

BAPTISTWAY PRESS
Dallas, Texas
baptistwaypress.org

**Adult
Bible Study
in
Simplified
English**

**Study
Guide**

WRITERS
Judy Hughes
Amy Barker



The Gospel of John: Part Two

Light Overcoming Darkness

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

The Gospel of John: Part Two *Light Overcoming Darkness*

Copyright © 2011 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®.
All rights reserved.

Permission is granted for a church to make as many copies of this publication as needed for use within its ministry. Copies of this publication are not to be sold, distributed, or used in any other manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations. For information, contact BAPTISTWAY PRESS, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 North Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW LIFE Version, Copyright © 1969, 1976, 1978, 1983, 1986, Christian Literature International, P.O. Box 777, Canby, OR 97013. Used by permission. Identified by “N.L.V.”

First edition: February 2011

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® Management Team

Executive Director, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Randel Everett

Director, Education/Discipleship Center

Chris Liebrum

Director, Bible Study/Discipleship

Phil Miller

Publisher, BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

Ross West

Language Materials Team

Writer for The Gospel of John: Part Two

Judy Hughes, First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Amy Barker, First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Editor for The Gospel of John: Part Two

Jennifer Carson, First Baptist Church, New Braunfels, Texas

Director, Office of Intercultural Ministries, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Patty Lane

Introduction

The Gospel of John: Part Two *Light Overcoming Darkness*

Many people say their favorite book of the Bible is the Gospel of John. It is full of wonderful but simple stories about Jesus' life and death. The other Gospels also tell about Jesus' arrest, trials, death and resurrection. But John includes meaningful details of Jesus' message during these hard times. We should look closely at the things. John helps us understand what they mean. He shows us how we can know Jesus is truly God's Son. He shows us how, through Jesus, God's light overcomes the dark times.

An earlier study of John was published by BaptistWay Press in 2010. It was called *The Gospel of John: Part One—The Light Shines*. Many of the stories in the first seventeen chapters of John are not found in the other Gospels. That earlier study shows how Jesus, God's Son, was greater than the Jewish laws and customs. It also shows how Jesus taught about who He was through the Jewish feasts. That study shows many signs that Jesus really is God's Son. That study helps us see the light of God's glory in Jesus.

These lessons are the second part of our study of the Gospel of John. This study deals with the last week of Jesus' earthly life. These lessons in the Gospel of John can teach everyone. For unbelievers, John tells how to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. For new believers, John gives a wonderful explanation of faith. For mature believers, John provides a sweet renewal of their relationship with God.

About the Writers

Judy Hughes and her retired pastor husband live on a farm near Moody, Texas, where they are developing a ministry retreat. Judy has taught English for many years and is an ESL trainer with the North American Mission Board. She has two children and seven grandchildren and attends First Baptist Church in Belton.

Amy Barker is a wife and homeschooling mother of three who lives on a farm near Moody, Texas. She is a graduate of UMHB in Belton, Texas and a member of First Baptist Church in Belton. When she's not reading, writing, teaching, or feeding animals, she bakes homemade bread, makes homemade soap, and knits.

Overview

The Gospel of John: Part Two *Light Overcoming Darkness*

Unit 1: Jesus' Parting Message

Lesson 1	Jesus' New Way	John 13:1-17
Lesson 2	Jesus—Truly the Way	John 13:31-14:14
Lesson 3	The Spirit—God with Us Forever	John 14:15-18, 25-27; 15:26-16:16
Lesson 4	The Fruitful Life	John 15:1-17
Lesson 5	Jesus Prays for His Followers	John 17:1-26

Unit 2: Jesus' Trial and Death on the Cross

Lesson 6	Judging Jesus	John 18:15-27, 18:37-19:8, 14-16
Lesson 7	It Is Finished	John 19:16-30, 38-42

Unit 3: Jesus' Resurrection

Lesson 8	Good News about Jesus	John 20:1-18
Lesson 9	Sent by Jesus	John 20:19-23
Lesson 10	A Story to Tell	John 20:24-31
Lesson 11	Lord of All Time	John 21:1-23

Word List

Unit 1

Lesson 1

Customary: according to custom; usual; the expected action

Deny: ¹ to answer in the negative; to say no
² to sacrifice one's own comfort

Refuse: to show or say one is unwilling to do something

Ritual: a formal action used to mark an important time

Lesson 2

Deserve: to be worthy of

Enable: to make able; to give the ability, means or right

Presence: being here, in the place mentioned

Sacrifice: to give up something of value

Lesson 3

Comfort: to make someone feel better

Defender: a guard; a protector

Guilty: having broken God's law; disobeyed God

Judgment: the final decision made by a judge or court

Witness: a person who tells what he saw happen

Lesson 4

Abide: dwell; remain; last; bear; endure

Connect: to join together

Prune: to trim by cutting away dead branches or extra growth

Relationship: connection

Unselfish: not concerned about self; thinking first of others

Lesson 5

Conflict: sharp disagreement

Executed: put to death by the authorities

Fellowship: friendly relationship through sharing and doing things together

Obedient: to do or be willing to do what one is asked or ordered to do

United: joined together

Unit 2

Lesson 6

Armed: to supply with or have weapons

Betray: to be disloyal to; to break faith with

Judge: to form an opinion about something or someone, whether they are right or wrong

Mock: to laugh at or make fun of someone

Worthy: deserving of

Lesson 7

Accomplish: to get something done; to finish a task

Appeal: to ask help from someone

Deserve: to be worthy of

Innocent: without guilt; cleared of crime

Unit 3

Lesson 8

Devoted: to set one's life apart to be given wholly to a purpose

Grief: great sorrow

Recognize: to be able to identify something or someone one has seen before

Resurrection: the rising of Jesus Christ from the grave

Word List

Lesson 9

Cruel: causing pain and suffering; taking pleasure in the pain of others; merciless

Entrust: to charge with a trust or responsibility

Humble: to take a lower place

Humility: the quality of being humble

Obedience: the act of obeying

Obedient: doing what one is told to do

Lesson 10

Confused: to be mentally unclear or uncertain

Doubt: uncertainty of belief or opinion

Scold: to speak in an angry way; to blame; to rebuke

Lesson 11

Design: to plan or create for a certain use

Instruction: directions on how to do something; teaching

Restored: brought back to the original condition or place

Secure: safe; protected from harm; firmly fixed

Variety: of many different kinds, conditions or activities; a mixed collection

Memory Verses

Unit 1

Lesson 1

Then Jesus said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow Me, he must give up himself and his own desires. He must take up his cross everyday and follow Me." (Luke 9:23)

Lesson 2

Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one can go to the Father except by Me." (John 14:6)

Lesson 3

"If you love Me, you will do what I say. Then I will ask My Father and He will give you another Helper. He will be with you forever." (John 14:15-16)

Lesson 4

I am the Vine and you are the branches. Get your life from Me. Then I will live in you and you will give much fruit. You can do nothing without Me. (John 15:5)

Lesson 5

This is life that lasts forever. It is to know You, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ Whom You have sent. (John 17:3)

Unit 2

Lesson 6

If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved from the punishment of sin. (Romans 10:9)

Lesson 7

You get what is coming to you when you sin. It is death! But God's free gift is life that lasts forever. It is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:23)

Unit 3

Lesson 8

Let us thank the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was through His loving-kindness that we were born again to a new life and have a hope that never dies. This hope is ours because Jesus was raised from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

Lesson 9

Then Jesus said to them again, "May you have peace. As the Father has sent Me, I also am sending you." (John 20:21)

Lesson 10

Your heart should be holy and set apart for the Lord God. Always be ready to tell everyone who asks you why you believe as you do. Be gentle as you speak and show respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

Lesson 11

The One Who called you is faithful and will do what He promised. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

UNIT 1

Jesus' Parting Message

Lesson 1

Jesus' New Way
(John 13:1-17)

Lesson 2

Jesus—Truly the Way
(John 13:31-14:14)

Lesson 3

The Spirit—God with Us
Forever
(John 14:15-18, 25-27,
15:26-16:16)

Lesson 4

The Fruitful Life
(John 15:1-17)

Lesson 5

Jesus Prays for His
Followers
(John 17:1-26)

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: PART TWO

Jesus' Parting Message

We begin this first unit of *The Gospel of John: Light Overcoming Darkness* by looking closely at John 13-17. Five important lessons come from these scriptures. These scriptures tell us about an important time in Jesus' life. Jesus and His followers were in a small room together. They were celebrating a religious feast called Passover. Jesus knew this would be his final meal with them. Today we call this event in Jesus' life the Last Supper.

This was Jesus' final chance to share his teachings with His followers. Jesus would leave this room and go to the garden to pray. He would be arrested there. He would die the next day. The final lessons that Jesus taught are meaningful for Christians today.

Jesus' final lessons teach us many important things. Jesus teaches about being a servant by washing the feet of His followers. He tells His followers that He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). He teaches about the Holy Spirit. He also tells His followers to "go and bear fruit" (John 15:16). Finally, Jesus prays for His followers to be united in love.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 13:1-17

Memory Verse

Then Jesus said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow Me, he must give up himself and his own desires. He must take up his cross everyday and follow Me."
(Luke 9:23)

Word List

Customary—according to custom; usual; the expected action

Deny —¹ to answer in the negative; to say no
² to sacrifice one's own comfort

Refuse—to show or say one is unwilling to do something

Ritual—a formal action used to mark an important time

Jesus' New Way

Have you left your home country to live in another country? How did you feel when you left the ones you love? Did you have special words you wanted to tell them? Jesus' last words to His disciples were chosen carefully, too. He knew He would soon return to heaven. He did not want to leave His disciples until they understood His love for them. He wanted them to understand His ways and share them with others.

Actions speak louder than words. Jesus knew His followers would remember what He *did* longer than what He *said*. Knowing this, He set an example for His disciples to follow. Then He told His disciples to follow His example.

Jesus Does What Is Customary (13:1-5)

In Jesus' day, people walked the dusty roads in sandals. Servants washed the dirty feet of guests. Why was it so important for guests to have clean feet? Guests at a meal were not seated in chairs like today. Each guest lay back at a low table. The feet of one guest were very near the next guest's face.

Imagine the disciples entering the room where they would eat the Last Supper with Jesus. They may have seen a bowl of water and a towel. They may have noticed there was no servant to wash their feet. Each one took his place at the table anyway.

Jesus saw the men with dirty feet. He knew each one had failed to serve the others. The Gospel of Luke tells us the disciples had been arguing about who was the greatest. They had even argued about this at the Last Supper (Luke 22:24). Jesus

Things to Think About

1. What humble act of service has someone done for you?
2. What simple acts of service can you do for someone else?
3. What type of people do you find it difficult to serve?
4. What do you think “give up himself” means?

Satan and Judas

John 13:2 explains something important about Satan. Satan put an evil thought into Judas' heart. Satan encouraged Judas to hand Jesus over to the leaders. The original Greek words tell us that Judas had been thinking about this for some time. Matthew says he did it out of greed. Judas cared about money. Satan used Judas' love of money to suit his evil purposes. Satan seeks to destroy us all. First Peter 5:8-9 tells us to stay awake and resist him!

knew they did not want to be seen as servants. He even knew that Judas was planning to hand Him over to the leaders.

But most importantly, Jesus knew who He was. He knew what the Father had planned for Him. Being the servant did not change who Jesus was. He loved those who disappointed Him. He even loved His enemy. Jesus came to live among us in order to serve us. He came to save us from our sins.

Jesus Sets an Example (13:6-15)

Jesus picked up the towel. He began to wash the feet of each disciple. Peter **refused** to let Jesus wash his dirty feet. He thought this act of service was below Jesus. He wanted Jesus to always be the leader and teacher. Jesus said, “You don't understand now, but you will later.” Peter still argued with Jesus. He said he would never let Jesus wash his feet.

Then Jesus summed up the Gospel in one sentence. He said, “Unless I wash you, you will not be a part of Me.” Jesus must wash us from our sins and cleanse our lives. We can never have Jesus if we do not accept His cleansing. His cleansing gives us a new relationship with God.

Peter was always eager. He asked Jesus to wash his hands and his head also. In our eagerness, we often make up new rules and **rituals**, too. But God allows us to know Him by faith alone. Sometimes that is hard for us to believe. We want to do something extra to earn His love. But simple faith in Jesus Christ is enough to begin a relationship with God the Father.

Jesus knew that Judas would hand Him over to the leaders. He knew washing Judas' feet would not change Judas' heart. We

cannot depend on rituals of faith to bring us to God. It's the inward change of our hearts that matters.

Jesus was the disciples' teacher and Lord. He humbled Himself to wash their feet. Then He told them they should do the same for each other.

Did Jesus mean that we should wash each other's feet in our worship services? Was He giving us another ritual? Today, we do not have the same need for foot washing. But the example remains true. We should serve one another just as Jesus did.

We sometimes want to hold on to our own importance. We do not want to be seen as lowly servants. Jesus turned this upside-down. He showed us a new way. A true servant will do the lowest act of service.

The Way to Blessings (13:16-17)

Many believers today only do what is easy in God's kingdom. They do not see needs around them as a way to serve. Many are just like the disciples who walked past the bowl of water and towel. We walk past needs and think someone else will take care of them. We may be more concerned about our own comfort than the needs of others.

Jesus said it should not be that way.

He sent out His followers to serve. Jesus showed them that the servant is not greater than the master. Jesus was the Son of God. He was willing to wash their feet. Surely Jesus' followers were not more important than Him. They were not too important to be servants. This is still true today.

Jesus was giving us a pattern to follow. The love and service He showed should be our pattern. Jesus made His teaching clear. One who did not **deny** himself or "give up himself" could not be His follower (Luke 9:23).

Jesus pointed to the blessings that await us if we are willing servants. He said, "If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them." Many believers have learned that serving brings true happiness.

There are many ways to serve. Some Christ-followers care for children while their parents go to Bible study. Some clean the church or mow the grass. Some teach English to international students.

In serving, others see Jesus in our actions. Some may come to faith in Him. This brings great joy. Serving others is truly a blessing from God!

Case Study

The CEO of your company has been very difficult as an employer. He doesn't seem to care for you and has passed you over for several promotions. Working for him has made your life difficult.

You learn that this CEO is facing serious surgery that will require blood transfusions. You also learn that his blood type is very rare. You and some of your fellow employees know that you have that rare blood type. Do you offer to give blood for this CEO, or do you wait, hoping someone else will give?

John 13:1-17

1 It was before the special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt. Jesus knew the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had loved His own who were in the world. He loved them to the end.

2 He and His followers were having supper. Satan had put the thought into the heart of Judas Iscariot of handing Jesus over to the leaders of the country.

3 Jesus knew the Father had put everything into His hands. He knew He had come from God and was going back to God.

4 Jesus got up from the supper and took off His coat. He picked up a cloth and put it around Him.

5 Then He put water into a wash pan and began to wash the feet of His followers. He dried their feet with the cloth He had put

around Himself.

6 Jesus came to Simon Peter. Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered him, "You do not understand now what I am doing but you will later."

8 Peter said to Him, "I will never let You wash my feet." Jesus said, "Unless I wash you, you will not be a part of Me."

9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, do not wash only my feet, but wash my hands and my head also."

10 Jesus said to him, "Anyone who has washed his body needs only to wash his feet. Then he is clean all over. You are all clean except one."

11 Jesus knew who was going to hand Him over to the leaders. That is why He said, "You are all clean except one."

12 Jesus washed their feet and put on His coat. Then He sat down again and said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"

13 You call Me Teacher and Lord. You are right because that is what I am.

14 I am your Teacher and Lord. I have washed your feet. You should wash each other's feet also.

15 I have done this to show you what should be done. You should do as I have done to you.

16 For sure, I tell you, a workman who is owned by someone is not greater than his owner. One who is sent is not greater than the one who sent him.

17 If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Jesus—Truly the Way

I asked a new Chinese Christian friend how he came to know Jesus. When he came to Texas to work as a scientist, he was lonely. He attended a Chinese Church to enjoy Chinese food and friends. There he learned about Jesus. He learned what Jesus said in John 14:6. “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one can go to the Father except by Me.”

My friend was surprised by such a bold statement. He knew scientists and government workers who thought highly of themselves. They boasted about themselves, but Jesus’ words were different. He had never heard anyone say such a bold thing. My friend wanted to know more about Jesus. In learning more of Jesus, this scientist learned the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Bible Text

John 13:31-14:14

Memory Verse

Jesus said, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one can go to the Father except by Me.”
(John 14:6)

Word List

Deserve—to be worthy of

Enable—to make able, give the ability, means or right

Presence—being here, in the place mentioned

Sacrifice—to give up something of value

Things to Think About

1. In what ways can we please God today?
2. How do we give the gift of God’s love to our fellow believers?

A Loving Presence (13:31-35)

Jesus knew where Judas was going when Judas left the Last Supper. Judas was going to find the Jews and hand Jesus over to them. Jesus knew the time He had left with his followers was very short. What He said was important. He first wanted His followers to understand about His death. He wanted them to know it was a part of God’s plan. It would bring God glory. Jesus’ death would make God’s love clear.

Jesus loved His disciples deeply and called them “little children.” He gave them a new Law. The Old Law said to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). The new Law went beyond that. Jesus said, “You must love each other as I have loved you.” Jesus loved us enough to **sacrifice** Himself. God’s

3. What other ways do people try to get to heaven rather than through Jesus, who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life?”

4. When has the Holy Spirit led you to share the good news of Jesus Christ?

Jesus Gave Glory to God

When Jesus brought honor or glory to God, He showed us more of who God is. This was not to give an honor or a reward. This was a different kind of glory than we usually show. Instead, this was to show what God already is. Jesus made God's true nature visible to us. He showed us what God is really like. God let us see the true nature of Jesus in His death on the cross and resurrection.

presence in the world is clear to us because of Jesus. Jesus loved us enough to die for us. Jesus expects us to love as He loved us.

This Law is new in three ways. First it is based on grace—a gift. We don't love someone because they **deserve** it or have earned it. We give them the gift of love first! Second, this Law is aimed at a different group of people. The old Law instructs us to love “our neighbor”—the world. The new Law teaches us to love “each other”—fellow believers. It is love among believers in Jesus Christ. Finally, this new Law shows the world we belong to Jesus. Loving one another shows Jesus' presence in our lives.

Assurance in His Presence (13:36-14:5)

Peter was troubled. He had followed Jesus every day. He went wherever Jesus went. Now Peter could not go where Jesus was going. Only Jesus could die on the cross. Peter's death would be just another death of a good man. Only Jesus' death could save us from our sins.

Peter said, “I will die for you.” Sadly, Jesus explained that Peter would deny Him three times before morning. Like Peter, many people fail to keep sincere promises they have made. For example, a woman grew up with a sister who had a deadly disease. Her family knew the sister would die young. The woman made bold promises to stand by her sister to the end. In the end, the woman was unable to do the things she thought she could do.

Jesus' next words are some of the most precious words in the Bible. He said, “Do not let your heart be troubled.” Jesus' followers were troubled about His death. When we face death, we are often full of fear, sorrow, and hopelessness. Jesus says we

should not allow our hearts to be troubled. We should trust Him instead.

We can trust Jesus because God knows best. He knows what He is doing. We can trust Jesus when death comes to us or someone we love. He conquered death and came to life again!

There is room in heaven for everyone who believes. No one who believes will be turned away. Jesus said, "If it were not so, I would have told you." Trust Jesus. He told us everything we need to know to live forever in God's presence. He did not leave anything out. Jesus Himself is preparing a place for every believer. No soul who believes will be left out.

Here is the best news of all. Jesus is coming back to take us to be with Him in heaven! Heaven means being in the presence of Jesus Christ. We will see and understand Him fully (1Corinthians 13:12).

A Saving Presence (14:6-10)

Thomas struggled to understand what Jesus said. Jesus' words in these verses make the Gospel plain. Thomas was in the presence of the saving way, truth, and life.

Jesus did not offer to show Thomas the way. Jesus said He is the Way. Jesus is

the only way to the Father. Through Jesus' payment for our sin, we can become children of God.

Jesus did not promise to tell Thomas the truth. Jesus said He is the Truth. Jesus is the truth of God in the flesh. He is the grace of God coming into our lives. Everything we need to know, we know in Him.

Scripture says Jesus is the life. "You get what is coming to you when you sin. It is death! But God's free gift is life that lasts forever. It is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:23). We deserve death, but God's gift is life through Jesus.

An Enabling Presence (14:11-14)

The Holy Spirit helps us offer salvation and eternal life to those around us. We do this through the **enabling** power and presence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "Yes, if you ask anything in My name, I will do it." What does it mean to ask something in the name of Jesus? Does it simply mean closing a prayer with the words *in Jesus' name*? No. It means asking for God's will, not our own. It means seeking what God wants, not what we want. This attitude will bring the enabling presence of Jesus' power.

John 13:31-14:14

31 After Judas went out, Jesus said, "The Son of Man is now honored and God has been honored in Him.

32 If God is honored in Him, God will also honor Him in Himself right now.

33 Little children, I will be with you only a little while. You will look for Me. I say to you what I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come!'

34 I give you a new Law. You are to love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you.

35 If you love each other, all men will know you are My followers."

36 Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "You cannot follow Me now where I am going. Later you will follow Me."

37 Peter said to Jesus, "Why can I not follow You now? I will die for You."

38 Jesus answered Peter, "Will you die for Me? For sure, I tell you, before a rooster crows, you will have said three times that you do not know Me."

14: 1 "Do not let your heart be troubled. You have put your trust in God, put your trust in Me also.

2 There are many rooms in My Father's house. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going away to make a place for you.

3 After I go and make a place for you, I will come back and take you with Me. Then you

may be where I am.

4 You know where I am going and you know how to get there."

5 Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way to get there?"

6 Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one can go to the Father except by Me.

7 If you had known Me, you would know My Father also. From now on you know Him and have seen Him."

8 Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we ask."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time and you do not know Me yet?

Whoever has seen Me, has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? What I say to you, I do not say by My own power. The Father Who lives in Me does His work through Me.

11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me. Or else believe Me because of the things I do.

12 For sure, I tell you, whoever puts his trust in Me can do the things I am doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father.

13 Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so the shining-greatness of the Father may be seen in the Son.

14 Yes, if you ask anything in My name, I will do it.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 14:15-18, 25-27;
15:26-16:16

Memory Verse

“If you love Me, you will do what I say. Then I will ask My Father and He will give you another Helper. He will be with you forever.”
(John 14:15-16)

Word List

Comfort—to make someone feel better
Defender— a guard; a protector
Guilty—having broken God’s law; disobeyed God
Judgment— the final decision made by a judge or court
Witness—a person who tells what he saw happen

The Spirit— God with Us Forever

Imagine a young girl whose mother has died. After a while, she might not remember exactly what her mother looked like. Her mother would not be there to **comfort** her when she was afraid. The girl would forget much of what her mother had said. The memory of her mother would fade as time passed.

Now think about Jesus’ followers. Jesus was leaving them to return to His Father. He did not want to leave them as children without parents. He knew they were sad. Even more than that, they were in danger of forgetting. He knew they would obey His teachings. But now they might forget Him and fall away from the truth. So Jesus sent “another Helper” (14:16). This word *another* means *one of the same kind*. Three names are used for the Helper: the *Helper*, the *Holy Spirit*, and the *Spirit of Truth*.

The Presence of God (14:15-18)

The Holy Spirit is God’s presence with us. The Holy Spirit is God, just as Jesus is God. God became a man (Jesus) and lived on earth for a short time. But the Helper is God with us forever. He will never leave us, no matter where we go.

The word for Helper is a legal term. We are not in charge of the Holy Spirit. It is not His job to do what we ask. The Helper is our guide, teacher, comforter, and **defender**.

Not everyone who saw Jesus on earth knew He was God. The world does not know the Helper either. As believers, we know Him because He lives with us and in us. The Spirit of God

Things to Think About

1. Why is it important that we have the Holy Spirit today when we have the truth revealed in the Bible?
2. Have you ever been aware of the Holy Spirit guiding you?
3. Have you ever had a witnessing opportunity when you knew the Holy Spirit had already been at work in that person's life?

I Will Come to You

Sometimes believers do not feel the Holy Spirit. This may be because we have not obeyed as we should. Maybe we have been unkind. We may not love others as Jesus taught. John 14:18 says, "I will come to you." This could be said, "I am coming always." The Holy Spirit is always coming, always with us. We sense Him best when our hearts are pure and our lives are pleasing to Him.

walks alongside us to guide us. The Holy Spirit is at work in us. He helps us read and understand the Bible. We may read the same Bible verses many times. Each time we read it, we may see a new truth. This is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit also helps us share the Gospel with others. He gives us the right words to say.

Because of the Spirit, Jesus is not just a memory. He is present with every believer in every place. He is always there.

The Witness of God (14:25-27; 15:26-27)

The early believers did not have the Gospel of John. They had nothing to help them remember Jesus' words and actions. But the Holy Spirit reminded them of everything! He is the **witness** who tells the truth about Jesus.

John said Jesus did many other powerful things (20:30). The Holy Spirit led John in writing this Gospel. He showed John which things to include in his writing. The things John wrote were included "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. When you put your trust in Him, you will have life that lasts forever though His name" (20:31).

The Holy Spirit comes from the Father with one purpose. He is a witness for Jesus. We can be witnesses, too. We can tell others about life that lasts forever! We need not be afraid. The Holy Spirit leads us to speak a clear message at the right time. He goes before us. He prepares people's hearts to hear about Jesus Christ. He helps them understand the message.

The Truth of God (16:1-16)

Early believers faced danger and hardship because of their love for Jesus. Many believers today face the same things. The

Holy Spirit gives them courage to live for Christ. Some are put in prison. They tell about the presence of the Spirit. They feel it even when they don't have a Bible or other believers with them. He comforts them.

It was hard for Jesus' followers to hear about His death. It seemed impossible that this was the best way—God's way. Jesus explained it was better for Him to return to the Father. Then the Holy Spirit could come. He would be with all believers at all times in all places, even in prison.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

John again explains the Holy Spirit's work in legal terms. The Holy Spirit brings a charge against us—sin. All of us have sinned. We know we have done wrong. We tend to think of sin as lying, cheating, stealing, and more. We think of sin as wrong things we have done. The Spirit shows us that all sin has the same root. The root problem is refusing Jesus Christ who came to save us. The Holy Spirit shows the truth clearly. We cannot deny our sin.

If sin is failure to put our trust Jesus Christ, then how do we become right with God? What is the standard by which we will be judged? We often try to solve the

sin problem ourselves. We try to think of something we can do. We try to stop lying, cheating, stealing and more. We give to good causes or do good deeds.

But the Holy Spirit leads us to the truth that we cannot be right with God on our own. Our actions are not enough. Only Jesus' death and return to life are enough.

Another legal term is important here. It is the idea of **judgment**. Because of sin, we are all found **guilty**! People who refuse Jesus are not the only guilty ones. Satan is also guilty. He tempts us to believe Jesus is not God. He tempts us to show hatred, meanness, and selfishness.

Jesus' followers did not really understand all He told them. He knew it was too much information to take in at one time. He could not tell them everything they needed to know. But the Helper led them to know the truth about Jesus.

The Spirit leads us today, too. He does not lead us to invent new things about God. He does not add or subtract anything. He hears from the Father and tells us what He hears. His work always honors Jesus Christ. The Spirit gives all honor and glory to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

John 14:15-18, 25-27; 15:26-16:16

15 "If you love Me, you will do what I say.

16 Then I will ask My Father and He will give you another Helper. He will be with you forever.

17 He is the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot receive Him. It does not see Him or know Him. You know Him because He lives with you and will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you without help as children without parents. I will come to you.

John 14:25-27

25 "I have told you these things while I am still with you.

26 The Helper is the Holy Spirit. The Father will send Him in My place. He will teach you everything and help you remember everything I have told you.

27 "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give peace to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

John 15:26-16:16

26 "The Helper (Holy Spirit) will tell about Me when He comes. I will send Him to you from the Father. He is the Spirit of Truth and comes from the Father.

27 You will also tell of Me because you have been with Me from the beginning.

16:1 "I have told you these things so you will not be ashamed of Me and leave Me.

2 They will put you out of the places of worship. The time will come when anyone who kills you will think he is helping God.

3 They will do these things to you because they do not know the Father or Me.

4 "When these things happen, you will

remember I told you they would happen. That is why I am telling you about these things now. I did not tell you these things before, because I was with you.

5 But now I am going to Him Who sent Me. Yet none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'

6 "Your hearts are full of sorrow because I am telling you these things.

7 I tell you the truth. It is better for you that I go away. If I do not go, the Helper will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you.

8 When the Helper comes, He will show the world the truth about sin. He will show the world about being right with God. And He will show the world what it is to be guilty.

9 He will show the world about sin, because they do not put their trust in Me.

10 He will show the world about being right with God, because I go to My Father and you will see Me no more.

11 He will show the world what it is to be guilty because the leader of this world (Satan) is guilty.

12 "I still have many things to say to you. You are not strong enough to understand them now.

13 The Holy Spirit is coming. He will lead you into all truth. He will not speak His Own words. He will speak what He hears. He will tell you of things to come.

14 He will honor Me. He will receive what is Mine and will tell it to you.

15 Everything the Father has is Mine. That is why I said to you, 'He will receive what is Mine and will tell it to you.'

16 "In a little while you will not see Me. Then in a little while you will see Me again."



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 15:1-17

Memory Verse

I am the Vine and you are the branches. Get your life from Me. Then I will live in you and you will give much fruit. You can do nothing without Me. (John 15:5)

Word List

Abide—dwell; remain; last; bear; endure

Connect—to join together

Prune—to trim by cutting away dead branches or extra growth

Relationship—connection

Unselfish—not concerned about self; thinking first of others

The Fruitful Life

Wild grapes grow on our farm in Central Texas. The vines grow so high that we cannot get to the grapes. Over-ripe fruit drops to the ground. The vines grow untamed. Very often, they produce sour grapes or no grapes at all.

Today's passage is part of Jesus' last talk with His followers. Jesus said these things just before He went to the cross. The disciples would have understood the word picture He used. Israel was and still is a nation of vine growers. Israel was called the vineyard of the Lord in the Old Testament (Isaiah 5:1-7). The vine of Israel is often mentioned in the Old Testament. It refers to a wild vine that grows untamed and produces no fruit.

I Am the True Vine (15:1-3)

Jesus said, "I am the true vine." This is the final *I am* saying in the Gospel of John. Jesus said He is the Bread of Life, (6:35,41,48,51), the Light of the World (8:12), the Gate for the Sheep (10:7,9), the Good Shepherd (10:11, 14), the One who Raises the Dead and Gives Them Life (11:25), and the Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6).

Jesus is the true vine to life with the Father. We are the branches that grow on the vine. Jesus came to **connect** us to the Father. A branch that is not connected to the vine will produce no fruit. It will wither and die. A vine left alone will grow many, many branches. Some of these branches take energy from the vine but produce no fruit. It is important to **prune** away these branches. Even a branch that bears fruit needs to be cut back so it

Things to Think About

1. Are you fully connected to the vine?
2. Have you given your life in some way for a friend? (John 15:13)
3. What things in your past do you understand now as God's pruning of your life?
4. Have you witnessed a believer living the unselfish love of Jesus?

Connected to the Vine

Pray—Set regular times to pray throughout each day.

Keep God's Day—Limit activities on God's day in order to worship, rest and family.

Silence—Time alone helps us focus on God. Silence helps us tune out the noise of the world so we can hear the voice of God.

Fasting—Going without food for a period of time can help us listen to God.

will bear fruit the next year. If the vine is pruned too closely, it may die. If it is not pruned enough, it will have few grapes. A vine grower shapes the vine to make it bear the best fruit.

Just like grapevines, our lives sometimes get crowded with things that do not produce fruit. Some things keep us from bearing fruit. Other things are good but must be cut back to keep our lives fruitful. What a wonderful thing God does for us! When He prunes our lives, we bear much good fruit.

Sometimes floods or fires destroy churches. But many believers have experienced sweet worship even when their churches were ruined. Their worship became more meaningful. It is true in our lives, too. We add more and more activities that keep us from quiet time with the Lord. When God takes these things away, we see the real joy of connecting closely to Jesus. Those things can no longer get in the way.

The Greek word used in verse 3 says we are cleaned by the Jesus' words. It can mean both *pruned* and *cleaned*. When a person moves to a new home, they pack up boxes and move. Often they get rid of extra things. This makes their new home cleaner than the old one. The home has been cleaned and pruned of unnecessary things. We can clean our lives the same way.

Sometimes God trims our lives. He cleans out the extra things that keep us from making the best fruit. We trust the Father. He knows when and how to trim our lives and our churches of extra things. He keeps us from living fruitless lives.

Get Your Life from Me (15:4-7)

The phrase *get your life* comes from a special Greek word.

It means to **abide**, dwell, live, remain, last or endure. This word means believers should have constant contact with Jesus. He is our vine. This means everything in our lives is connected to Jesus. We abide in Jesus by reading His Word, praying, and thinking about Him. In our daily activities, we are connected to Jesus. When He is our vine, we will act with kindness, love, grace and mercy.

If the branches are cut off from the vine, they die. A dead vine is good for nothing but burning. A fruitless life is worthless. We may know this but still try to live life by our own rules. Jesus said we cannot do anything without Him. Simply trying harder does not work. Honest prayer and constant contact with Jesus changes us.

Give Much Fruit (15:8-17)

The proof of our connection with Jesus is the fruit of our lives. We might ask what fruit God wants to grow in us. Verses 9, 10, 11, and 13 answer that question. God wants us to love as Jesus loved. Love is the reason for all the things Jesus did.

How did Jesus show God's love? He obeyed the Father and was constantly in contact with Him. The same is true for us.

When we obey His teachings, we remain in His love. Here's the best part. It brings the joy of Jesus.

Jesus showed **unselfish** love when He died on the cross for our sins. His sacrifice for us shows the powerful love of God. In parts of the world, Christians are dying for Christ. But most believers do not have to sacrifice their lives. Yet we can still live unselfish lives. For example, teachers sacrifice time and money to teach about God's love. All believers can share the love of Jesus in some way with someone.

Jesus did not choose us to be slaves. We are not slaves who do not know the master's plans. Jesus chose us as friends to have a close **relationship** with Him. He shares His plans with us. He chose us to be witnesses for Him and to show His love.

The final verse in our lesson today is a powerful one. Verse 17 says, "This is what I tell you to do: Love each other." If we abide in Christ, we will keep His command to love each other. We will honor God and please Him. We will find joy and answered prayer in this unselfish life. We will bear the fruit of unselfish love.

John 15:1-17

1 "I am the true Vine. My Father is the One Who cares for the Vine.

2 He takes away any branch in Me that does not give fruit. Any branch that gives fruit, He cuts it back so it will give more fruit.

3 You are made clean by the words I have spoken to you.

4 Get your life from Me and I will live in you. No branch can give fruit by itself. It has to get life from the vine. You are able to give fruit only when you have life from Me.

5 I am the Vine and you are the branches. Get your life from Me. Then I will live in you and you will give much fruit. You can do nothing without Me.

6 "If anyone does not get his life from Me, he is cut off like a branch and dries up. Such branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and they are burned.

7 If you get your life from Me and My Words live in you, ask whatever you want. It will be done for you.

8 "When you give much fruit, My Father is honored. This shows you are My followers.

9 I have loved you just as My Father has loved Me. Stay in My love.

10 If you obey My teaching, you will live

in My love. In this way, I have obeyed My Father's teaching and live in His love.

11 I have told you these things so My joy may be in you and your joy may be full.

12 "This is what I tell you to do: Love each other just as I have loved you.

13 No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends.

14 You are My friends if you do what I tell you.

15 I do not call you servants that I own anymore. A servant does not know what his owner is doing. I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from My Father.

16 You have not chosen Me, I have chosen you. I have set you apart for the work of bringing in fruit. Your fruit should last. And whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you.

17 "This is what I tell you to do: Love each other.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 17:1-26

Memory Verse

This is life that lasts forever. It is to know You, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ Whom You have sent.
(John 17:3)

Word List

Conflict—sharp disagreement

Executed—put to death by the authorities

Fellowship—friendly relationship through sharing and doing things together

Obedient—to do or be willing to do what one is asked or ordered to do

United—joined together

Jesus Prays for His Followers

My father insisted on a big family breakfast. There were five girls in our family. Each morning around the breakfast table, Dad prayed for us. He said, “Father, keep my girls safe and clean and pure for Your service.” Hearing my father’s prayer affected my behavior. I could not go to school and be as mean as I wanted to be. My father’s prayer kept me from doing many sinful things. It influenced the things my young heart wanted to do.

Jesus knew that in a short time He would be **executed** on the cross. He used these last moments to pray for Himself. He prayed for His followers. He prayed for all believers yet to come. He prayed for His followers to be **united** in love.

Look at this important prayer closely. See how much love filled Jesus in those final moments. Think about how this prayer might change us. Does it make us want to share Jesus’ love?

Jesus Prays for Himself (17:1-5)

Jesus began His prayer with a request for Himself. But it was not a selfish prayer. Jesus did not ask God to change His plan. Jesus prayed that He would be honored by God. He prayed that He would return honor to the Father. God’s plan depended on Jesus following the Father’s will. He prayed to be completely **obedient** to God’s plan. That was the honor He wanted.

Even in His final moments, Jesus made it clear why He had to die. He stayed focused on the Father’s will. Only Jesus’ death could give us life that lasts forever. God is the only true God. Jesus Christ is the One He sent to save us.

Things to Think About

1. How does Jesus' prayer show His relationship with the Father?
2. How does Jesus' prayer apply to conflicts in the church today?
3. What do we learn about how to pray from the prayer of Jesus?

The Church United

A church with good fellowship is made up of members who:

- Pray for one another as Jesus prayed for us.
- Try to be in fellowship with God through prayer and Bible study.
- Work for love in the church by focusing on others' needs.
- Think of themselves as servants of Christ who show His love and grace to others.

Jesus had honor with the Father before he came to live among us. He longed for that honor to be restored. In heaven, Jesus had close **fellowship** with the Father. He longed for that closeness even in His death. Jesus knew He would die on the cross and rise again in power and love. Being close to the Father would help Him follow God's plan.

We can learn from Jesus' prayer. A selfish prayer does not seek God's honor. Our prayers should always seek to bring honor to God. We too should pray to do the will of the Father. We can only please Him when we have close fellowship with Him.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples (17:6-19)

Jesus also prayed for His followers. These were the ones who had shared His life each day. They had seen Him heal the sick. They had learned from His teaching. Now the task of sharing the Good News was theirs.

Jesus said, "I have made Your name known to the people You have given Me from the world." Jews did not speak the name of God because His name was special. In fact, most people did not even know how to pronounce it. The name of God was a symbol of His nature and character. Jesus came to live with us. He showed the nature and character of God to every person. This new way of relating to God meant the old ways were over.

Jesus knew they would face hard times, danger and even death. There would be **conflicts** with the Jewish and Roman leaders. Jesus did not pray that His followers escape these dangers. He did not expect them to hide from danger and conflict. Jesus expected they would face these dangers and win over them.

His prayer was for them to be protected from the evil one.

Fellowship with the Father would help the disciples win victory over death. Fellowship with the risen Lord helps believers win the victory over sin. It helps them share the Good News.

Our prayer life must follow the example of Jesus. We should not pray to escape our troubles. Instead, we should pray for protection from Satan. We should pray for greater trust in God's Word. Most importantly, we should seek to abide in Christ. We can not win the battle against Satan and share the Good News without Christ. Only a closer walk with Jesus will give us strength and power. We should pray for followers of Christ around the world. Pray for their protection from Satan. Pray for their closeness with God.

A Prayer for the Church (17:20—26)

Finally, Jesus prayed for “those who will put their trust in Me through the teaching they have heard.” There would be many new believers in the days to come. Jesus prayed for them to form a fellowship of believers—the church.

Jesus knew His followers would have many feelings over the coming days. They would be very sad when Jesus died on the cross. Then they would be overjoyed when He rose from the dead. They would be amazed when He went back to heaven.

In the end, Jesus knew they would become bold witnesses for Him. News about Him would spread quickly. There would be many new believers. These new believers would need a strong fellowship. Jesus prayed for a closeness among the new believers. He prayed it would be like the closeness He had with the Father. Jesus said the new believers could do nothing without Him (John 15:5). The new believers needed the power of God. Without it, the church would not stand against the evil one.

The unity and love of the believers would be a powerful witness to the world. The world would see that Jesus really was sent from the Father. This close fellowship would be powerful. It would change the world. This could only happen when the people of Christ loved each other like Jesus.

Pray for your church and its leaders. Pray for the worldwide church. Pray for love that clearly shows Jesus is the Savior.

John 17:1-26

1 When Jesus had said these things, He looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the time has come! Honor Your Son so Your Son may honor You.

2 You have given Him power over all men. He is to give life that lasts forever to all You have given to Him.

3 This is life that lasts forever. It is to know You, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ Whom You have sent.

4 I honored You on earth. I did the work You gave Me to do.

5 Now, Father, honor Me with the honor I had with You before the world was made.

6 "I have made Your name known to the people You have given Me from the world. They were Yours but You gave them to Me. They have obeyed Your Word.

7 Now they know that everything You have given Me came from You.

8 I gave them the Word which You gave Me. They received it. They know I came from You and they believe You sent Me.

9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world. I pray for those You gave Me. They are Yours.

10 All that is Mine is Yours. All that is Yours is Mine. I have been honored through them.

11 I am no longer in the world. I am coming to You. But these are still in the world. Holy Father, keep those You have given to Me in the power of Your name. Then they will be one, even as We are One.

12 While I have been with them in the world, I have kept them in the power of Your name. I have kept watch over those You gave Me. Not one of them has been lost except the one who is going to be destroyed, which is the son of death. The Holy Writings said it would happen.

13 But now I come to You, Father. I say these things while I am in the world. In this way, My followers may have My joy in their hearts.

14 "I have given Your Word to My followers. The world hated them because they do not belong to the world, even as I do not belong to the world.

15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world. I ask You to keep them from the devil.

16 My followers do not belong to the world just as I do not belong to the world.

17 Make them holy for Yourself by the truth. Your Word is truth.

18 "As You sent Me into the world so I have sent them into the world also.

19 I set Myself apart to be holy for them. Then they may be made holy by the truth.

20 "I do not pray for these followers only. I pray for those who will put their trust in Me through the teaching they have heard.

21 May they all be as one, Father, as You are in Me and I am in You. May they belong to Us. Then the world will believe that You sent Me.

22 I gave them the honor You gave Me that they may be one as We are One.

23 I am in them and You are in Me so they may be one and be made perfect. Then the world may know that You sent Me and that You love them as You love Me.

24 "Father, I want My followers You gave Me to be with Me where I am. Then they may see My shining-greatness which You gave Me because You loved Me before the world was made.

25 Holy Father, the world has not known You. I have known You. These have known You sent Me.

26 I have made Your name known to them and will make it known. So then the love You have for Me may be in them and I may be in them."



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

UNIT 2

Jesus' Trial and Death on the Cross

Lesson 6

Judging Jesus
(John 18:15-27;
18:37-19:8, 14-16)

Lesson 7

It Is Finished
(John 19:16-30, 38-42)

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: PART TWO

Jesus' Trial and Death on the Cross

This unit contains only two lessons. These lessons teach about some of the most important events in all the Bible. Lesson 6 focuses on John 18. In this lesson we look at the trials of Jesus' final night. We consider the different ways people responded to Him. On His final night, Jesus encountered several people. The Jewish leaders, Peter and Pilate all responded differently to Jesus. It is the same today. People respond to Jesus in different ways when they are under pressure. This lesson shows the important need for Christians to be prepared at all times. We must be faithful in prayer and Bible study.

Lesson 7 focuses our attention on John 19. We look closely at the cross. We see that Jesus finished everything He came to do by dying on the cross. He fulfilled the ancient writings to the smallest detail. He made all of God's words come true. He is truly the Son of God. We must each respond to Jesus' death on the cross. He died for our sins. He wants us to have a relationship with God by forgiving our sins. This is what He came to do.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 18:15-27,
18:37-19:8, 14-16

Memory Verse

If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved from the punishment of sin. (Romans 10:9)

Word List

Armed—to supply with or have weapons

Betray—to be disloyal to, to break faith with

Judge—to form an opinion about something or someone, whether they are right or wrong

Mock—to laugh at or make fun of someone

Worthy—deserving of

Judging Jesus

Jesus knew everything that was about to happen to Him. He knew He would die and rise again from the grave. He knew He would bring honor to God. He knew His followers would be afraid and fail. He knew they needed to pray. Only prayer could prepare them. Even when we do not know the future, we can prepare by praying. Jesus led His followers to a garden to pray.

Jesus knew Judas would **betray** Him. Judas led over 600 **armed** men to arrest Jesus. Peter wanted to fight the men. But Jesus knew the Father's will. He knew He must die on the cross. He let the men tie Him up and lead Him away.

Judged by the High Priests (18:15-27)

Jesus was questioned by the Jewish leaders. Most of Jesus' followers ran away when He was arrested. Peter and one other man followed to see where they took Jesus. The other man went inside the home of Annas. Annas had been the High Priest before. He was not the High Priest this year. He had no right to put Jesus on trial.

Peter was not allowed inside. He stood outside the door. Peter had said he would die for Jesus (13:37-38). He had drawn a sword when Jesus was arrested (18:10-11). Suddenly Peter was afraid when Jesus stood before Annas. Three times he said he did not even know Jesus! The rooster crowed, and Peter's heart was broken. He remembered that Jesus said this would happen.

Annas asked Jesus about his followers. He asked Jesus about His teaching. Annas decided that Jesus should be put to

Things to Think About

1. Like Judas, how do we let the love of money and things keep us from living for Jesus?
2. Like Peter, why do we fail to speak up for Christ when we should?
3. When are we like the high priests who had already made a judgment of Jesus?
4. Like Pilate, in what ways do we let the crowd decide for us?
5. Have you ever been in a crowd of people who were unkind? Have you ever been able to change their opinions?
6. Like Jesus, have you ever been willing to follow the will of God no matter what?

death. He sent Jesus to Caiaphas. Caiaphas said, “Do you not see it is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed?” (11:50). He had already decided Jesus should die. Caiaphas sent Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor.

Judged by Pilate (18:37-19:8, 14-16)

It was the time of the Feast of Passover. This was an important Jewish celebration. The Jews would not even enter Pilate’s house. They thought it would make them unclean for worship on Passover. They did not see that hate filled their hearts. This hate made their worship unacceptable to God.

They wanted Pilate to kill Jesus by nailing Him to a cross. Pilate told the Jews to **judge** Jesus themselves. But only Pilate could put someone to death on the cross. This is how the Jews wanted Jesus to die. Then wanted everyone to see Him suffer.

Pilate questioned Jesus. He asked, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus asked Pilate if this question came from his own heart or from the Jews. Pilate tried not to answer. He asked Jesus again, “So you are a king?” Jesus explained He was born to be our King. Jesus was born to die for the sins of the world.

Every year at Passover, a prisoner was released. Pilate offered to release Jesus. But the crowd demanded Barabbas, the robber. Barabbas had killed people while trying to work against the Romans. Still, Pilate agreed to release him and keep Jesus.

Pilate let the Roman soldiers beat Jesus with a whip. It was a terrible beating. Many people died when they were beaten this way. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head. They put a purple robe on Him. They were **mocking** Jesus.

Pilate led Jesus out to the crowd. Maybe he wanted them to see that Jesus had been beaten. Maybe Pilate wanted them to feel sorry for Jesus and let Him go. Pilate said again, "I do not find Him guilty." Jesus was bleeding and bruised. This still did not move the hearts of the people. They called again for Jesus' death on the cross.

Pilate tried to get out of putting Jesus to death. He questioned the Jews over and over. Many times he asked, "Do you want me to nail your King to a cross?" The Jews said Caesar was their king. Then Pilate knew he had no choice. Caesar was the ruler of the Roman Empire. Pilate's job was to control Israel and keep the Jews happy.

Pilate could find nothing Jesus had done that was **worthy** of death. He could have released Jesus. He was in charge. But Pilate let the crowd make him do what he knew was wrong.

It is hard to understand how people could judge Jesus so wrongly. This angry crowd shows us how badly the world needs a Savior. At times, we even act like Pilate. We fear the crowds. We let others decide for us how we will treat Jesus.

We each must make a judgment

about Jesus. Is He worthy of all our devotion? If so, we must live each day for Him. We must guard our hearts with prayer. The devil wants us to fail. Prayer to the Father through Jesus Christ helps us win over sin and death.

John 18:15-27, 18:37-19:8, 14-16

15 Simon Peter and another follower came behind Jesus. This other follower was known to the head religious leader. He went with Jesus to the head religious leader's house.

16 Peter stood outside at the gate. The other follower, who was known by the head religious leader, went out and talked to the servant-girl who watched the gate. Then he took Peter inside.

17 The servant-girl who watched the door said to Peter, "Are you not a follower of this Man?" He said, "I am not!"

18 The servants who were owned by someone and the soldiers had made a fire because it was cold. They were getting warm by the fire. Peter was standing with them getting warm.

19 The head religious leader of the Jews asked Jesus about His followers. He asked Jesus about His teaching.

20 Jesus said, "I have spoken very plain words to the world. I have always taught in the Jewish place of worship and in the house of God. It is where the Jews go all the time. My words have not been said in secret.

21 Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard what I said to them. They know what I said."

22 Then one of the soldiers standing there hit Jesus with his hand. He said, "Is that how You talk to the head religious leaders?"

23 Jesus said, "If I said anything wrong, tell Me what was wrong. If I said what was right, why did you hit Me?"

24 Then Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the head religious leader. Jesus was still tied up.

25 Simon Peter was standing there and getting warm. They said to him, "Are you not one of His followers also?" He lied and said he did not know Jesus and answered, "I am not!"

26 A servant who was owned by the head religious leader was there. He was of the family of the man whose ear Peter cut off. The man said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

27 Again Peter lied and said he did not know Jesus. At once a rooster crowed.

John 18:37-19:8

37 Pilate said to Him, "So You are a King?" Jesus said, "You are right when you say that I am a King. I was born for this reason. I came into the world for this reason. I came to speak about the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

38 Pilate said to Jesus, "What is truth?" After Pilate said this, he went out again to the Jews. He said, "I do not find Him guilty.

39 But every year a man who is in prison is allowed to go free at the special religious

gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt. Do you want the King of the Jews to go free?"

40 Then they spoke with loud voices, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

19:1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him beaten.

2 The soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head. They put a purple coat on Him.

3 Then they said, "Hello, King of the Jews!" and hit Him with their hands.

4 Pilate went out again and said to the people, "See, I bring Him out to you so you will know I do not find Him guilty."

5 Jesus came out. He had on the crown of thorns and a purple coat. Pilate said to the people, "See! This is the Man!"

6 The religious leaders and the soldiers saw Him. They spoke with loud voices, "Nail Him to a cross! Nail Him to a cross!" Pilate said, "Take Him yourselves and nail Him to a cross. As for me, I do not find Him guilty."

7 The Jews said to Pilate, "We have a Law that says He should die because He has said He is the Son of God."

8 When Pilate heard them say this, he was more afraid.

John 19:14-16

14 It was the day to get ready for the special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt. It was about noon. Pilate said to the Jews, "See, your King!"

15 They spoke with a loud voice, "Take Him away! Nail Him to a cross!" Pilate said to them, "Do you want me to nail your King to a cross?" The head religious leaders said, "We have no king but Caesar!"

16 Then Pilate handed Him over to be nailed to a cross. They took Jesus and led Him away.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 19:16-30, 38-42

Memory Verse

You get what is
coming to you when
you sin. It is death!
But God's free gift is
life that lasts forever.
It is given to us by our
Lord Jesus Christ.
(Romans 6:23)

Word List

Accomplish—to get
something done; to
finish a task

Appeal—to ask help
from someone

Deserve—to be
worthy of

Innocent—without
guilt; cleared of crime

It Is Finished

In our country, a person accused of committing a crime has special rights. He is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. He must be found guilty beyond any reasonable doubt. If he is found guilty, he can **appeal** to another court. Another court may find him **innocent**. If he is sentenced to die, he can still appeal his sentence. Executions must be done privately and respectfully.

None of this was true in the Roman Empire. People were killed on wooden crosses in a public places. They suffered for days and died terrible deaths. Jesus died on the cross less a day after his arrest.

Jesus Bears His Cross (19:16-24)

After being beaten, Jesus carried His own cross through Jerusalem. Many people watched Him. Finally, Jesus got to the Place of the Skull. Then long nails were driven into His wrists and feet. He was hung on a cross between two robbers.

Pilate placed a sign above Jesus' head. It said: *King of the Jews*. Jesus said He was the King of the Jews. The Jewish leaders did not like the sign over Jesus' head. They wanted Pilate to change it. They did not accept Jesus as their king. Pilate knew Jesus didn't **deserve** to die. Pilate had allowed the Jews to push him to kill Jesus. Pilate would not let them change the sign.

While Jesus suffered, soldiers played a game to see who would get His clothing. These should have been given to Jesus' family, but the soldiers did not care. Jesus was bringing life and forgiveness to all mankind. This did not matter to the soldiers.

Things to Think About

1. Why did Jesus refuse the wine that would have lessened the pain of the cross?
2. How did Jesus' death fulfill the ancient writings?

The Women at the Cross

John says there were four women standing near the cross. These were women who loved Jesus. Each came from a different background. His mother Mary was there. She had lived her whole life to the Lord. Her sister was there with her. We don't know much about her sister except that she loved Jesus. There was also a woman we know nothing about - Mary, the wife of Cleophas. The last was Mary Magdalene. Jesus had cast seven demons out of her. She had lived a sinful life before she met Jesus. Four women. Four different stories. One Savior.

Jesus' Final Hour (19:25-30)

Jesus' suffering and death on the cross were necessary to **accomplish** God's plan. His final hours were painful ones. From the cross, He watched His mother weeping. She was standing next to the disciple "whom He loved." Many believe this disciple was John. Jesus instructed this disciple to take care of Mary. This disciple loved Jesus. He did exactly what Jesus asked even when it was difficult.

Jesus had not eaten or drank since the night before at the Last Supper. Jesus had been offered some wine mixed with myrrh earlier. This would have eased the pain of the cross. But Jesus had refused that wine. Now He called out, "I am thirsty." The soldiers soaked a sponge in sour wine. They lifted it up to Jesus on a hyssop stick. The soldiers did just what the ancient writings said they would do (Psalm 69:21). They did not know it, but Jesus knew it.

That very day people were using hyssop sticks to put blood above their doors. This custom was one of the ways they celebrated the Feast of Passover. They were remembering the time when Jews were slaves in Egypt. They were remembering how God set them free from slavery.

Usually it took days to die on the cross. The Jews wanted the men to die quickly. They wanted to remove their bodies before the Feast. They asked the soldiers to break the legs of the three men. If they could not hold themselves up, they could not breathe. They would die faster. They broke the robbers' legs. When they came to Jesus, He was already dead. They did not break the legs of Jesus. An ancient writer said not a bone of the

Christ would be broken (Psalm 34:20).

The soldiers wanted to make sure Jesus was dead. One soldier pushed a spear through His side. Water and blood gushed out of the wound. An ancient writer said this would happen, too (Zechariah 12:10). Even to the last details, Jesus had done all the ancient writers had said. His death made all of God's ancient words come true.

Jesus said, "It is finished!" Our debt was paid in full by Jesus. He had done everything the Father asked Him to do. Since the beginning of time, God wanted to have a relationship with us. He wanted our sins to be forgiven. Jesus' death was the final punishment for sin. He made a way for us to escape the final punishment for sin. Jesus finished the work God wanted to accomplish.

Jesus' Secret Disciples (19:38-42)

Jesus had said, "And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will attract all people toward Me" (12:32). Joseph was a member of the ruling group of Jews. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus at night, was also a member of the ruling group. These two men had believed Jesus was the Son of God. But they had kept their belief

secret. Now, both men became bold for Jesus. Maybe they were the first ones attracted to Jesus when He was lifted up. They asked Pilate to give them Jesus' body. Romans did not care about the bodies of people who died on the cross. They tossed the bodies in a heap for the birds to eat.

Joseph had a brand new tomb near the hill where Jesus died. Nicodemus brought enough spices to take care of the body of a king. They put the spices and linen cloths on Jesus' body. They put His body in Joseph's new tomb. Joseph and Nicodemus loved Jesus. They wanted to bury His body in a respectful way.

Later, some people said Jesus didn't really die on the cross. When He rose from the grave, some people said it was not true. They said He was just asleep when His body came off the cross. But blood and water flowed from Jesus' side when He was pierced. This proved He was really dead. Joseph and Nicodemus knew that Jesus was dead. There was no doubt. They knew He had died for their sins. They knew He was the Son of God, the promised Christ.

John 19:16-30, 38-42

16 Then Pilate handed Him over to be nailed to a cross. They took Jesus and led Him away.

17 Jesus carried His own cross to a hill called the Place of the Skull.

18 There they nailed Him to the cross. With Him were two others. There was one on each side of Jesus.

19 Then Pilate put a writing on the cross which said, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This was read by many of the Jews. The place where Jesus was nailed to the cross was near the city. The writing was written in the Hebrew and the Latin and the Greek languages.

21 Then the head religious leaders of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews!' Write, 'He said, I am the King of the Jews.' "

22 Pilate said, "What I have written is to stay just as it is!"

23 The soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross took His clothes and divided them in four parts, each soldier getting one part. But His coat which was not sewed was made in one piece.

24 They said to each other, "Let us not cut it up. Let us draw names to see whose it should be." This happened as the Holy Writings said it would happen, "They divided My clothes among them and they drew names for My coat." (Psalm 22:18)

25 This is what the soldiers did. The mother of Jesus and her sister Mary, the wife of Cleophas, were standing near the cross. Mary Magdalene was there also.

26 Jesus saw His mother and the follower

whom He loved standing near. He said to His mother, "Woman, look at your son."

27 Then Jesus said to the follower, "Look at your mother." From that time the follower took her to his own house.

28 Jesus knew that everything was now finished. Everything happened as the Holy Writings said it would happen. He said, "I am thirsty." (Psalm 69:21)

29 There was a jar full of sour wine near. They filled a sponge and put it on a stick and put it to His mouth.

30 Jesus took the sour wine and said, "It is finished." He put His head down and gave up His spirit and died.

John 19:38-42

38 Joseph was from the town of Arimathea. He was a follower of Jesus but was afraid of the Jews. So he worshiped without anyone knowing it. He asked Pilate if he could take away the body of Jesus. Pilate said he could. Then Joseph came and took it away.

39 Nicodemus came also. The first time he had come to Jesus had been at night. He brought with him a large box of spices.

40 Then they took the body of Jesus with the spices and put it in linen cloths. This was the way the Jews made a body ready for the grave.

41 There was a garden near the place where He had been nailed to the cross. In the garden there was a new grave in the side of the hill. No one had ever been laid there.

42 This place was near by. Because it was the day the Jews got ready for the special religious gathering, they laid Jesus in it.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

UNIT 3

Jesus' Resurrection

Lesson 8

Good News about Jesus
(John 20:1-18)

Lesson 9

Sent by Jesus
(John 20:19-23)

Lesson 10

A Story to Tell
(John 20:24-31)

Lesson 11

Lord of All Time
(John 21:1-23)

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: PART TWO

Jesus' Resurrection

Unit 3 examines John 20 and 21. These lessons look at what happened after Jesus died on the cross. Four different times the risen Lord Jesus appeared to His followers. Each of these lessons urges us to recognize the risen Lord. These lessons help us to understand our place in His kingdom.

The Lord is risen and life will never be the same again. Christians now carry the message of God's love and forgiveness to a troubled world. Sharing this message is the most important thing we will ever do. The world needs to hear our story!

When we meet those who doubt, we must respond in gentleness. This is what Jesus did for Thomas and the other disciples. Like them, we must be ready to tell our stories. Life changed for the disciples when Jesus died and rose again. When we meet Jesus, our lives change, too. We will never be the same. We are to spend the rest of our lives telling others about Jesus. This is how Christians respond to the risen Lord.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 20:1-18

Memory Verse

Let us thank the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was through His loving-kindness that we were born again to a new life and have a hope that never dies. This hope is ours because Jesus was raised from the dead.

(1 Peter 1:3)

Word List

Devoted—to set one's life apart to be given wholly to a purpose

Grief—great sorrow

Recognize—to be able to identify something or someone one has seen before

Resurrection—the rising of Jesus Christ from the grave

Good News about Jesus

Everyone will die one day. Many people are afraid of death. They fear aging and sickness. But Christians have hope! We know death is not the end. We know Jesus has gone ahead of us to prepare a place for us. We have the hope of heaven with Him one day. We have a life full of purpose here on earth. This is the Good News of the **resurrection** on Easter Sunday. Christ is alive! He lives! And because He lives, we can live forever.

Visit the Tomb (20:1-2)

In Jesus' time, the Jews buried their dead quickly. The body was wrapped in cloths and placed in a cave. Then the cave was sealed with a large stone. The family would return the next day to roll away the stone. Then they would wash the body and cover it with spices. The next year the family returned to collect the bones. They put them in a special box on a shelf in the cave. There might be several generations of a family buried together.

Jesus died on Friday, just before the special Day of Rest. His body was put in a tomb where no one else had been buried. Mary watched as Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus' body. They wrapped it in cloths and covered it with spices. The cave was sealed and left until early Sunday morning (Matthew 27:61).

Mary Magdalene was from a city called Magdala. We know Jesus healed her of seven demons. We know that Mary **devoted** herself to doing things for Jesus. She cared for Jesus and His followers by using what she had (Luke 8:2). Maybe Mary

**Things to
Think About**

1. Has your life been changed by God?
2. Are you doing the things God would have you do with your new life?
3. What worries kept Mary from seeing the risen Lord?
4. Are there worries in your life that keep you from serving God?
5. Have you been busy on family business for our Lord?
6. Who is waiting for you to tell them the Good News of Jesus?

had cooked meals or washed Jesus' clothes. Most importantly, we know that Mary Magdalene loved Jesus.

Mary must have been very sad as she came to the tomb. Maybe she thought this would be the last thing she could do for Jesus. She saw that the stone was rolled away. She did not go inside the cave. She feared someone had stolen Jesus' body.

Even though there was a law against it, stolen bodies were a common problem. The punishment for breaking this law was death. Jewish leaders worried that Jesus' body might be stolen. They remembered that Jesus said He would rise again. They feared His followers may steal His body. Then it would look like He had risen from the dead. To keep this from happening, they sealed Jesus' grave and placed guards around it (Matt 28:66).

See the Clothes (20:3-13)

Mary ran to tell Peter and the other disciples that Jesus' body had been stolen. They ran to the grave to see. Both men went inside the cave. They saw the linen cloths lying there.

Jesus had risen from the dead by the power of God! He left the grave cloths behind. He would never need them again. Jesus rose and would never die again. He won victory over death and the grave by His resurrection. The two disciples did not really understand the resurrection. They left the tomb and returned to their homes.

Mary was so sad that she stayed by the grave and cried. Finally, she bent down and looked inside. She saw angels sitting where Jesus' body had been. The angels asked her why she was crying. They told her the Lord had risen! Mary should have been

happy. But her **grief** caused her to hold on to the sad idea of Jesus' death.

Meet the Lord (20:14-17)

When Mary turned around, the risen Lord was standing with her. Mary may not have looked up into the face of Jesus. Maybe her grief and tears blinded her to His presence. For some reason, she did not **recognize** Jesus. But our Lord seeks to make Himself known to us. He questioned her. Mary asked the man where he had taken Jesus' body. She offered to take the body away herself.

When Jesus said her name, Mary recognized Him immediately. It was her teacher and Lord! Maybe she thought things would now be like they were before Jesus died. We do not know exactly what Mary did at that moment. We do know that she took hold of Jesus. This Jesus was real. Mary could hold and touch Him.

Jesus told her, "Do not hold on to me." Jesus was different. He was no longer the teacher who walked with His followers. Now Jesus is the risen Lord! Mary had done what she could for Jesus while he lived on earth. Now the risen Lord Jesus

had more for Mary to do. He told her He had not yet gone up to the Father in heaven. He sent her to go to the disciples. He told Mary to "tell them that I will go up to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God!"(20:17).

Jesus told the disciples something important before He died. He said, "I do not call you servants that I own anymore. A servant does not know what his owner is doing. I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from My Father" (15:15).

Now Jesus calls us not servants, not even friends, but brothers! We are part of the family of God. Jesus sent Mary on family business. Mary was sent with the wonderful Good News! She did not go telling that she had seen the Teacher. Mary saw Jesus now as the Lord.

Just like Mary, we can leave our past lives behind. The sin and sickness that Jesus has healed is behind us. We go forward on family business for Him. Our news is Good News. The Lord is risen and life will never be the same again.

John 20:1-18

1 It was the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene came to the grave early in the morning while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been pushed away from the grave.

2 She ran to Simon Peter and the other follower whom Jesus loved. She said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the grave. We do not know where they have put Him."

3 Then Peter and the other follower went to the grave.

4 They ran but the other follower ran faster than Peter and came to the grave first.

5 He got down and looked in and saw the linen cloths but did not go in.

6 Then Simon Peter came and went into the grave. He saw the linen cloths lying there.

7 The white cloth that had been around the head of Jesus was not lying with the other linen cloths. It was rolled up and lying apart by itself.

8 Then the other follower, who had come first, went in also. He saw and believed.

9 They still did not understand what the Holy Writings meant when they said that He must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the followers went back again to their homes.

11 Mary stood outside the grave crying. As

she cried, she got down and looked inside the grave.

12 She saw two angels dressed in white clothes. They were sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. One angel was where His head had lain and one angel was where His feet had lain.

13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord. I do not know where they have put Him."

14 After saying this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus.

15 He said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" She thought He was the man who cared for the garden. She said to Him, "Sir, if you have taken Jesus from here, tell me where you have put Him. I will take Him away."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned around and said to Him, "Teacher!"

17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to Me. I have not yet gone up to My Father. But go to My brothers. Tell them that I will go up to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God!"

18 Mary Magdalene went and told the followers that she had seen the Lord. She told them the things He had said to her.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 20:19-23

Memory Verse

The Jesus said to them again, “May you have peace. As the Father has sent Me, I also am sending you.” (John 20:21)

Word List

Cruel—causing pain and suffering; taking pleasure in the pain of others; merciless
Entrust—to charge with a trust or responsibility
Humble—to take a lower place
Humility—the quality of being humble
Obedience—the act of obeying
Obedient—doing what one is told to do

Sent by Jesus

I enjoy teaching students from other countries to speak English. Sometimes a student returns home to their own country. I always say, “Go, do well and show them what you learned.” I want to know that our classes have helped them speak better English. We help our students do well in many ways. Our most important work, though, is kingdom work. We share the love and forgiveness of God with our students.

Jesus **entrusted** his followers with the Gospel. He knew they would form a fellowship—the church. Those early followers changed the world through the power of the Gospel. Today, we are entrusted with the same message of God’s love and forgiveness. The world needs this message now as much as ever.

May You Have Peace (20:19)

Jesus’ followers had been through a terrible time. They ate the Feast with Jesus on Thursday. On Friday they watched Him die. Saturday was certainly a sad day for them. Their lives had been focused on following Jesus for three years. Now that seemed to be over. By Sunday evening, they were all locked in a room together. They were afraid of the Jews. They locked the doors because they thought the Jews would come for them next.

Suddenly, Jesus was inside that room with them! He did not knock on the door. He was just there. He said, “May you have peace.” This was a common greeting in those days. But it was more than a simple greeting. Jesus meant every word.

At the Feast, Jesus had said, “Peace I leave with you. My

Things to Think About

1. Have you trusted Jesus to forgive your sin and give you life? If so, share how that happened in your life. If not, ask someone to share this message with you.
2. Have you shared this important message of forgiveness with someone who needs it?
3. What are your scars that prove humility and faithfulness lead to peace?
4. When have you experienced God's peace that the world cannot understand?

Thomas à Kempis on Peace

Thomas à Kempis lived from 1380-1471. He wrote this about God's peace: "The more humble a man is in himself, the more obedient toward God, the wiser will he be in all things, and the more shall his soul be at peace."

peace I give to you. I do not give peace to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, or afraid"(14:27). He even told them all that would happen. Now their troubled, frightened hearts found peace in the presence of Jesus. Surely the room must have been filled with joy. The peace of God flowed freely!

The world believes there can be peace if countries work together. This is not true. We hear of wars every day in the news. Many people suffer because they have no peace in their hearts. Many seek peace in new ways of thinking. Many try exercise to bring peace to their hearts and minds. That is not working either. Jesus offers peace that only God can give. Paul said that "the peace of God is much greater than the human mind can understand" (Phil 4:7). That peace comes from Jesus.

I Also Am Sending You (20:20-21)

Jesus showed the disciples the scars in His hands and side. Jesus wanted them to know the truth. Jesus really died a **cruel** death on the cross. He had the scars to prove it. And He was really alive again. He was there in that room talking with them!

Jesus told them something important. He was sending them out just like the Father sent Him. How did the Father send Jesus? First, Jesus **humbled** Himself. He gave up heaven to come live with us. He became a human baby in a poor family. He did not come as a rich king but a servant. We must humble ourselves, too. Second, Jesus was **obedient**. Jesus said, "My food is to do what God wants Me to do and to finish His work" (4:34). Jesus obeyed God in everything. He sends us out to be obedient, too. Obedience is important in every part of our lives.

Jesus' scars were proof that **humility** and **obedience** lead to victory. Jesus did not lose the battle on the cross. He won! The plan was in the Father's hands. Jesus trusted and obeyed God. He won the battle over sin and death! When we are humble and obey God, we can trust Him. He will fill us with peace that only He can give.

Receive the Holy Spirit (20:22-23)

God had breathed life into Adam (Gen 2:7). In the same way, Jesus breathed on His followers. This is how he gave them the Holy Spirit. Jesus did exactly what He said He would do. He had told the disciples, "I tell you the truth. It is better for you that I go away. If I do not go, the Helper will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you" (16:7). Jesus kept His promise.

Jesus did not send His followers out in their own power. He sent them out with the power of the Holy Spirit. John 16 tells us the work of the Holy Spirit. He reminds us of the truth of Jesus. He gives power to do the work of Jesus on earth.

Verse 23 is hard to understand at first. How can a man forgive the sins of other men? Jesus wanted His followers to carry the message of God's forgiveness.

Forgiveness is free to all, but only some receive it. It happens when a person turns away from their sin and turns to Jesus Christ. Some will turn from their sins and find forgiveness. That forgiveness is forever. Others will hold on to their sins and not be forgiven. This is the message Jesus' followers would carry to the world. God offers forgiveness that lasts forever in Jesus our Lord.

What about Us?

Believers today are just like these first followers of Jesus. The church today has the work of Jesus to do. We carry the God's message of love and forgiveness to a troubled world. We can have peace that the world doesn't understand. We must humble ourselves and obey God completely.

Our message of forgiveness is the most important message of all time. God offers forgiveness today just as He did in Jesus' day. If we turn from our sin to Jesus, we find forgiveness and peace. Sharing this message is the most important thing we will ever do.

John 20:19-23

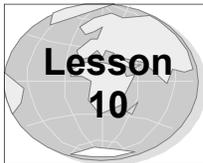
19 It was evening of the first day of the week. The followers had gathered together with the doors locked because they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "May you have peace."

20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. When the followers saw the Lord, they were filled with joy.

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "May you have peace. As the Father has sent Me, I also am sending you."

22 When Jesus had said this, He breathed on them. He said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 If you say that people are free of sins, they are free of them. If you say that people are not free of sins, they still have them."



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

John 20:24-31

Memory Verse

Your heart should be holy and set apart for the Lord God. Always be ready to tell everyone who asks you why you believe as you do. Be gentle as you speak and show respect.
(1 Peter 3:15)

Word List

Confused—to be mentally unclear or uncertain

Doubt—uncertainty of belief or opinion

Scold—to speak in an angry way; to blame; to rebuke

A Story to Tell

A family I know spent the week before Christmas helping their aging parents. They spent all their Christmas money on groceries and medicine for their parents. They used all their money. They could not buy gifts for their kids. When they came home, they found a surprise. There were three checks in the mail that they had not expected. How thankful to God they were!

How does this story make you feel? Have you heard other stories like this one? Do you ever **doubt** the stories? Do you wish that God would do something like that for you? None of us want to miss out on God's gifts. But we have not! God has already given His greatest gift. Believers have salvation through Jesus.

Doubts and Fears (20:24-25)

Thomas had listened, watched, and followed Him closely. When Jesus left for Jerusalem, Thomas knew there would be danger. Even so, Thomas was ready to go with Jesus and to die with Him (11:16). Thomas spent his life following Jesus. He loved Jesus deeply.

When Thomas had a chance to show his love for Jesus, Thomas ran away. Like Peter, he failed to live up to his words. Like the other followers, Thomas did not understand why Jesus must die. Thomas was **confused** the night before Jesus' arrest. After Jesus' death, Thomas was still confused. Maybe Thomas thought following Jesus was a mistake.

After Jesus rose from the grave, He visited His followers. But Thomas had not been with them in that locked room. Thomas

**Things to
Think About**

1. How do you feel when you hear of what God has done for someone else?
2. What helps you to believe in Jesus even though you cannot see or touch Him?
3. Have you ever had a personal meeting with Jesus? If so, how did it change you?
4. Can you say, like Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"? How is that shown in your life?
5. Do you think you are ready to tell your story if someone should ask why you believe?

heard the disciples' stories about Jesus' visit. He heard what Jesus had said. He heard about Jesus' scars. Could he believe the stories? Would he ever see Jesus like that? Thomas waited and wondered and doubted. The other disciples told their stories. Thomas said, "I will not believe until I see the marks made by the nails in His hands. I will not believe until I put my finger into the marks of the nails. I will not believe until I put my hand into His side" (20:25).

The Evidence (20:26-27)

A week passed. Again the disciples got together in a locked room. Again Jesus was suddenly with them in the room. This time Thomas was there. Jesus showed Thomas what he needed to see. Jesus held up His scars for Thomas to see. He gently invited Thomas to see and believe. Jesus said, "Put your finger into My hands. Put your hand into My side. Do not doubt, believe!" (20:27). Jesus knew Thomas was confused and doubting. He knew Thomas needed to see Him for himself. Jesus did not **scold** Thomas for doubting.

Many people today still have doubts about the Bible. They doubt the stories of believers. Until they meet Jesus for themselves, they cannot understand. God is still willing today to give us what we need. He wants each of us to have our own story to tell about Him. He still takes care of His children.

The Response (20:28-31)

The Bible does not say if Thomas touched Jesus' hands and side. It does tell us what Thomas said. He exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (20:28). With these five words, Thomas

showed his deep feelings. This could be said another way: “The Lord of me and the God of me!” Now Thomas had his own personal story to tell.

Thomas' story changed him. He had no doubt left. Once he had been Jesus' follower. Now he was Jesus' servant. Jesus had been his teacher. Now Jesus was his God. Now he understood all he needed to know. Thomas knew that Jesus was God.

Jesus spoke of Thomas' doubts. He said, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you believe. Those are happy who have never seen Me and yet believe!” (20:29). Jesus gave Thomas a special gift. Thomas saw the risen Jesus for himself. Many of Jesus' followers would not get that chance. Soon people would believe only by the stories they heard.

John wrote to such people. After Jesus returned to heaven, people no longer saw Him. Today we cannot touch Jesus with our hands or see Him with our eyes. Yet people still believe in Jesus. John wrote His gospel to tell the stories about Jesus. In believing them, Jesus said we are blessed.

What about Us?

Today many people have doubts

about the truth of the Bible. Thomas is not the only one who has ever doubted. Even the men who Mary told about seeing Jesus did not believe her. Doubt is nothing new.

Once Thomas saw Jesus for himself, the doubts went away. It did not matter that Thomas had doubted. What mattered was what Thomas did once he understood the truth. Seeing Jesus changed Thomas. After that, he lived with faith in Jesus.

The same is true for us. We do not need to be afraid of doubt. In our doubt, we must search for Jesus. When we find Him, we will be changed. Then we will have a story to tell. The world needs to hear our story!

When we meet those who doubt, we must respond like Jesus. We must be gentle. 1 Peter 3:15 says that our hearts “should be holy and set apart for the Lord God. Always be ready to tell everyone who asks you why you believe as you do. Be gentle as you speak and show respect.” God can still meet the needs of those who look for Him. He will do it through us. We must be ready to tell our stories.

John 20:24-31

24 Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. He was one of the twelve followers and was called the Twin.

25 The other followers told him, "We have seen the Lord!" He said to them, "I will not believe until I see the marks made by the nails in His hands. I will not believe until I put my finger into the marks of the nails. I will not believe until I put my hand into His side."

26 Eight days later the followers were again inside a house. Thomas was with them. The doors were locked. Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "May you have peace!"

27 He said to Thomas, "Put your finger into My hands. Put your hand into My side. Do not doubt, believe!"

28 Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you believe. Those are happy who have never seen Me and yet believe!"

30 Jesus did many other powerful works in front of His followers. They are not written in this book.

31 But these are written so you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. When you put your trust in Him, you will have life that lasts forever through His name.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

John 21:1-23

Memory Verse

The One Who called you is faithful and will do what He promised.
(1 Thessalonians 5:24)

Word List

Design—to plan or create for a certain use

Instruction—directions on how to do something; teaching

Restored—brought back to the original condition or place

Secure—safe, protected from harm; firmly fixed

Variety—of many different kinds, conditions, or activities; a mixed collection

Lord of All Time

Our world changes quickly. Today's new cell phone will seem old tomorrow. Our grandchildren will know a very different world from ours. Everything changes. The Bible tells us God does not change (Malachi 3:6). He will be the same at the end of time as He was in the beginning. He calls us to follow Him and trust Him with every moment. He is Lord of all time.

A Gift for the Present (21:1-14)

Jesus' resurrection changed the disciples' lives. They had all left their work to follow Jesus. Now their leader was gone. What would they do? They still had to work and eat.

One night Peter and five disciples went fishing on the Sea of Galilee. The Romans called it the Sea of Tiberias. They fished all night and caught nothing. Early in the morning, a stranger walked along the beach. He asked if they had caught anything. They told him no. The stranger pointed to a spot in the lake. The men threw their net where he pointed and caught a net full of fish! One of the disciples recognized the stranger. He said, "It is the Lord!" Then Peter jumped into the water and swam to Jesus.

When the others got to shore, they found Jesus. He was cooking fish over a fire. He invited them to bring some fish and eat. He fed them a breakfast of bread and fish.

Some people said the disciples did not see the real Jesus. Some said they saw a ghost. Some said they saw a vision. But Jesus was really alive. He ate with them. He helped them with their work. He still cared about them.

Things to Think About

1. How do you see God's faithfulness in your life?
2. Jesus helped the fishermen in their work. How can you allow Jesus to take part in your work?
3. Peter needed Jesus to forgive his past mistakes before he could do his new work. Have you let Jesus clean up your past?
4. What gifts do you have that you can use to serve Jesus?

Do You Love Me?

Practice asking Jesus' question out loud.

Change the way you say it each time.

- Do *you* love Me?
- Do you *love* Me?
- Do you love *Me*?
- *Do* you love Me?

How does the meaning change when you change how you say it?

Away with the Past (21:15-17)

When Jesus was arrested, Peter said he didn't know Jesus three times. Peter needed Jesus' forgiveness and healing. After breakfast, Jesus talked with Peter. "Do you love Me?" Jesus asked. He asked this three times. Peter answered yes three times. The last time Peter said, "Lord, You know everything. You know I love You." Jesus knew. He wanted Peter to have the chance to say it. Peter was **restored** in his relationship with Jesus. He knew he was forgiven. Peter could leave the past behind.

Jesus followed each of His questions with an **instruction**. Jesus instructed Peter to feed his lambs, care for his sheep and feed his sheep. Jesus was inviting Peter to do His work. Peter was a fisherman when he first met Jesus. He had left his fishing business to be Jesus' disciple. Now Jesus wanted Peter to become something new. His past life was over. He would do Jesus' work.

Into the Future (21:18-23)

Jesus spoke of Peter's future. Peter used to decide his life for himself. Now Peter's life was not his own. His future would be very different. Jesus had said, "The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Now Jesus told Peter to be a good shepherd also. Someday Peter would give his life away.

Maybe Jesus and Peter were walking alone as they talked. Maybe Peter looked back. Maybe he saw another disciple behind them. Peter asked about him. Would he also die for Jesus? Would they all give up their lives? Or would Peter be the only one?

Jesus said, "If I want this one to wait until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me" (21:22). Peter had been given a job

to do. Now he was to be a shepherd. The other disciple had a different job to do. But each man was to follow Jesus.

We do not all have the same gifts. We are all different. God **designed** us that way. He likes **variety** among His people. He gives us each our own work to do. Peter later wrote about this. He said, “God has given each of you a gift. Use it to help each other. This will show God’s loving-favor” (1 Pet 4:10). We do not all look and act the same. But we must all follow Jesus.

What about Us?

Life changed for the disciples when Jesus died and rose again. They would never be the same. Each man was given a different job to do. Each man gave the rest of his life to telling others about Jesus. Each man died for his faith.

Later the disciples talked about this day. They remembered Jesus saying, “If I want this one to wait until I come, what is that to you?” (21:22). They believed Jesus would come again quickly. They waited for Jesus to return.

Each of the disciples died. Not one would live to see Jesus return in His glory. Before they died, the disciples told their

stories. They did the jobs Jesus had given them.

Some of them wrote about all that Jesus had done and said. This is what John did in his Gospel. Jesus had loved him deeply. John loved Jesus deeply, too. Out of this love, John told about his friend, Savior, and Lord. We still read his words today. And we meet the living Word through them.

When we invite Jesus into our life, He changes every part of it. Our past is forgiven. Our future is **secure**. Our present is filled with promise. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 says, “The One Who called you is faithful and will do what He promised.” We can trust Him to lead us. He will do what He says He will do. We are blessed when we make Him Lord of every moment in our lives.

John 21:1-23

1 After this, Jesus again showed Himself to His followers at the lake of Tiberias. It happened like this:

2 Simon Peter and Thomas who was called the Twin and Nathanael from the town of Cana in the country of Galilee and the sons of Zebedee and two other followers were

all together.

3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." The others said, "We will go with you." They went out and got into a boat. That night they caught no fish.

4 Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore of the lake. The followers did not know it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They said, "No."

6 He said to them, "Put your net over the right side of the boat. Then you will catch some fish." They put out the net. They were not able to pull it in because it was so full of fish.

7 Then the follower whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Peter heard it was the Lord, he put on his fisherman's coat. (He had taken it off.) Then he jumped into the water.

8 The other followers came in the boat. They were pulling the net with the fish. They were not far from land, only a little way out.

9 When they came to land they saw fish and bread on a fire.

10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

11 Simon Peter went out and pulled the net to land. There were 153 big fish. The net was not broken even with so many.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat." Not one of the followers would ask, "Who are You?" They knew it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came and took bread and fish and gave it to them.

14 This was the third time Jesus had shown Himself to His followers after He had risen from the dead.

15 When they were finished eating, Jesus said

to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" Peter answered Jesus, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 Jesus said to Peter the second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He answered Jesus, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Take care of My sheep."

17 Jesus said to Peter the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter felt bad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love Me?" He answered Jesus, "Lord, You know everything. You know I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

18 For sure, I tell you, when you were young, you put on your belt and went wherever you wanted to go. When you get old, you will put out your hands and someone else will put on your belt and take you away where you do not want to go."

19 He said this to tell Peter what kind of death he would die to honor God. After Jesus said this, He said to Peter, "Follow Me."

20 Peter turned around. He saw the follower whom Jesus loved, following. This one had been beside Jesus at the supper. This is the one who had asked Jesus, "Lord, who will hand You over?"

21 Peter saw him and said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this one?"

22 Jesus said, "If I want this one to wait until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."

23 So the news spread among the followers that this follower would not die. But Jesus did not say to him that he would not die. He said, "If I want him to wait until I come, what is that to you?"