Jesus' side and Peter would deny His master three times.

16. Read verses 31-38. Describe the tone in which Jesus speaks to the eleven men still with Him.

17. After washing their feet, teaching them, and dismissing Judas, Jesus gives a new commandment (verses 34, 35). Read these verses a few times. In the space below make as many statements as you can describing love between believers.

18. Today we sometimes use the word *disciple* to describe a follower of Jesus. In John 13, we learn that one characteristic of a disciple is that he or she loves other disciples. Two other descriptions of a disciple are found in the verses below.

What are they?

a. John 8:31, 32

b. John 15:8

How would you evaluate your own life in Jesus on the basis of these three descriptions of a disciple?

19. Peter is mentioned two times in this chapter. After thinking about these two incidents, how would you describe Peter's disposition, personality, or character? In what way do you see yourself in Peter's interaction with Jesus?

## **CONCLUSION**

The Life in Jesus means loving one another. Jesus shows us how to love.

What does love mean? It means putting up with each others' weaknesses and sin, giving encouragement, loving those who don't agree or support us, doing the little things that will give comfort to another. Love means helping one another with the sin that infects us daily. It means humbly submitting, giving up our rights in order to serve.

20. Make this lesson practical by writing down one way in which you can demonstrate your love for another believer. Jesus said, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

## LESSON 4

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS KNOWING HIM

*John 14:1-31*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus is the Way to the Father (John 14:1-11)

II. Jesus Lives in Us Through the Holy Spirit (John 14:12-21)

III. Jesus Gives Us Peace (John 14:22-31)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Tell about a moment when you were frightened.

### MEDITATION

When stating the goal of his life, the apostle Paul said, *“For my determined purpose is that I may know Him — that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and clearly”* (Philippians 3:10, Amplified).

Before beginning to study John 14, take some time to reread and think about the statement above. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to know Jesus. Remember that knowing about Jesus is different than knowing Him.

## INTRODUCTION

In the upper room with the remaining eleven disciples, Jesus talks about the future. He speaks about what would happen to them and to Him. As God, Jesus was able to see beyond the immediate future. Because of this He was able to comfort His bewildered disciples.

1. Jesus begins by saying, "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (John 14:1). Look back over the last chapter, John 13. List what had happened to cause these men to be upset.

2. Now read John 14. This chapter may be so familiar to some of us that we read it without thinking much about what Jesus is saying. Try to use your imagination to put yourself in the disciples' place as they listened to Jesus. As you read, look for one particular thought that is helpful to you. Use the space below to record that thought or verse.

### I. JESUS IS THE WAY TO THE FATHER (JOHN 14:1-11)

As their teacher, Jesus wanted His disciples to look beyond temporal, earthly things to heavenly realities. This was difficult for these men. It was difficult because they were looking for a kingdom. They expected Jesus to take charge and to set up this kingdom. The idea of Jesus' death was a disappointment. It was unappealing, unacceptable, and didn't fit with their mind-set. Isn't it hard to understand something when we really don't want to understand it?

3. What was different about the way in which Jesus approached His own death and the way in which people usually prepare to die?

4. Jesus knew that the hearts of the disciples were troubled. In John 14:1, He gives the prescription for a troubled heart. Write that prescription in the space below.

5. Can you give a definition for belief or trust? What does the phrase above mean to you? (Proverbs 3:5, 6 may help you with an answer.)

6. After giving this instruction, Jesus goes on to talk about heaven. What do you learn about heaven from looking at verses 2-4?

Jesus said, "You know the way to the place where I am going" (verse 4). Thomas wants this clarified and so he asks a question.

7. How do you feel about Thomas asking this question of Jesus?

8. What was Jesus' answer to Thomas? Try to put verses 6 and 7 in your own words.

9. Many people have been church-goers for years. The statements of Jesus, the miracles He performed, the accounts of His death, and His resurrection are all very familiar. Yet Jesus today could be saying to some of us as He did to Philip, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you so long?" Why do people fail to know Jesus?

10. Jesus again described His relationship to the Father. Read verses 10 and 11 and complete the following sentences. Jesus said:

a. "I am

b. "The Father

c. "My words

d. The purpose of the miracles is

## **II. JESUS LIVES IN US THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT (JOHN 14:12-21)**

Jesus lived a life of complete dependence on His Father. By living in this way, He gave His followers a pattern to follow. To reflect the life of Jesus, to see prayer answered, to witness God's glory, we need to know that the Holy Spirit lives in us. (See Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; I John 2:27.)

The Holy Spirit, because He is one and the same as God, had always been at work in the world. After Jesus' death, resurrection, and return to heaven, however, the Holy Spirit came in a new way to live in those who believed. In these verses, Jesus teaches His disciples about the coming Holy Spirit.

11. One result of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life should be answered prayer. What do verses 12-14 teach on the subject of prayer?

If we take time to ponder these words of Jesus, we are perplexed as we honestly admit that we have been disappointed with prayer. Jesus hasn't done everything we have asked Him to. We did not get what we asked for. We did not see the miraculous change that we prayed for in faith and anticipated. We wonder why.

Before going on, let's review what we know:

We know that God never lies. Jesus is God and whatever He says is true. Therefore, these promises He makes about prayer must be reliable.

Since the words of Jesus are trustworthy, the problem with unanswered prayer must lie with our own understanding of Jesus' words or with the kind of application we make of them.

12. Right after encouraging the disciples to pray, Jesus says, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (verse 15). Disobedience may be one hindrance to answered prayer. What do the following verses teach about our relationship with God?

- a. Mark 12:28-34



b. Matthew 7:21-23

c. Luke 6:46-49

People who are not living in obedience to God's Word do not know how to ask God for what they should. They do not know how to pray in Jesus' name. We need to continually come, hear, and obey Jesus in order to stand firm against the floods of opposition from the three enemies; the world, Satan, and one's own sinful flesh.

Jesus many times encouraged His followers to pray. He not only told them to pray but showed them by example that prayer was essential to a useful life. In Luke 11, after teaching the disciples about prayer, He made this statement, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (verse 13).

13. What do you learn about the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-21?

14. What has been your experience with prayer recently? What has God been teaching you regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer?

### III. JESUS GIVES US PEACE (JOHN 14:22-31)

We have said that one reason for the disciples' anxiety during this time was their desire for a kingdom. It wasn't that Jesus didn't have a kingdom. He was and is King. His kingdom, however, was not of this world. He had told them that His kingdom would not come *visibly* because, He said, "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

Are we sometimes like these disciples in that we are anxious and lack peace because we are trying to make God's plans fit in with *our* plans? Peace comes when we turn from doing this; when we submit to His authority as ruler of the universe and creator of all life. It is His sovereign right to do what He pleases.

15. What was the other Judas' question? How did Jesus answer this question?

16. Notice that there are three references to the world in verses 25-31. Write down as many statements as you can about the world as you read these verses.

17. People search for peace. They want peace within themselves and in their relationships with family or friends. They desire peace nationally so that the fear of war is removed. How is the peace that Jesus gives (verse 27) different than the peace of the world?

18. Using cross-references or a concordance, find some other verses in Scripture on the subject of peace.

19. If the disciples had remembered Jesus' words in verses 28-31 as they saw Jesus arrested and then crucified, how would they have been comforted?

## **CONCLUSION**

The life in Jesus means *knowing* Him. When we know Him, we know He is the only way to heaven. He died to pay for our sin. We know Him because He gives us the Holy Spirit who reminds us of the words of Jesus. As we listen to Him and obey Him, He gives us His peace.

A question for each of us to ask ourselves is this: Do we *know* Jesus or do we only know *about* Him? If we know Him, are we experiencing His peace?

## LESSON 5

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS CHANGED RELATIONSHIPS

*John 15:1-16:4*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. A Disciple Bears Fruit By Living in Jesus (John 15:1-8)

II. A Disciple Loves Because of God's Love (John 15:9-17)

III. A Disciple Must be Prepared for the World's Hatred (John 15:18-16:4)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Describe what you think your life might be like in 10 years.

### MEDITATION

A large part of Jesus' teaching during His last hours concerned the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples that after He left they would not be alone because He would come to them. He would ask the Father and the Father would give them the Counselor to be with them forever. He is called the Spirit of truth whom the world would not recognize. His work would be to teach the disciples and remind them of Jesus' words.

As a preparation for studying John 15, meditate for a few minutes on the verse below. Remember that Jesus never changes. He is with each of His children today and He is able to transform us so that we become like Him.

*"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (II Corinthians 3:17, 18 RSV).*

## INTRODUCTION

The world has many ways of categorizing people. We speak for example of old and young, rich and poor, gifted and ordinary, educated and uneducated, attractive and unattractive, famous and not famous, men and women, black and white. People tend to judge by what things look like on the outside. God sees the hearts of people. His system of categorizing people is simple. It is based on what is *inside*.

In God's eyes, the world is divided into two groups. Either a person knows Jesus and by faith is trusting Him, or a person does not. A person either seeks to live in Jesus or chooses to go on an independent path.

Everything changed for the disciples when they left their occupations to follow Jesus. As they walked with Him, life was different. Jesus taught new attitudes, new motivations, new relationships. For any disciple, the life in Jesus will mean changed relationships. In this chapter of John, Jesus talks about these changes, changes in relationships with Him and with other people

1. Read John 15 and make a list of all the changed relationships that are a part of the life of a disciple of Jesus. (You will find a long list; two examples are given below.)
  - a. Being made clean by the Word (verse 3)
  - b. Abiding in Jesus — a deeper dependence on Him (verse 4) etc.

2. All of the above relate to the privileges we have when we live in Jesus. Which of the above privileges have stood out in your recent experience? In what way?

**I. A DISCIPLE BEARS FRUIT BY LIVING IN JESUS (JOHN 15:1-8)**

In John 15:1-8 Jesus describes the ideal life of a believer. In this kind of life, the child of God derives nourishment from the true vine, Jesus, and as this relationship grows, fruit is the result.

3. Notice how many times the phrase “remain (or abide) in me” is repeated in these verses. Describe what is involved in abiding or remaining by looking again at the verses below:

a. Verse 4 - You can't bear fruit without abiding

b. Verse 5

c. Verse 6

d. Verse 7

4. Whenever Jesus repeats something (as He repeated the principle of abiding) we know it is important. If you were to tell someone how to abide in Jesus, what would you say?

The Old Testament gives a picture of the nation of Israel as God's choice vine. He loved that vine and cared for it but the fruit God looked for was not there. Israel disappointed God by refusing to listen to Him. They did not demonstrate their faith by the way they lived and produced only worthless fruit. Leaders did not set the right example. They were dishonest, ruthless, without compassion or justice. (See Jeremiah 6:9, 10; Ezekiel 15:1-8; Isaiah 5:1-7; 3:14; 30:12; 59:13; Hosea 10:1, 2.)

Israel needed a Savior. Because of His complete obedience to the Father, Jesus fulfilled what God had intended for Israel. Jesus is the *true* vine.

In these verses Jesus is teaching His disciples that without the living Christ within us (the Holy Spirit) it is impossible to live in a way that pleases God. *Fruitfulness is the result of Jesus' life being reproduced within us.*

5. Do you really believe that apart from Jesus you can do nothing (verse 5b)? What does this word of Jesus mean to you?

6. Jesus says, "No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine" (verse 4). What *is* fruit? How can a follower of Jesus know when fruit is being produced?

7. What promises does Jesus give in these eight verses? As you write the promises below, also write the conditions for the fulfillment of these promises.

8. Which verse in this section is helpful or encouraging to you? Write that verse in the space below.

## **II. A DISCIPLE LOVES BECAUSE OF GOD'S LOVE (JOHN 15:9-17)**

A person becomes a member of God's family because of God's love and grace. This family is to be characterized by *love*. God loves each member of this family and because of His love, each member is to love each other member of that family. A characteristic mark of a true disciple is a unique affinity for fellow disciples. In John 15:9-17 Jesus teaches about the relationship of believers to each other.

9. This section begins with the statement that Jesus loves His followers in the same way that the Father loved Him. Take some time to think of the personal, infinite love that comes to you in Jesus. What difference does the reality of God's love make for you?

10. Read John 15:9-11 again. What should be the results of knowing God loves us? (Can you find three results?)

11. In verse 12 Jesus repeats the commandment He had given earlier in the upper room. Because God loves us He tells us to do the things that are good for us. He has to tell us more than once because it is so easy for us to forget. Compare John 13:34, 35 with John 15:12, 13 and I John 3:14. Then complete this sentence in as many ways as you can: To love one another is to:

12. Jesus gives a further description of love between disciples when He spoke of laying down your life for your friends (verse 13). This is what Jesus did when He went to the cross. Can you give some practical illustrations of what it means to lay down your life for another believer?



13. Another evidence of Jesus' love is that He calls us His friends (verse 15). What meaning does this have for our lives? (See also Psalm 25:14.)

14. How has your experience of being a part of a loving group of believers been a help to you in your walk with God? What do you do when you realize you can't love a certain person who is also a believer?

### **III. A DISCIPLE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE WORLD'S HATRED (JOHN 15:18-16:4)**

A disciple of Jesus will not always be treated with love by others in the world. As long as the choice is made to follow Jesus and obey His commands the disciple can expect misunderstanding, hatred, and even persecution. Sometimes this opposition will come from unexpected sources.

15. Why does the world hate a true disciple of Jesus? Find as many reasons as you can in verses 18-25 and 16:1-4.

16. What two actions does Jesus say we should take when experiencing the hatred of the world (verses 20a and 26, 16:4)?

17. Do all believers experience hatred from the world? Why or why not?

18. How does the world express its hatred toward disciples of Jesus? In what way have you experienced the opposition of the world?

19. What does Jesus say to encourage His disciples in these verses?

## **CONCLUSION**

The call of Jesus to be His disciple is a call to be different from those who have not chosen to follow Him. One reason we are different is that our relationships change. We learn how vital it is to continually depend on the True Vine, Jesus. As we obey His command to love other believers and rejoice in His love for us, we will be equipped to face the hatred of the world with its opposite system of values.

At the close of this lesson, please take time to read and meditate on I John 5:18-20. These verses summarize the life in Jesus. As you read, you may make these words your own by replacing each we with the pronoun *I*.

“Thank you Jesus for keeping us safe, for giving us understanding, for revealing Yourself as True God, and for eternal life. Amen.”



## LESSON 6

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

*John 16:5-33*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus Would Leave and Send the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-15)

II. The Disciples' Sorrow Would Turn to Joy (John 16:16-24)

III. Troubles Would Lead to Knowing Jesus Better (John 16:25-33)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Life is full of unexpected changes. Tell about a change in your life that turned out for the best.

### MEDITATION

In the midst of a rapidly changing world we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus never changes. The prophet Malachi says, *"I the Lord do not change"* (Malachi 3:6). In Hebrews 13:8 we have these words, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*

The knowledge of God's unchangeableness is an anchor for our souls. The hymnwriter expressed this thought with these words: *"Change and decay in all around I see, O Thou that changest not abide with me."* Dwell in His presence, make these words *your* prayer as you prepare to study John 16.

## INTRODUCTION

By this time the disciples had grown accustomed to being with Jesus. Three years ago they had left their homes and occupations to devote themselves to being full-time disciples of Jesus. Now suddenly everything was changing. In these years the disciples had come to deeply love their Master. Because of their love, their hearts ached as He told them He would be leaving them.

We all find security in familiarity and routine. When our familiar routine is threatened by change insecurity is natural.

The Life in Jesus means *changing circumstances*. We change as we learn and grow older. People around us change and events come into our lives that demand more changes and more adjustments. Nothing earthly ever stays exactly the same.

In all of these changes, the disciple of Jesus needs to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. A modern-day disciple may be surprised to discover how frequently the life of faith involves being led from a place of seeming comfortable security to a place of uncertainty. We don't always know or understand exactly what God is doing and until the fog lifts we honor Him by choosing to trust. In time the uncertainty will be replaced by renewed confidence in God's love and power.

1. Read John 16:5-33 and as you do, imagine that you are one of the disciples hearing these words of Jesus. What would be going on in your mind as you listened to Him speak to you? Try to describe your thoughts and your emotions.
  
2. Jesus is telling His followers about the coming changes that would take place in their lives. List these changes.
  
3. Look again at Jesus in this chapter. What does this section show you about who He is and what He is like?

**I. JESUS WOULD LEAVE AND SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT (JOHN 16:5-15)**

4. In verses 5-7 Jesus talks to His disciples about leaving them. In verse 4b-5a He says, "I did not tell you this at first, because I was with you. Now I am going to him who sent me." Jesus said the coming change would be an advantage to the disciples. Why?

5. When you think of the Holy Spirit, think of Him as God's special gift to you as His child. What do you learn in the following verses about the Holy Spirit?

a. Galatians 4:6, 1 Corinthians 6:19

b. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13

c. Romans 8:9-17

d. Ephesians 5:18-20

6. Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the disciples would never have been able to do the things they did after Jesus had left them. The Holy Spirit gives power for ministry, for living a life that pleases God and bears fruit for Him. How does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will work in the world (verses 8- 11)?

7. Read verses 8-11 again and write in your own words what you think Jesus meant by each of the following:

a. "in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me"

b. "in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father"

c. "in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

8. What is the Holy Spirit's work in the believer now?

a. Verse 13a

b. Verse 13b

c. Verse 14

## **II. THE DISCIPLES' SORROW WOULD TURN TO JOY (JOHN 16:16-24)**

Jesus never told us that we would have clear sailing, only happiness and no sadness, once we began knowing and serving Him. Earlier Jesus had warned His followers of problems ahead. He said, "You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you ... If they persecuted me, they will persecute you" (John 15:19, 20). Power to overcome the world's hatred comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The world is not the only source of difficulty. Until we have our new bodies, we will always be hampered by the weakness of our human flesh. We have the Holy Spirit in us, but we also can never escape the reality of our own finiteness. We still sin, we still don't always believe. This is true of us as it was true of the disciples of Jesus.

9. The disciples had a question. What was their confusion about? What do you learn about Jesus as you observe the way He handled their perplexity?

Jesus demonstrated His eagerness to help them understand. It is comforting to remember that Jesus is always like this. He always stands ready to reveal Himself, to make Himself known to any person who honestly is seeking to find God. Questions of the sort which point to a desire to know Him never cause offense.

10. Read Psalm 139:4; Hebrews 4:13; Jeremiah 29:13; and II Chronicles 16:9. What do you learn from these verses about the mind of God?

11. The phrase "little while" is repeated seven times in verses 18-19. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of a "little while?" Are there two "little whiles?" If so, what periods of time is Jesus here referring to?



12. Jesus had earlier told the disciples that a change was coming. Compare these words in John 16 with Matthew 16:21-24; Mark 9:31, 32; and John 14:18-24. List the things Jesus had already told the disciples about the future.

13. What is different or what new information does Jesus now give His disciples (verses 20-24)?

14. What do you think was Jesus' purpose in sharing this information about the future with His disciples?

15. How is the joy Jesus gives described in these verses? In what way is this kind of joy a reality in your life?

### **III. TROUBLES WOULD LEAD TO KNOWING JESUS BETTER (JOHN 16:25-33)**

The disciples needed to know that they would have pain in sensing their aloneness in relation to the reaction of the world to Jesus' death. Not only would the disciples lose their best friend, but they needed to know that they couldn't expect empathy from other people. These words of Jesus were a reminder to the disciples to look to the Father, not to other people for their comfort.

One of the most difficult aspects of pain is to be alone in our suffering. Sorrow has purpose and brings rich benefits to us when we use it to turn from depending on our own resources and trust God.

16. What does Jesus teach in this section about His own relationship with the Father?

17. What do you learn about the Father's relationship to the disciples? Read verse 27 as though these words were addressed to you personally. What does this verse teach you regarding your relationship with God?

18. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, after He had performed His first miracle, John says, "This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (John 2:11). Compare this with Jesus' statement in John 16:31. Do you think Jesus and John are talking about the same thing? Why or why not?

19. Jesus speaks of a future hour or time in verses 25 and 26. What time is Jesus referring to? What could be said about the relationship of Jesus to His followers in that day?

## **CONCLUSION**

The disciples were about to enter a time of great turmoil. Their security, all of their beliefs, all of their dreams and aspirations would be threatened as they would see Jesus arrested and then killed. In these coming changing circumstances Jesus wanted the disciples to believe Him when He said, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Read these words of Jesus again and ask God to help you believe them for whatever changing circumstances are taking place in your life at this time. Thank Him for the Holy Spirit who gives His love and peace to His children in the midst of a constantly troubled world.

20. How can these words of Jesus help you, or someone close to you, today?

## LESSON 7

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS A LIFE OF PRAYER

*John 17:1-26*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus Prays for Himself (John 17:1-5)

II. Jesus Prays for the Eleven Disciples (John 17:6-19)

III. Jesus Prays for Future Disciples (John 17:20-26)

Conclusion

### OPENER

What do you think heaven will be like?

### MEDITATION

We have a God who answers prayer and who has invited us to bring to Him daily whatever concern is on our hearts. As we learn to know Jesus and as we live the life in Jesus, part of our joy is in learning to ask in His name. To His disciples Jesus said, *“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete”* (John 16:24).

We need to remember that there is always more to experience in our walk with God. God desires that we live confident lives — confident not in our own ability but in the power of His Spirit living in us. As we meditate on His Word daily, the Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray. Let us ask Him to do this: to teach us to pray in Jesus’ name. Let us ask that He fulfill His purpose for our lives this day, this week, and this year.

**INTRODUCTION**

This prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17 must have been precious to the disciples. It is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus and was prayed at a crucial time in their lives. Jesus had just encouraged the disciples to pray and had just given them some tremendous promises regarding prayer. Then He demonstrated His own confidence in the importance and power of prayer by allowing these men to listen to Him pray.

1. Read this chapter (if possible, read aloud). As you read, notice the three divisions of Jesus' prayer: verses 1-5; verses 6-19; and verses 20-26. Notice the words Jesus uses to address God throughout His prayer. After you have read the chapter, make a few summary sentences about what this prayer teaches you about God the Father.

2. Is there anything in particular that impresses you about the way Jesus prays? Can you think of some adjectives to describe His prayer?

3. Jesus seems to be making five basic requests. How would you define what He is asking of the Father in each of the following verses?

a. Verses 1 and 5

b. Verses 11 and 15

c. Verse 17

d. Verses 20 and 21

e. Verse 24

### **I. JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF (JOHN 17:1-5)**

The first words of Jesus' prayer are these: "Father, the time has come." What time was it? It was the hour of His death, separation from His disciples and from His Father; the hour of suffering, rejection, and agony. In speaking of this time, Jesus does not mean a period of time of minutes or hours, but rather He means, "This is the time, the right time for me to live out the purpose for my coming to the world; the time for the fulfillment of all the Old Testament Scriptures regarding the Lamb to be sacrificed for the sin of the world. I will now carry out what has been the purpose for my coming to the world all along."

We see that before Jesus prayed for His followers and for those who would believe in the future He prayed for Himself. Since Jesus the perfect sinless Son of God did this, we need never condemn ourselves for bringing our own needs to God.

4. Notice that in verse 1 we are told that Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed. Heaven is a real place. It is our future home and is the dwelling place of God. Read Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:10, 16; Hebrews 12:22-24; Matthew 6:20; and II Corinthians 5:1-8. In the space below record your observations about heaven as you read these verses.

5. In His prayer Jesus gives a description of eternal life. What is eternal life (verses 2, 3)?

6. What insights do you get about Jesus in these five verses? What is He like and what does He do?

7. Jesus said, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (verse 4). Why is it possible or impossible for a disciple of Jesus to be able to pray this prayer in truth and sincerity at the end of life? Or is Jesus the only Person who could make this statement? (These verses may help you with an answer: Romans 15:5, 6; Philippians 1:6; 2:12, 13; Psalm 138:8; Psalm 86:12.)

## **II. JESUS PRAYS FOR THE ELEVEN DISCIPLES (JOHN 17:6-19)**

During the three and a half years of His public ministry, Jesus concentrated on training the twelve disciples. When He left to return to heaven, the future of the Christian church rested on what these men would do as they were filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' training of the disciples included His words, His teaching, His miracles, as well as His prayer for them.

We know that Jesus had prayed for these men earlier. He prayed all night before choosing them (see Luke 6:12-16). To Peter, Jesus said, "Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31, 32 RSV).

This final prayer of Jesus for His disciples is significant. These words were the last recorded ones spoken during the time Jesus was alone with His disciples. His prayer contains a summary of Jesus' ministry with His disciples and His purpose for them for the future.

8. Read verses 6-19 again. What does Jesus say He had done (verse 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18)?

9. What does Jesus say about the disciples' response to Jesus' life and words? (See verses 6, 7, 8, and 10 and list below the statements He makes.) How can these responses be true in our lives as well?

10. In verse 10, Jesus says "glory has come to me through them." Think about these words. What do you think Jesus meant by them?



11. If we think of glorifying Jesus as honoring Him, revealing who He is, and lifting Him up, what are some ways in which we also can bring glory to Jesus today?

12. One of Jesus' requests of the Father for His disciples was that they be protected. Why was protection needed? In what way do we also need protection today as God's children? (See also I Peter 5:8, 9 and I John 2:15-17.)

13. A basic theme throughout this prayer of Jesus is the oneness between Himself and the Father. Where and how do you find this theme expressed in verses 6-19?

A prayer of Jesus that we hear so often repeated is His request that His disciples would be "one as we are one" (verse 11). Notice that Jesus mentions His concern for protection of the disciples just before He asks for their unity. We know that one of the schemes of Satan is to divide His people, to make them distrust and criticize each other. Satan knows that the blessings of God come when His children walk in unity of spirit and of purpose. David, in Psalm 133, expresses the blessings in unity with these words: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!...For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore."

14. Jesus prayed that His disciples would be sanctified or made holy by God's Word which is truth. Later (verse 20), He says that His prayer is not only for these disciples but for all those (including us) who would someday believe. Since Jesus prayed for this for all believers, we know it is possible. What are some evidences that this sanctification is taking place in our life?

### **III. JESUS PRAYS FOR FUTURE DISCIPLES (JOHN 17:20-26)**

As Jesus looks to the future He prays for those who would believe as a result of the ministry of His disciples. Again He prays that they would be one or united in spirit.

Despite differences of opinion on certain issues such as baptism, speaking in tongues, and details regarding the Lord's return, all truly born-again people will agree on such basic issues as the authority of Scripture and salvation through Christ alone. The kind of unity that Jesus is talking about is one that is based on *agape* love. (*Agape* is the Greek word used in the New Testament to describe sacrificial love, especially Christ's love for the world.) This kind of love and unity crosses denominational lines and is God's desire for all of those who are a part of His family. We need to remember that it is possible to be right theologically and yet be wrong in spirit. (See II Corinthians 13:1, 2.)

15. How do you describe the kind of unity Jesus prays for? What would be the result of this unity (verses 20-23)?

16. Because God loves His children He has a wonderful future planned for them. What does verse 24 tell you about this future? (Also see Revelation 21:1-4 and Revelation 22:3-5.)

17. In verses 25 and 26 we see a summary of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. What does the Holy Spirit do?

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus teaches us that living the Life in Jesus is a life of prayer. As we pray we can ask for unity of spirit with fellow believers so that our joy will be complete and the world will believe. How can each of us be involved in bringing about this kind of unity?

## LESSON 8

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS RECOGNIZING OUR FRAILTY

*John 18: 1-27*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Peter Fights Against Jesus' Arrest (John 18:1-11)

II. Peter Denies Being a Disciple as Jesus is taken to Annas (John 18:12-18)

III. Jesus is Questioned while Peter Twice More Denies Him (John 18:19-27)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Tell about a big disappointment in your life.

### MEDITATION

God loves us as His children. By His power and love He protects, shelters, and cherishes each of those who truly know Him. He has promised that no temptation or trial will come into our lives that is too much for us. He also promises that in every difficulty He will be with us and will provide a way out so that we can live in victory (I Corinthians 10:13).

One description of Jesus in the Bible is that He is our great high priest. For thirty-three years He lived on earth as a human being. Now He is in heaven praying to the Father for us. Think of Jesus as your personal high priest as you meditate on Hebrews 4:15, 16.



4. What had happened earlier to lead up to Jesus' arrest? (See Matthew 26:1-5; John 11:45-53; and John 13:21-30.)

5. What do you find in these verses to indicate that Jesus is in control; that even at this time He is not a helpless victim? (Also read Matthew 26:53-56.)

We look at the disciples as a group in this incident but we see them also as individuals within that group. Judas had left them a few hours earlier to betray his master. Peter, James, and John had been close to Jesus in the Garden as He urged them to pray that they would not enter into temptation, but they had slept while Jesus prayed.

Among the disciples Peter was one who showed characteristics of leadership. We often see him assuming this role as he was not afraid to ask questions and make decisions that affected the group. Jesus used the events which follow in Peter's life to make him into the kind of leader God later used.

6. Peter was the disciple that took a sword to try to defend Jesus. What does this action show you about his personality and his thoughts about Jesus? (Compare this with Peter's conversation with Jesus in Matthew 16:21-23.)

7. What attitudes of Peter's, demonstrated in Matthew 16; John 13:37; and John 16:29-30, needed changing? In what way can you identify with Peter?

Luke is the gospel writer that tells us that Jesus performed an act of creation in restoring the ear to the high priest's slave. We can't help but be impressed by Jesus' gentle kindness in taking care of the blundering of His disciple.

We are sometimes like Peter in having a tendency to hurt someone by acting in haste, thinking we are doing something to help Jesus. We can be thankful that Jesus is the Healer. He can even heal relationships that we have damaged because of our frailty. So of'en we are selfish, we lack wisdom and patience, we want to do things our own way rather than to wait for God's timing. We, like Peter, err in opposing the plan of God for our lives especially when it becomes apparent that God's plan may involve personal suffering.

8. In verse 11, after Peter's blunder, what is the new motto that Jesus made for all of His followers? What difference will it make in my life if I make this motto my own?

## **II. PETER DENIES BEING A DISCIPLE AS JESUS IS TAKEN TO ANNAS (JOHN 18:12-18)**

Jesus suffered at the hands of religious leaders. These men, Caiaphas and Annas, were in positions of religious leadership. Yet it was these leaders who were not in their hearts right with God. It was men like this that played a part in putting Jesus to death.

There are people like this today in places of leadership in the church. God sees the heart. He knows when people are seeking Him. He knows those who want to be motivated by love for Him. He also knows those who are seeking to use their position to promote their own personal interest.

9. Why did the religious leaders so strongly oppose Jesus? (Try to use some Scripture reference with your answer.)

10. Rather than point a finger at religious leaders, we need to ask God to cleanse our own hearts. The prophet Isaiah writes, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). For the one who turns and confesses sin there is forgiveness. Psalm 51:10-12 is a good daily prayer. What does David pray for in these verses?

11. John uses the word "another disciple" other times in his book in referring to himself. Very likely the disciple with Peter in verse 15 is also John. Can you think of any reason why John would have chosen not to clearly identify himself in this incident?

12. Read verses 15-18 again and think about what Peter did: he followed Jesus at a distance; he warmed himself at the fire of the enemy; when given an opportunity he failed to identify himself with Jesus. In what way can these actions take place in our own lives? What will be the result?

### **III. JESUS IS QUESTIONED WHILE PETER TWICE MORE DENIES HIM (JOHN 18:19-27)**

As we create this scene in our minds we remember that this takes place in the darkness. It is dark and it is cold. In the courtyard soldiers light a fire to try to keep warm. Above them, Jesus is being questioned by Jewish authorities.

13. Jesus called Himself the Light of the World (see John 8:12). Without Jesus there is always darkness. Read I John 1:5-7. What is it like to live in the light? What is it like to live in the darkness?



14. Jesus is not only the Light of the World but He is Truth (see John 14:6). Jesus never lies. Where do you see Jesus as Truth in verses 20-33? Contrast Jesus' words here with Peter's in verses 17, 25, and 27.

15. Why do you think Jesus used the crowing of the rooster to bring Peter to an awareness of what he was doing? How did Peter react? (See also Luke 22:61-62.)

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus had told Peter what would happen to him. Jesus knew Peter would deny Him, and yet Peter, because of his pride, could not comprehend it until it happened. We can learn from Peter because we are no different than he was. We like to think we are strong. God wants us to know we are weak and that without Him we can do nothing. The life in Jesus means *recognizing* our frailty.

When Jesus told Peter earlier that Satan had demanded to have him that he might sift Peter as wheat, Jesus also gave him encouragement with these words: "When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31, 32). Peter did this as he became a leader in the new church and also wrote two letters that are a part of our Bible today.

16. Read I Peter 1:24, 25; 2:23; 3:15; 4:8; 5:1-11. What had Peter learned?

## LESSON 9

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS FEARING GOD MORE THAN PEOPLE

*John 18:28-19:16*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus is Delivered to Pilate (John 18:28-32)

II. Pilate Finds Him Innocent (John 18:33-40)

III. Pilate is Afraid and Sentences Jesus to Death (John 19:1-16)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Tell about a time when you were pressured by someone to do something that you didn't want to do. How did you feel?

### MEDITATION

Why do we pray before we study God's Word? There is good reason. When we pray we acknowledge our need for God. Prayer forces us to focus our minds on the unseen world. We remember that everything around us is temporal. Nothing but God, His Word, and the souls of people, last forever. We pray because in praying we are being obedient to God. He has told us to seek Him, to trust Him, to bring all our problems to Him. The reason we study the Bible is to learn to know God through His Son. The reason we pray before we study is to give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to prepare our hearts so that what we read makes sense.

Take some time to be still before God. Worship Him as you think about who He is. Thank Him for what He has done for you. Then make these words your prayer: Lord, *"send forth your light and your truth; let them guide me, let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell"* (Psalm 43:3). Amen.

**INTRODUCTION**

Many people recite the Apostle’s Creed in their churches each Sunday. Two people are mentioned in this creed: Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Pontius Pilate. Under Pilate, Jesus suffered. This Roman governor was the person who authorized the physical abuse borne by Jesus.

As we look at Pilate we see him as a man under pressure. He had pressure from the Jewish authorities who hated Jesus and pressure from his conscience which told him that Jesus was innocent. There was also pressure from his wife who warned him against being involved with Jesus.

Pilate was afraid. We can identify with him, we can pity him, and we can learn from him. His story warns us of the danger of fearing people more than God. In Proverbs 29:25 it is written, “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.”

1. As you read John 18:28-19:16, you will see Pilate’s actions as he goes from being outside the palace with the Jews to being inside the palace with Jesus. Keeping this in mind, describe Pilate’s involvement with Jesus in each of these seven changes of scene. (One example is given for you.)

	<b>Location</b>	<b>What happened</b>
a. Verses 28-32	<i>Outside the palace with the Jews</i>	<i>Pilate receives Jesus from the authorities.</i>
b. Verses 33-38a		
c. Verses 38b-40		
d. Verses 1-3		
e. Verses 4-8		
f. Verses 9-12		
g. Verses 13-16		

2. Which verses in this section indicate Pilate's consciousness and fear of public opinion? In what way are our temptations sometimes like those of Pilate?

### **I. JESUS IS DELIVERED TO PILATE (JOHN 18:28-32)**

Before Pilate saw Jesus, He had been brought before both Caiaphas and Annas. There the chief priest and the whole council tried to find some reason to put Jesus to death. Witnesses were called in to make accusations against Him, but these witnesses could not agree. Jesus spoke the truth about who He was. He was accused of blasphemy and condemned by these men as deserving death. Because Jewish law forbade execution, they brought Jesus to the Roman governor.

3. Jesus was led by the Jews to Pilate's palace. Read verse 28 and think about the statement made about the Jews' concern with ceremonial cleanness. Considering what they were doing, why didn't this make sense?

4. How is it possible for us to be like these Jewish religious leaders? (See Matthew 23 for Jesus' descriptions of such people.)

What warning can we take from the example of these men?

5. Why did the Jews bring Jesus to Pilate (verses 29-32)?

## II. PILATE FINDS JESUS INNOCENT (JOHN 18:33-40)

6. We learn in Luke 23:1-2 that the Jews presented three specific charges against Jesus to Pilate. List these charges:

7. When Pilate initially speaks to Jesus, his first question is related to the last of the three charges above. He asks, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Why do you think Pilate focused on this particular issue?

In verse 34 Jesus responds to Pilate's question with one of His own: "Is that your own idea or did others talk to you about me?" All of us need to come to a place where the basis of our convictions is open for examination. We need to ask ourselves, "Do I believe this because I have been told this by others? Or are these convictions truly my own?"

8. Has there been a time in your life when you came to realize that you were not sure about what you believed? Or you were not sure why you believed what you did about God? If so, what was the result of this time of questioning?

9. For us as well as for Pilate the basic issue in question is who is Jesus? We need to know who He is. We need to know because what we believe about Him makes a difference in the way we think and the way we live. What does Jesus teach you about who He is in verses 36-38?

10. Pilate's question to Jesus related to His kingship. Think about Jesus' answer, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight." What does this phrase mean to you in regard to the believer's response to government and the world's system?

Jesus had been accused of saying that He was a king. Jesus said, "I am a king." Since He was speaking the truth and since He was and is truly King, Pilate was not wrong in coming to the conclusion that Jesus was innocent. Pilate left the palace to go out to present his findings to the waiting Jews (see verse 38).

11. What was the Jews' response when Pilate offered to release Jesus?

### III. PILATE IS AFRAID AND SENTENCES JESUS TO DEATH (JOHN 19:1-16)

12. Describe the kind of suffering Jesus experienced as He stood before the Roman soldiers and then before the crowd of chief priests. (See John 19:1-6 and Matthew 27:27-31.) Take some time to think about this before answering.

13. As we look at Pilate and the enemies of Jesus and compare their actions to the reactions of Jesus we see a sharp contrast between the sinfulness of humanity and the sinlessness of Jesus. In which verses do you find the following:

- a. The soldiers' cruelty \_\_\_\_\_  
Jesus' kindness \_\_\_\_\_
- b. The crowds' shouting \_\_\_\_\_  
Jesus' silence \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Pilate's fear \_\_\_\_\_  
Jesus' confidence \_\_\_\_\_

14. What happened that finally made Pilate decide to turn Jesus over to be crucified? What does this reveal about Pilate? (Compare with Jesus' words in Luke 12:4 and John 5:41, 44.)

## CONCLUSION

Like Pilate, many people live in fear of people, and fear is bondage. Jesus came to set us free from this kind of bondage also. How is this possible?

Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this earth. Believers experience unnecessary anguish when they expect a righteous kingdom on this earth. This will never be established until Jesus comes again. When He returns, He will be King. His reign will reflect the sinlessness of His own nature. As long as imperfect and corrupt leaders are in authority, there will be wickedness of one kind or another.

The life in Jesus means fearing God more than people. Our hope is in Jesus. He is the perfect Lamb of God who forgives our sins, renews our strength, assures us of His presence, and gives us hope for the future. What this world needs more of is men and women who stand on the truth of God's word and live and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. We need fear no evil when He is with us. We don't even have to fear the evil present in this world.

How can I demonstrate that I fear God more than people? The psalmist writes, "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands" (Psalm 112:1). We can continually ask, is my first desire to know God and obey Him? Do I find great delight in all of His commandments? Do I want Him to show me where I am not willing to obey Him fully?

15. Do you know Jesus in a different way or in a more complete way than you did a few months or years ago? Has knowing Him helped you to fear Him more than you fear people? Describe your thoughts about these two questions.

## LESSON 10

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE HE DIED

*John 19:17-42*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus' Death is for All People (John 19:17-22)

II. Jesus' Death Brings Division (John 19:23-27)

III. Jesus' Death Proclaims God's Power (John 19:28-37)

IV. Jesus' Death Gives Us a Reason for Living (John 19:38-42)

Conclusion

### OPENER

What are your feelings about death?

### MEDITATION

At our dinner table our family will often take time for each of us to pray short sentence prayers after we read some part of Scripture. For a long time our youngest's favorite sentence prayer was, "Thank you that You died on the cross for our sins." Each night from this same corner of the table we all heard this prayer. Over the weeks and months as we listened and prayed along with this simple prayer, we became more and more convinced that there could be no better prayer. Jesus died for us. He paid for our sins. Because He died we have eternal life.

As we begin this lesson on the death of Jesus let us all pray together from our hearts — "Thank you Jesus, that You died on the cross for our sins."



**INTRODUCTION**

We all know something about death. We know that death is inevitable. Everything on this earth that has a beginning also has an ending. We know that parents usually die before children. We know that old people die. We also know that death sometimes comes as an unwelcome surprise, especially when it claims the young and strong rather than the old and weak.

Death is not beautiful. It is ugly. Death involves separation and is painful.

With death comes great change. As I write this sentence I would like to underline it. Death brings tremendous changes. Those of us who have lost someone dear to us can testify to this great change.

Jesus died. And with His death has come the most significant change in history. His death and its meaning for our lives is the subject for this lesson.

1. Read and meditate on John 19:17-42. Notice each person or group of persons who witnessed Jesus' death. List them and describe what you see as the reaction of each to the death of Jesus.

2. Although we can make an analogy between Jesus' death and the fact that all of us will die it is also true that Jesus' death was unique. Why was it unique? How was His death different than the death of anyone else who has died?

### **I. JESUS' DEATH IS FOR ALL PEOPLE (JOHN 19:17-22)**

After Pilate's struggle with his own conscience and after his decision to give in to the will of the Jews by delivering Jesus to be crucified, the sentence of death was carried out.

3. Why was (and is) the manner of Jesus' death a stumbling block to the Jews? (Compare Deuteronomy 21:23, I Corinthians 1:23.)

4. Carrying His own cross, Jesus went out to the place where executions were carried out. Jesus died not in Jerusalem, but just outside the city. What significance does this detail have? (See Hebrews 13:11-13.)

5. Pilate had a sign made to be placed on Jesus' cross. What did this say and how was it written? Why did this inscription annoy the Jews?

In spite of the Jews' objections the statement about Jesus' identity stood for all to see. It was written in three languages: in Hebrew, the language of the Jews and of the Old Testament; in Latin, the language of Rome; and in Greek, the language of philosophy and of the New Testament. It stood and still stands as we read it as a testimony to Jesus' death for all peoples of the world.

6. Read John 3:16; I John 2:2; 4:14; II Corinthians 5:15; and copy the phrases which tell you that Jesus' death was for all people.

7. The Bible teaches that we can know Jesus died for the sins of the world and yet still not possess eternal life. Why? Read John 1:11-13; II Corinthians 4:4; John 8:24; John 3:36.

## **II. JESUS' DEATH BRINGS DIVISION (JOHN 19:23-27)**

It is often surprising to observe people witness an identical event and then come to opposite conclusions on the basis of that event. The Roman soldiers watched Jesus die. Some women who loved Him also watched. Their reactions were different.

8. What did the soldiers do and what did these women do? To which group did Jesus respond? Why?

9. The soldiers used the cross of Jesus to further their own ends. In what way is it possible for us to be guilty of the same sin?

Isn't it interesting that the soldiers (who most likely did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God) by their actions fulfilled Scriptures? Doesn't this show you God's interest in the details of life? Doesn't it also show you His power in using even people who do not believe, in accomplishing His purposes?

10. What do you learn about Jesus as you observe His response to His mother and John?

The cross of Jesus always brings division between those who believe and those who do not believe. This was demonstrated in the contrast between the behavior of the soldiers and that of the women at the cross. Later Jesus' followers came to realize that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18). This is still true.

### **III. JESUS' DEATH PROCLAIMS GOD'S POWER (JOHN 19:28-37)**

We know that all power was, and always has been, in the hands of God, even at the time when Jesus was dying on the cross. Jesus, the Son of God, loved us and gave Himself for us. (See Galatians 2:20.)

11. Which do you think takes more power: to fight against some kind of injustice or suffering, or to submit to it when you would not have to submit? When might we have to do the latter?

12. Read the following verses and take notes of your thoughts on the subject of sin, suffering, and the response God wants us to have to each:

a. I Peter 2:24

b. II Corinthians 7:8-10

c. Romans 5:3-5

d. I Peter 4:13-16, 19

13. This section, verses 28-37, begins and ends with John writing out details at the cross which were fulfillments of Old Testament Scripture. List these three details and match them with the parallel Old Testament references.

14. As you read and meditate on Psalm 69:21; Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20; and Zechariah 12:10, what additional insights do you receive about God and His Word?

15. Have you thought about the meaning of Jesus' words on the cross in verse 30, "It is finished?" What does this mean to you? What difference does it make in your life?

#### **IV. JESUS' DEATH GIVES US A REASON FOR LIVING (JOHN 19:38-42)**

When we see Jesus' death on the cross and know that He died for us, we have the privilege of demonstrating our love for Him. This is what Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did as they took the body of Jesus and prepared it for burial.

16. The burial of Jesus is told in all four gospels. What added information do you find about Joseph of Arimathea in Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:43; and Luke 23:50, 51?

17. Only John mentions Nicodemus joining Joseph in taking care of Jesus' body. Can you think of any reason?

What these two men did at this important time in history has been recorded for all of us to remember. Joseph and Nicodemus were hesitant to follow Jesus publicly. They feared what people would think and yet God used them to do a work that was significant. Praise God that He is willing to use us, that He gives us something to do in spite of our weaknesses and failures.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a mystery about the cross which none of us will ever be able to fully comprehend. We wonder why or how God could love sinful people to such an extent that He would provide a way to heaven for every believer on the basis of what Jesus did on the cross.

The cross is the focus of history. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden their only hope was to look forward to a time when the Redeemer would come to defeat the power of sin and Satan and make the payment that was required to pay for sin. Each person who lived after Adam and Eve was given the gift of eternal life as they looked forward to the promised Savior. Each person after Jesus died is given eternal life as they look back to the cross. We are given life as we look to Jesus. Jesus described this earlier when He talked to Nicodemus and said: "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again ... the Son of Man must be lifted up; that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." Have you looked at Jesus? Are you still looking to Him?



## LESSON 11

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS KNOWING HE IS ALIVE

*John 20:1-31*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. The Tomb is Found Empty (John 20:1 -10)

II. Mary Sees Two Angels and Jesus (John 20:11-18)

III. Jesus Appears to the Disciples and Thomas (John 20:19-31)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Describe a situation that you have experienced that seemed too good to be true.

### MEDITATION

Jesus wants His followers to be convinced, to know, that He is alive. He wants us to know He is working in the world and in our daily lives. He wants us to come to Him; to ask in His name for the things we need.

Use these words from Psalm 116 as your prayer: *"I love the Lord, for he heard my voice ; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live ... The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion ... I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord. "*





3. Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus in His resurrected body. Other passages of Scripture give us additional information about this woman. Along with John 20:1, 2; read Luke 8:1, 2; John 19:25; and Mark 16:9-11. What do you learn about her?

4. When Mary came to the tomb, what did she see? What were her conclusions at this time?

5. How would you describe the differences in personality between Peter and John on the basis of their reactions to Mary's announcement?

6. What admirable qualities do you find in Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John?

We are told that when John looked into the tomb, he saw and believed. John believed on the basis of what he saw. He knew that if Jesus' body had been stolen, the robber would not have bothered to leave the grave clothes behind. The manner in which these linen strips were arranged was an evidence to John that Jesus had risen.

7. John believed, yet something would happen in the future to deepen his belief. What was it (verse 9)?

**II. MARY SEES THE ANGELS AND JESUS (JOHN 20:11-18)**

After seeing the grave clothes, the disciples left to return to their homes. Mary Magdalene stayed at the tomb weeping. The fact that Jesus' body was missing was deeply distressing to her because at this time the wonderful reality of Jesus' rising from the dead was hidden from her. Her sorrow was real and painful; yet it was unnecessary.

8. Have there been times in your life when you have sorrowed unnecessarily because the truth of a situation had not yet dawned on you? Please describe what it was like for you before you knew the truth and then what it was like when the truth came to light.

9. Jesus chose to come to Mary, to comfort her with His presence. What does this teach you about Him?

When Mary looked beyond the outward sign of the stone being rolled away and stooped down to look into the tomb she saw two angels. One of them asked her why she was weeping. She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put him."

The cause of Mary's sorrow was the abrupt change in circumstances along with the fact that she didn't understand what was happening. All of us have been in situations like this. We have seen something happen that we didn't expect and we are bewildered when we don't understand what is going on.

10. Copy Proverbs 3:5, 6 in the space below. How can this verse help you at a time when you can't understand what is happening in your life?

11. What two names did Mary use in referring to Jesus? What did Jesus say earlier about using these two names in referring to Him? (See John 13:13.) Why can He not be one of these to us without also being the other?

12. Mary did not recognize Jesus at first. What did Jesus do that made her know that this was Jesus, her Teacher and Lord?

Most people are uncomfortable when their names are mispronounced or substituted for the name of someone else. A name is a very personal thing. We have a great God who knows each of us and loves us with a love that is beyond comprehension. He even knows our name.

13. What do the following verses show you about God's love and concern for each individual person?

a. Matthew 10:28-31

b. Psalm 139:1-4; 9-10; 13-18

c. John 10:3

d. Daniel 12:1

14. Look at Jesus' instructions to Mary in verse 17. Why do you think He said this?

When Mary had seen Jesus and was convinced He was alive, she shared her good news with her friends. This is always the way to bless others with our lives and witness. We must first see Jesus ourselves. He must be real and living to us. Then we can share with others and point them to Jesus.

15. If Jesus is not real to us, how do you think He can become real?

### **III. JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES AND THOMAS (JOHN 20:19-31)**

John tells about two different appearances of Jesus to the disciples: one with Thomas missing; the other with Thomas present. These two incidents took place a week apart. The disciples were afraid and hid in locked houses. Notice the wonderful contrast to their fear in the words, "The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord" (verse 20).

Should not this always be the case when God's children experience His presence with them? As we have had opportunity over the last weeks and months to meet together to study the book of John, we who have studied and prayed together know what this means. We too have been overjoyed at seeing the Lord!

16. The apostle Paul in Philippians 3:20, 21 says, "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." The disciples saw what Jesus' glorified body was like. Read verses 20:19-29. When we have glorified bodies, what will they be like?

17. It is Jesus' presence and also His words which comforted the disciples. List below in summary form the message that Jesus brought to these men. (Which statement is repeated three times?)

Thomas wanted to see Jesus himself before he would believe that He was really alive. It was not enough for him to simply hear about Him from the other disciples. Notice that Jesus did not refuse to come to Thomas, Himself. To anyone who wants to know Him, Jesus is willing to make Himself known.

18. What encouragement does Jesus give to us in verse 29?

## **CONCLUSION**

John concludes this section on the resurrection of Jesus by stating the purpose for writing his book: these words were written for us that we might believe that Jesus is truly God's Son and that by believing we would have life in his name (verses 30, 31).

The kind of life he is talking about is a life of faith, trusting Him even when we do not understand, seeking Him and rejoicing in the fact that He loves us enough to know us by name. Jesus is alive today and reveals Himself to us through His Word, through other believers, and through the circumstances of our daily lives. The life in Jesus means knowing He is alive.



## LESSON 12

# THE LIFE IN JESUS IS LOVING HIM

*John 21:1-25*

### OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Jesus Helps the Disciples Catch Fish (John 21:1-8)

II. Jesus Prepares Breakfast for Them (John 21:9-14)

III. Jesus Talks to Peter (John 21:15-23)

IV. John Gives His Final Testimony (John 21:24, 25)

Conclusion

### OPENER

Tell about a time when you were given a second chance.

### MEDITATION

When Jesus talked to Thomas, He described the blessed person as one who did not see and yet believed. This is what the life in Jesus is all about — to live and walk by faith and not by sight. No matter how long we have known Jesus, no matter how much we know the Bible and Christian doctrine, the basic issue always is what is in our hearts. Are we trusting Jesus alone for salvation and for growing in Him? Is our chief desire that He be honored and praised?

The Word of God is central in our walk of faith. We can't really know God unless we choose to spend time with Him through meditation and study of Scripture.

For this last meditation in this series of lessons, I want to point you to Psalm 119. This is the longest chapter of the Bible; each verse of this wonderfully rich psalm has some reference to the importance of God's Word in the life of the Christian. Before you look at John 21 take some time to read at least the first part of Psalm 119. Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to you as you read. Use the space below to record the verses or thoughts that are especially helpful to you.



## INTRODUCTION

The promises of God belong to His children; to the ones who know Him and love Him. To these people He promises, "All things work together for good;" "I will never leave you or forsake you;" "Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will act;" "Be still and know that I am God."

If we love someone we should tell them so. If we do this with our family and close friends, should we not also do this when we speak to the One who has loved us and died for our sins? Anyone who has truly seen Jesus with the eyes of faith will love Him. And if we love Him we will honor Him by telling Him that we love Him.

Jesus had said earlier that He would show Himself to the ones who loved Him (John 14:21). After He rose from the dead, He revealed, or made Himself visible, to His disciples. As we study this chapter we will see things about Jesus that will cause us to love Him more.

1. Read this chapter which begins with the words: "After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples ... He manifested Himself in this way" (NAS). As you read, think about this question: What did Jesus reveal about Himself during the events surrounding this breakfast? What did He show the disciples about what He was like? (Record your observations below.)

### I. JESUS HELPS THE DISCIPLES CATCH FISH (JOHN 21:1-8)

After His resurrection Jesus made numerous appearances both to individuals and to groups. He talked to Simon Peter, Mary Magdalene, James, two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the disciples gathered in an upper room, and larger groups of assembled followers. (See I Corinthians 15:4-8.) In this chapter Jesus comes to His disciples at a familiar place, the Sea of Galilee. This was a surprise visit which the disciples were not expecting.

2. Who was involved in this incident by the Sea of Galilee? From memory (or from looking back) tell what you know about the men who are named in verse 2.

3. Try to picture in your mind these seven men out on the boat fishing all night. What do you think was on their minds? What do you think they talked about?

4. When Jesus first spoke to the disciples they did not know who He was. This was also true of Mary Magdalene at the tomb. He spoke but she did not recognize Him at first. The same thing happened to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Does this also happen today? Are there times when Jesus is speaking to us and we don't know that the thoughts or ideas we have are from Him? Does it take time for us to recognize Him as it did for these people? Why is that?

5. What convinced Peter that this was Jesus speaking to them? What was Peter's response?

6. The disciples had fished all night and had caught nothing. Jesus could have chosen to come to them earlier so that they would not have had to "waste" all this time. Why do you think He waited?

7. What do you think the disciples learned about Jesus through this incident? (Or what do you think they should have learned?)



### **III. JESUS TALKS TO PETER (JOHN 21:15-23)**

After taking care of their physical needs, Jesus spoke to His disciples. Since Jesus did many more things than what John could write about (see verse 25), it is likely that He spoke to the other six men individually as well as to Peter.

Peter was the confident, bold disciple who had seen Jesus do many miracles — miracles at his place of business on the Sea of Galilee as well as a miracle in his own home when Jesus healed his mother-in-law. He had been a leader, one of the inner circle of disciples and had been so sure he would never deny Jesus. Now after what had happened he was quiet.

11. Notice that Jesus did not scold Peter. He did not say, “Stop failing me” or “Try harder.” Jesus knew Peter. He knew that Peter, like all of us, will fail Him because of the weakness of our human flesh. Jesus forced Peter to respond by asking him a question three times. Write that question in the space below.

Peter was to be a leader in the church after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. To be the kind of leader that God could use, Peter needed to know an important principle. That principle is this: The key to serving Jesus lies in our love for Him. If we don’t really love Him we can’t serve Him.

12. Jesus’ desire for Peter was that he grow up; that he learn to be a shepherd and that he do these things out of love for Jesus the Good and True Shepherd. What was Jesus calling Peter to do (verses 15, 16, 17)?

13. Like many of us, Peter had a problem in being concerned with things about which he did not need to be concerned. What lesson is there for you in verses 20-23?

Later Peter was used of God to preach at a service where 3,000 people became Christians. He also wrote two letters to believers who were experiencing persecution for their faith. These letters are included in our Bibles today.

#### **IV. JOHN GIVES HIS FINAL TESTIMONY (JOHN 21:24,25)**

This wonderful book ends with a reminder to us of the truth of the written word of God. Every word of this book is true. Every promise God made concerning the coming Savior was fulfilled in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. We can trust this book because it is the word of God and God cannot lie.

14. Read verse 25 again. Rejoice in the truth that God has told us all that we need to know in this life. Someday we will be with Him in eternity where our knowledge will be complete and all our questions will be answered. What questions might you ask of Jesus your first day in heaven? What comfort do these verses give to you?

#### **CONCLUSION**

To His followers Jesus had said earlier that He had come that they might have life, and have it abundantly. In this study of John's Gospel we have seen in many different ways the kind of life Jesus was talking about. Why should we be satisfied with anything less?

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