

Bible Studies from the Gospel of John

Note: In the fourth column are the rankings of the questions. The easiest ones are marked with one *, fairly easy ones with ** and somewhat difficult ones with ***.

1.	The Word was God	1:1-18	***
2.	We have found the Messiah	1:43-51	**
3.	Water becomes wine	2:1-11	**
4.	Jesus with a whip	2:13-22	***
5.	The pharisee and the bronze snake	3:1-16	**
6.	Living water	4:5-19	*
7.	Signs, wonders and faith	4:46-54	**
8.	Abandoned by everyone	5:1-18	*
9.	The bread of life	6:1-15	**
10.	The hidden Messiah	7:40-52	***
11.	Jesus as a Judge	8:1-11	*
12.	The light of the world	9:1-7, 18-23, 35-41	**
13.	The good shepherd	10:1-16	***
14.	The resurrection and the life	11:1-5, 32-46	**
15.	A kernel of wheat that died	12:20-33	***
16.	The master as a slave	13:1-17	**
17.	The Way, the Truth and the Life	14:1-11	***
18.	The true vine	15:1-11	***
19.	Sadness will turn into gladness	16:20-24, 32-33	***
20.	Jesus is praying for His own	17:13-21	***
21.	Jesus is arrested	18:1-14	**
22.	It is finished!	19:25-30	**
23.	Outside the empty tomb	20:11-18	**
24.	No seeing, no believing!	20:19-29	**
25.	Do you love Me?	21:15-19	**

1. THE WORD WAS GOD (John 1:1-18)

BACKGROUND: (A) If there are people in your Glad Tidings study group who don't know the Bible at all, we suggest that you don't start with this passage. It is too difficult for beginners. (B) The questions in parentheses should only be asked if no one has answered the previous question.

1. The word (verses 1-3,14)

- Explain in your own words the meaning of these four verses.
- What do you think is the significance of "the word" to the fellowship shared by two people?
- Why is "the word" the most important thing in the Christian faith, more important than, say, experience?
- If we didn't have the word of God, how could we know God?
- Why is Jesus called The Word of God?

1. The light (verses 4-10)

- What do verses 4-5 mean?
- What has light in-common with Jesus?
- What does it mean that the darkness has not overcome the light? (Verse 5 and the relevant footnote)
- Why didn't the world recognize Jesus even though he was "shining" as a light in darkness (verse 10)?

1. John the Baptist (verses 6-8)

- According to this passage, what was John the Baptist's role?
- What does it mean that John the Baptist was not the light himself? (verse 8)
- What had made John so humble that he didn't strive to be "the light" himself?
- Compare the role of John with your own role in the kingdom of God.

1. The world and the children of God (verses 9-13)

- What kind of place is "the world" according to this passage?
- How does one become a child of God according this passage? (Why doesn't anyone become a child of God through natural birth?)
- Have you already become a child of God? If you have, how? (You can answer this in your own heart.)

1. The witness of John (verses 15-18)

- Say in your own words what John the Baptist witnessed about Jesus.
- Can you bear witness that verse 16 is true in your life?
- What, according to John, is the only means by which we can learn to know God?
- In the light of this passage, what do you think about the claim that Jews, Muslims and Christians all have the same God?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus and the Word are one and the same thing. If you receive the word of the Bible into your life, you receive Jesus. If you reject the Bible, you will reject Jesus. The word of Jesus is the light, which is shining in your darkness even today. It is only from this word that you can receive "grace upon grace".

2. WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH (John 1:43-51)

BACKGROUND: Look where Bethany (1:28), Bethsaida (1:44) and Nazareth (1:46) are situated on the map. The Old Testament does not refer to Nazareth with messianic prophecies except that the word “branch” is very similar to the word “Nazarene” in Hebrew ([Is.11:1](#), [53:2](#), [Jer.23:5](#), [33:15](#)). The leader should read the story of Jacob’s ladder ([Gen.28:10-22](#)) beforehand, because the last question refers to it.

1. Why did Philip want to tell his friend immediately about Jesus, whom he only just had met (verses 43-45)?
 - Recall the time you first came to know Jesus. Did you want to tell others what you had found? Explain why you felt this way.

1. What made Nathanael doubt the words of Philip?
 - Why did Nathanael nevertheless go to see Jesus?

1. What did Jesus mean by the words with which he greeted Nathanael (verse 47)?
 - How do you think Nathanael felt upon hearing Jesus’ greeting?
 - How would you feel if Jesus said to you today: “Here is a true Christian, in whom there is nothing false”?

1. Nathanael was really surprised to hear that Jesus knew what had happened under the fig tree. Think of various possibilities for what Nathanael had been thinking or praying there.

2. Recall what you thought when you were alone recently. How do you feel upon realizing that Jesus also was there and could read your thoughts like an open book?
 - What can it mean for a human being that somebody else sees their real self?

1. The word of Jesus in verse 47 are an indirect quotation from [Psalms 32:1-2](#) (the leader may read these two verses). How, according to these verses, can someone become so upright that there is nothing false in their heart?

2. On what ground does Nathaniel all of a sudden call Jesus the Son of God and the King of Israel (verse 49)?

3. The leader may summarize [Gen.28:10-22](#) here. What does Jesus mean by verses 50 to 51? Think of various possibilities.
 - What does Jacob’s ladder have in common with the cross of Jesus?

3. WATER BECOMES WINE (John 2:1-11)

BACKGROUND: A wedding was a great event in Jesus' day. Usually it lasted several days. The distance between Nazareth and Cana was about 12 kilometers as the crow flies. Jesus' mother had yet to see her son's first miracle, but she had herself experienced the miracle of the virgin birth.

1. What could be the reason the wine ran out at this wedding? Think of various possibilities.
 - What do you think would have worried the host family or the young couple most in this situation?

1. Do you think Mary was prepared for such a miracle as took place at this wedding? Give your reasons.
 - Verse 3 contains Mary's prayer to Jesus. Compare it to your own prayers and see what might be different.

1. Why didn't Mary give up when Jesus declined to follow her hint (verse 4)?
 - What did Mary believe about her son at this point?
 - Why did Jesus perform a miracle even though he perhaps hadn't originally intended to do so?

1. In what situations do we need a faith like Mary's?

2. How do you think the servants felt about carrying hundreds of liters of water from the village well in the middle of a busy wedding feast?
 - Why did the servants do as Jesus told them?

1. How many years does it take to make really good wine?
 - How much would such a quantity of very good wine cost in our own day? (verse 6)

1. How do you think the servants felt when they realized that the water had changed into wine?
 - Do you think that all these servants believed in Jesus from that point on? Give your reasons.

1. The word "glory" in the Bible means that God's presence is visible to our bare eyes. God's glory was first revealed in the tabernacle and in the temple. What does it mean, then, that Jesus revealed his glory to his disciples through this sign (verse 11)?
 - Why doesn't John in his gospel want to call the miracles of Jesus as "miracles" but rather as "signs"?
 - John tells us later that the glory of God was also revealed in Jesus' sufferings. What does he mean by that?

1. What did the disciples believe about Jesus after this sign?
 - Why was the faith of the disciples not yet ready?

GLAD TIDINGS: In the Old Testament wine is connected with the ruler who will come from Judah. "The scepter will not depart from Judah... until he comes to whom it belongs... he will wash his

garments in wine...” (Gen.49:10-11). In the New Testament wine refers to the blood of Jesus, which is shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

4. JESUS WITH A WHIP (John 2:13-22)

BACKGROUND: The temple was, for the Jews, the most important place on earth, even more important than their own homes. King Solomon had built the first temple; Ezra the second. The temple of Jesus' day was a magnificent building raised by King Herod the Great. After the crucifixion of Jesus it stood in Jerusalem for only thirty to forty years.

1. Read verses 14-16. What surprises you most in Jesus' behavior?
 - It takes some time to make a whip out of cords. How do you think Jesus looked like while doing this job (verse 15)?
 - Imagine what kinds of noises might have been heard in the temple during the moments described in verse 15.

1. Why didn't anyone try to stop Jesus while he was overturning tables and brandishing his whip?
 - What exactly was Jesus so indignant about?

1. Do you think that even in our own time God's temple/church can become a market place? Give your reasons.
 - Sacrifices were offered in the temple in order that those offering them could have their sins forgiven. How might this system have been corrupted to the point that it didn't correspond to God's original purpose?

1. Why does the God of the Bible hate ceremonies that are performed only for the sake of appearances?
 - If you consider your own worship, prayer, service etc., how much of it is only for the sake of appearance?
 - From what things should the temple of your heart be cleaned by Jesus today? (You can answer in your own heart.)

1. What is the difference between Jesus' anger and ours (verses 16-17)?

2. In this passage Jesus draws a parallel between the temple and his own body (verses 19-21). Why did God have to raise one more temple on this earth? (Which functions of the temple did Jesus fulfill in his own body while hanging on the cross?)

3. Think of various reasons why God may have let the Romans destroy Herod's temple thirty or forty years after the crucifixion of Jesus. (Why isn't the temple in Jerusalem needed any more?)

4. The image of the body of Jesus as a temple does not only refer to his sacrifice on the cross but also to the Christian church, his temple on the earth now (1 Cor.12:27). Do you think the church in our day needs a reformation of the kind that Jesus set about creating in the temple in Jerusalem? Give your reasons.
 - In what situations must the leader of the church brandish a whip?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus has become a temple for your sake – a temple where your sins have been atoned for. And not only the temple but also the sacrifice: the Lamb of God who carried away the sins of the world.

5. THE PHARISEE AND THE BRONZE SNAKE (John 3:1-16)

BACKGROUND: Although Nicodemus is a so-called professional in religious matters, he nevertheless hasn't entered the kingdom of God, which cannot be seen. It seems a bit strange that Nicodemus comes to discuss these matters with Jesus who is younger than him, and is neither as educated, nor in as high a social position as himself. Nicodemus is a member of the Sanhedrin in Israel, a kind of MP.

1. From what you see in this text, what are both the strong and weak points in the character of Nicodemus? (What does it show about Nicodemus that he didn't come to meet Jesus during the day but by night?)
 - What is it that Nicodemus came to talk with Jesus about?
1. Why didn't Nicodemus have any assurance of salvation, even after having believed in God all his life?
 - For what reasons may we also lack assurance of salvation?
1. Next we consider the expression Jesus uses here: "being born again". What will be changed when somebody is born again (verses 3-8)?
 - What might it mean that one must be born "of water and the Spirit" (verse 5)?
1. Nicodemus asks Jesus: "How can this (being born again) happen?" (verse 9). Explain in your own words what Jesus says to him in reply (verses 10-16).
2. When explaining the new birth, Jesus takes an example from Israel's journey in the wilderness, the incident where God sent venomous snakes to punish the sins of his people. Later on, however, God gave a remedy for this poison: whoever looked at the bronze snake hoisted by Moses, was saved (Num.21:4-9). What does that incident have common with the death of Jesus on the cross? Think of as many similarities as possible (verses 13-16).
3. What did those people believe who decided to look at the bronze snake?
 - The Bible tells us that many people died that day. Why didn't everybody believe in the remedy provided by God?
 - What does this incident in the Old Testament have to do with being born again?
1. In the Bible, the snake is almost always a symbol of Satan, God's adversary. Why do you think Jesus drew a parallel in this case between himself and the serpent?
2. What does verse 16 teach us about being born again?
3. (If there is any time left:) What kinds of misunderstandings have you had concerning the new birth? Discuss them in the light of this text.

GLAD TIDINGS: God so loved you that he gave his one and only Son, so that if you want to believe in him you shall not perish but have eternal life.

6. LIVING WATER (John 4:5-19)

BACKGROUND: The Samaritans were people of mixed blood and was thus looked down on by the Jews. If this woman was in her early thirties at the time, it means that she had changed her partner just about every other year.

1. Why do you think this woman went to fetch water at noon and not at sunset as was customary for other women in Sychar? (How do you think this woman felt when going to the well alone every day?)
 - Whom could this woman keep company with?
 - What kinds of hopes and fears do you think she harbored for about the future?

1. Which is harder: to leave five lovers one after another, or to be left five times? Give your reasons.
 - What do you think it was like to start a new relationship for the sixth time, and this time with a married man?
 - How could she try to justify having stolen the father of some of the children of the village?

1. How do you think the woman felt about herself/ about men in general/ about love?

2. Jewish men avoided talking to women in public places and absolutely didn't do it one to one. Why was Jesus not afraid of critique and rumors?
 - Why did Jesus start the conversation by asking a favor from the woman (verse 7)?

1. In what way did the woman misunderstand the words of Jesus in verse 10?
 - What was it that this woman was thirsting after?
 - What do you most thirst after in your own life? (You can answer this in your heart.)

1. Read the words in verse 14 as Jesus' words spoken to you personally. What do these words mean to you in your present circumstances?
 - What is the person like who has a well of living water in his/her heart?

1. Why does Jesus answer the request of the woman by saying: "Go, call your husband and come back" (verses 15-16)?
 - What would have happened if Jesus had proclaimed verse 18 to the woman straight away without the exchange of words in verses 16 to 17?
 - Why does Jesus want to show us our sins before giving us living water?

1. How do you think this woman felt upon realizing that Jesus knew her whole life story?
 - How did the woman understand that instead of despising her, Jesus actually cared for her?

1. During the discussion that followed, Jesus revealed to the woman that he was the Messiah – a fact that he concealed from many others. Why do you think he did this (verses 25-26)?

2. Look at verses 28 to 30. What practical consequences did it bring to the life of this woman that she had received living water from Jesus? (How did her attitude to her own sins

change? What about her relationship with the village?)

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus cried out on the cross: “I am thirsty!” ([John 19:28](#)). The owner of the well of living water had to experience excruciating thirst of body and soul. That is what he had to pay for the living water he is offering to us even today.

7. SIGNS, WONDERS AND FAITH (John 4:46-54)

BACKGROUND: The official who seeks Jesus in this passage, worked for Herod Antipas. He was the man who had arrested and killed John the Baptist. (The Herod who had killed the babies in Bethlehem was his grandfather.) The Herods were only half Jewish and extremely unpopular with the Jews. The distance between Capernaum and Cana is 38 kilometers.

1. What do you think might have been the good and bad points in the life of this royal official before his son became ill?
2. Why do you think this man decided not to send one of his servants to Jesus, but to go himself?
 - Think of any place, which is about 40 kilometers away from where you are right now. What was this father perhaps thinking while walking that long distance to Cana?
1. Why would it have been extremely difficult for this man to ask a favor of Jesus?
 - Recall an occasion when it was very difficult for you to approach Jesus. Why was this?
1. What do the words of Jesus in verse 48 have to do with the rest of the story?
 - What is wrong with seeking after signs and wonders in order to be able to believe?
 - In your opinion, is it possible to apply the words of Jesus in verse 48 to this man? Give your reasons.
1. Why didn't Jesus go with this man to Capernaum, as he had asked him to do (verses 47,50)?
 - How was his faith changed by meeting Jesus (verse 50)?
1. Why is it so difficult to simply believe in the word of God even before experiencing his help?
 - What is the promise of God that you should cling to at this very moment?
1. Why is the moment of the boy's healing recorded for us in the Bible (verse 52)?
 - What difference would it have made to the father if the boy had become well at some other time and not exactly when Jesus gave his promise?
1. What is the meaning of "faith" according to this passage?
 - Compare your own faith with the faith of this father.
1. What does this incident teach us about the word of Jesus?
 - What difference is there between suffering without the word of God and clinging to his promises while suffering?
1. Why didn't Jesus use his powerful word when he himself was close to death?

GLAD TIDINGS: The word of Jesus is so powerful because he has paid a great price for it: the son of the royal official could live, but the Son of God had to die instead.

8. ABANDONED BY EVERYONE (John 5:1-18)

BACKGROUND: This passage deals with the first dispute over the Sabbath between Jesus and the Jews. The Sabbath was the holy day of rest for the Jews. According to their beliefs, the Messiah would not come until the whole nation had kept one Sabbath. Archeological excavations in Jerusalem have revealed the pool of Bethesda with its colonnades.

1. Imagine what kind of life this man had led under the colonnades of Bethesda for 38 years.
 - The Greek word *astheneia* in verse 5 can mean an illness, but more often it only means “a weakness”. Think of various alternatives. What was ailing this man?
 - How did the first 10 years of illness perhaps differ from the final 10?

1. Why didn't his relatives take care of him (verse 7)? (What was perhaps his own fault, what may have been the fault of others?)
 - What impression do you get concerning the character of this man? Look at his words in verse 7.

1. What was the relationship probably like between the sick people who were waiting to get healed?
 - Why didn't others let this poor man enter the pool first, even though he had been there longer than them?

1. What was actually this man's object of faith? (Where did he expect to get help from?)
 - What kind of strange “remedies” do sick people rely on in our own day?
 - What was the sin of this man which Jesus referred to in verse 14?

1. Why do you think Jesus decided to approach this particular man, instead of some other sufferer?
 - Why did Jesus ask the man a self-evident question (verse 6)?
 - Why didn't the man answer Jesus' question clearly (verse 7)?
 - If Jesus asked you now whether you want some burning problem of yours solved, what would you answer him?

1. According to Jesus, what is worse than suffering that lasts thirty eight long years (verse 14)?
 - What, according to Jesus, is worse for you than your present suffering?

1. For what purpose do you think the man went to the temple after being healed (verse 14)?
 - When did this man come to believe in Jesus (if he ever did)?

1. Why did the healed man do as he did in verse 15? Think of various possible explanations.
 - Jesus must have known beforehand how this incident would end. Why, then, did he heal the man?

GLAD TIDINGS: In the end Jesus had to bear the same fate as the man in the text: he was abandoned by all. Jesus even had to experience something worse than an illness of thirty eight years: he was forsaken by his Heavenly Father. That is why he is now able to say to anyone who has been abandoned: “You have some one who cares for you. You have me!”

9. THE BREAD OF LIFE (John 6:1-15)

BACKGROUND: The prophet the people are referring to in verse 14 means the one Moses had predicted would come into the world. This prophet was supposed to be like Moses himself (Deut.18:15 and 18). Because people had received manna in the wilderness in Moses' day, this new prophet should surely be able to perform a similar miracle. Five small loaves and two fish made one meal at that time.

1. What was the secret of Jesus' popularity (verse 2)?
 - Why didn't Jesus' popularity last very long?
 - What do famous people usually do when their popularity starts to ebb?

1. Why did Jesus test the faith of his disciples over and over again (verses 5-6)?
 - In your opinion, did the disciples become any more mature through these tests of faith?
 - How has God tested your faith through financial difficulties? (You can answer in your own heart.)

1. 200 denarii corresponded in Jesus day' to the wages of eight months. In our country today, how many people could you buy lunch for with eight months' wages (verse 7)?

2. How do you think the boy felt when he offered his lunch to one of the disciples (verse 9)?
 - Do you think Andrew expected a miracle when mentioning the boy to Jesus? Give your reasons?

1. Some theologians argue that the food was increased to 5000-fold because those who had something to eat, shared it with their neighbors. What in this passage shows that this interpretation is wrong?
 - Why is this miracle so important that it is recorded in all four gospels?

1. What kind of ruler have people opted to have throughout history (verse 15)?
 - Why didn't Jesus want to be made the king of the Jews at this point even though he could claim that position as a descendant of David?

1. What, above all, do "the masses" expect to get from Jesus today?
 - What do you expect to get from Jesus above anything else?
 - What does the feeding miracle of Jesus say to you personally today?

1. Why did people still require a miraculous sign from Jesus even after having experienced this particular one (verse 30)?

2. What did Jesus mean by saying after this miracle that he was the bread of life (verse 35)?

GLAD TIDINGS: Read verses 48 to 51. The miracle of feeding 5000 men speaks about Jesus himself – how he became the bread of life. Jesus had to die that we could eat his bread and live forever. The bread of life can also mean the bread of Holy Communion.

10. THE HIDDEN MESSIAH (John 7:40-52)

BACKGROUND: The prophet in verse 40 refers again to the new Moses, the appearance of whom the Jews had been expecting for more than one thousand years (Deut.18:15,18).

1. What different groups of people appear in this text?
 - What different stands do these people take towards Jesus?
1. On what grounds should Jesus' contemporaries have realized that he was the Messiah?
 - Why didn't Jesus proclaim to everyone: "I was raised in Nazareth, but I am a descendant of David born in Bethlehem" (verses 41-42)?
1. Do you think it is easier now to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, than while he still was on earth? Give your reasons.
2. Why did the messiah ship of Jesus have to be hidden? (What would have happened if the fact that Jesus was the Messiah had been obvious from the start?)
3. What makes it so difficult for an individual to stand against the power of a group (verses 45-48)?
4. What does verse 49 reveal to us about the Pharisees' way of thinking?
5. What had the Pharisees perhaps originally planned to do at the council's meeting described in verses 45 to 52?
 - Why did the words of Jesus rather than his miracles seem to have impressed the temple guards (verse 46)?
1. What might have happened if Nicodemus had not kept silent (verses 50-51)?
 - Earlier on, when Nicodemus had come to Jesus during the night, he probably did so because he was afraid of the other Pharisees. How did he now find the courage to say what he had in mind?
 - Do you also have the courage to express your convictions, even when everybody else disagrees with you?
1. In your opinion, did the words of Nicodemus have their desired effect? If they did, what was it?
 - Ending up by being harshly criticized by others, do you think Nicodemus regretted what he had said (verse 52)? Give your reasons.
1. (If you have time) What is the responsibility of the individual in a situation where the majority is about to make the wrong decision?
 - Why do you think God didn't reveal explicitly in front of everybody that Jesus was the Messiah?

11. JESUS AS A JUDGE (John 8:1-11)

BACKGROUND: According to the law of Moses, both the man and the woman caught in adultery should have been stoned to death (Lev.20:10). The Romans, however, had assumed the right to preside over capital punishment in occupied Israel.

1. What makes a person commit adultery? Think of various reasons.
 - Imagine the life of this woman after she had found “a new love”. What kind of happiness, what kind of pain did this relationship bring to her life?

1. What do you think could be the worst aspect of being caught right in the act of adultery?
 - How do you think the woman might have felt about her partner after he fled the scene?
 - What do you think was the most difficult thing in this situation for the man, who was probably also married?

1. There were many people involved in this incident. Think how the following people may have felt about the adultery and possible death penalty: the husband of the woman – her children – her parents (if they were still alive)? What about the wife of her lover, and his children?
 - How might this incident have affected the future of the children involved?

1. How did the woman possibly feel about Jesus when she was dragged before Him (verses 3-5)?
 - How do you think the woman felt about her adultery at that moment?

1. Why did the Jews drag the woman in front of Jesus even though they knew that the death penalty was something only the Romans presided over?
 - Why didn't Jesus simply answer: “None of you has the right to throw a stone at this woman”, instead of what he actually said in verse 7?

1. Why do you think the accusers left the place in the order stated in verse 9?
 - Why didn't Jesus want to observe the effect his words had on his audience, choosing, instead, to bend down and write something on the ground?

1. Why did Jesus, and he alone, have the right to condemn this woman to death?
 - Why didn't Jesus act according to the Law of Moses in this case?
 - What happened to the punishment this woman should have suffered after having ruined the happiness of so many people?

1. Why do you think the woman didn't flee the scene while Jesus was writing on the ground for the second time and she had the chance to do it (verses 8-9)?
 - When do you think the woman started to believe that her sins had been forgiven?

1. Why, do you suppose, Jesus wanted to say the words in verse 11 to this woman?
 - Jesus is also saying the words in verse 11 to you. What might they mean to you in your present circumstances?

GLAD TIDINGS: We are not told what Jesus wrote on the ground. Perhaps he acted like a judge

and firstly wrote out the capital punishment that the law pronounced on adultery. And bending down for the second time, perhaps he may even have added these words: "I will suffer her punishment in her place."

12. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (John 9:1-7, 18-23 and 35-41)

BACKGROUND: Hardly any other miracle of Jesus received as much attention as did the healing of the man born blind. (John 9:32, 10:21, 11:37). If somebody is born blind, his eyeballs are undeveloped. His other senses, for example hearing, usually become very keen instead.

1. Verses 1-7

- How does the life of the parents change if a child with a handicap is born into the family?
- What impression do you get about how these parents may have tackled this situation?
- Try to imagine what the average day may have been like for this blind beggar.
- What do you think this man may have thought about the love of God?
- The blind beggar had heard many a time what passers-by had said about his disability. Do you think anyone can ever get used to hearing comments like those of the disciples (verse 2)?
- Why do we humans always want to blame someone for the suffering around us?
- What sorts of situations have made you feel that your tragedies, or those of your family, are somebody's fault?
- How did the beggar probably feel upon hearing the answer given by Jesus to the question of the disciples (verses 3-5)?
- In your opinion, how could the work of God be best displayed in your own life (verse 3)?
- What does it show by the fact that the man didn't protest when a stranger came and put mud paste on his eyes (verse 6)?
- Why didn't Jesus heal the blind man on the spot, rather than send him to grope his way to the Pool of Siloam?

1. Verses 18-23. The reaction of the parents. Note that being put out of the synagogue equaled being put out of the wider community (cf. weddings, funerals etc.).

- How do you think the parents might have reacted to comments like the one in verse 2?
- Why didn't the parents seem particularly happy about the healing of their son?
- Why was the healed man apparently unafraid of being put out of the synagogue, in contrast to his parents (verse 22)?
- How do you think you would have acted in the parents' position?

1. Verses 35-43. The second encounter between Jesus and the healed man.

- Why do you suppose Jesus wanted to talk to this man once more?
- Why didn't Jesus ask the man: "Do you believe in me?" instead of "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (verse 35)?
- Jesus asks you the same question today. What do you answer him?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world (verse 5)?
- What does verse 39 mean?
- Why do you think Jesus had to experience the darkness of hell, even though he himself was the light of the world?

GLAD TIDINGS: Your sufferings and those of your loved ones have been given to you so that the

work of God might be displayed in your lives. Take verse 3 home with you as a word from Jesus today for you personally.

13. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (John 10:1-16)

1. Verses 1-6. At this stage Jesus hasn't yet revealed that he is talking about himself. Thus the discussion in your Bible study must for the moment deal only with a literal shepherd and his sheep.
 - What characteristics does a sheep have according to these six verses?
 - What is peculiar to a shepherd according to these verses?
 - Why can't a sheep manage without a shepherd?
 - Why is it not easy to change from one shepherd to another?
 - What are the differences between a shepherd and a thief?
 - What is the function of a watchman in the life of a sheep?

1. Verses 7-10. Thieves, robbers and gates.
 - What does it mean that Jesus is a gate? (Where is he a gate to?)
 - Whom is Jesus referring to in verse eight?
 - Why should anyone want to come into a Christian fellowship "over the fence" and not through the gate (cf. also verse 1)?
 - What does Jesus mean by claiming that inside the Christian fellowship there are people who will "steal and kill and destroy"?
 - Are these words of Jesus relevant to your own life: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (verse 10)?

1. Verses 11-13: It is only now that Jesus reveals himself as the Good Shepherd of whom many prophets in the Old Testament wrote about. (For example [Ezek.34](#) and [Psalms 23](#)).
 - What are the differences between a shepherd and a hired hand? (Why would a hired hand have accepted the job in the first place, do you think?)
 - Whom is Jesus referring to as "a hired hand"?
 - Find as many similarities as possible between Jesus and a good shepherd.
 - How would you feel if your child offered his life for his dog?
 - Which of these two things makes more sense to you: that a man dies for the sake of an animal or that God dies for the sake of human beings?
 - Why did Jesus agree to die for your sake?
 - Give an example of "a wolf" found among Christians.
 - How must the shepherds of our day fight the "wolves" that attack our Christian fellowship?

1. Verses 14-16: Coming to know the Good Shepherd.
 - How do a sheep and a shepherd come to know each other? (How does Jesus come to know us and how do we come to know him?)
 - What does this passage teach us about the words of Jesus (3,4,5,8,16)?
 - How can we learn to distinguish the voice of Jesus from other voices?
 - What is common to all the Christians of the world (verse 16)?
 - Why can't we speak about the Good Shepherd without speaking about his death?

GLAD TIDINGS: The reader may read [Ex.12:7,13](#). This text combines the image of a sheep with that of a door, and teaches us how Jesus became a door (or a gate) himself.

14. THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (John 11:1-5 and 32-46)

BACKGROUND: When Jesus heard about the illness of Lazarus, he was one day's walk away from Bethany.

Verses 1-5

1. How did these three siblings know that Jesus loved them (verses 3 and 5)?
 - How can you know that Jesus loves you and your family?
1. Why didn't Jesus set out at once to heal Lazarus?
 - What did Jesus mean by the words of verse 4?
 - Do you think that Jesus could also say the words of verse 4 in regard to your suffering?

Verses 25-26

1. What do these verses mean?
 - Why is it that the one who believes in Jesus does not have to fear death?

Verses 32-46

1. How do you think Mary felt about Jesus while saying the words found in verse 32? Discuss various possibilities.
2. What exactly was the reason for Jesus becoming "deeply moved in spirit and troubled" (verse 33)?
3. What might it have meant to Mary that Jesus wept with her (verse 35)?
 - What does it mean to you that Jesus has – perhaps unknown to you – wept with you about parting from a loved one, or some other sorrow in your life?
1. For what purpose did Martha think Jesus wanted to open the grave (verses 38-39)?
 - Did Martha believe that Jesus would raise her brother from the dead? Give your reasons.
 - What did Jesus mean by his words in verse 40?
1. What exactly did Jesus ask for in his prayer in verses 41-42?
 - How do you think those present felt when they saw Lazarus coming out of the grave (verses 43-44)?
1. How was the faith of Martha and Mary changed by the events at the grave of Lazarus?
 - How did this miracle affect the Jews who were present (verses 45-46)?
 - Why is it that some people can stick to their unbelief, even when witnessing a miracle like this one?
1. How do you think Lazarus felt on being brought back to life?
 - Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead while knowing perfectly well what price

he would have to pay for this action later on (verse 53)?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus raised a dead man who had only been paid his due wages (because the wages of sin is death). Soon after this, Jesus atoned for Lazarus' sin with his own death. That is why Jesus can now become the resurrection and the life for you, for me and for our loved ones.

15. A KERNEL OF WHEAT THAT DIED (John 12:20-33)

BACKGROUND: It was the last night of Jesus' life here on earth. He knew that he would be killed the next day. Through these words the Savior reveals to us something of the fierce struggle that was raging in his heart before his death.

1. Why didn't the Greeks turn directly to Jesus with their request (verses 20-21)?
 - Why didn't Philip turn directly to Jesus with his request (verse 22)?

1. What does it mean in practice to "love one's own life" (verse 25)?
 - What would it mean in practice to "hate one's life in this world" (verse 25)?
 - Why can't we humans become happy if we set doing so as our biggest goal?
 - What did verse 26 mean in the experience of the disciples?
 - How could you put verse 26 into practice in your own life?

1. What kind of struggle was raging in the heart of Jesus at this moment (verses 27-28)? (Which alternatives did Jesus have to choose from?)
 - Jesus had decided to die for the sins of mankind even before he came to this world. Why was he nonetheless so deeply troubled in this situation?
 - What made Jesus to choose the way of a kernel of wheat?

1. If you had to choose, which of these two would you take: a happy life which benefits no one else, or a life full of sufferings which brings great blessing to others? Give your reasons.

2. Can you say concerning your own suffering what Jesus said: "It was for this very reason I came to this hour" (verse 27)? Give your reasons.

3. What had Jesus set as the most important goal in his life (verses 28-29)?
 - Why would the name of God the Father be most glorified in the death of his Son?

1. What do verses 31 and 32 mean?

2. What was Jesus' answer to Philip and Andrew's request (verses 23-33)?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus gave up his life because of his love for us. Shouldn't we then give our lives because of our love for him!

16. THE MASTER AS A SLAVE (John 13:1-17)

BACKGROUND: Jesus had rented a room and asked his disciples to prepare a Passover meal there. Water, a basin and a towel were ready at hand, but no servant was there to wash everyone's feet before the meal. People ate in a half reclining position, and the unwashed feet of a neighbor could reduce one's appetite.

1. Jesus knew that he would die the next day. What would you do today if you knew that you would die tomorrow?
 - What does verse 3 have to do with the rest of the story?
1. Why didn't any of the disciples want to do the work of a slave? (Why did even the youngest of the company refuse to serve the others by washing their feet?)
 - Why is "a pecking order" so important for us humans, do you think?
1. How do you think the disciples felt when starting the Passover meal with unwashed feet?
 - Why do you suppose Jesus washed the feet of the disciples only after they had started to eat (verse 4)?
1. What did Jesus want to reveal about himself through this act?
2. How would you feel if Jesus did something you had already refused to do?
3. Why did Peter refuse to be washed by Jesus (verses 6-8)?
 - What do the words in verse 8a reveal about Peter?
 - Why do you suppose a person can have no part with Jesus if he refuses to be washed by him (verse 8)?
1. Why do you think Peter all of a sudden wanted Jesus to wash his hands and his head as well as his feet (verse 9)?
 - What does Jesus mean by his reply to Peter in verse 10? (What does he refer to by "having a bath", what about "washing one's feet"?)
 - Can you say that Jesus has washed away your sins? If you can – where and when did it happen?
1. Why did Jesus want to wash even the feet of Judas (verses 2,11)?
 - How do you think Judas felt when Jesus was kneeling before him?
 - Do you think Judas believed in the love of Jesus (verse 10)?
 - What was the big mistake made by Judas?
1. How can Christians in our day follow the example Jesus set for us here (verses 12-17)?
 - Why is it impossible for a Christian to wash the feet of others, if he hasn't already let Jesus wash his own feet?
1. Why does this particular act of Jesus show "the full extent of his love" (verse 1)?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus associated the work of a servant or a slave with his own death on the cross by saying: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever

wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45).

17. THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE (John 14:1-11)

BACKGROUND: How many of us would have the presence of mind to think about the troubled hearts of others if we knew that we would be tortured and killed the next day?

1. In your opinion, does a troubled heart and a downcast spirit show a lack of faith? Give your reasons (verse 1).
 - What makes you troubled today? (You can answer in your own heart.)

1. What does verse 1 mean?
 - What facts must one believe concerning God or Jesus when one is worried?

1. What does Jesus say about faith in these 11 verses? Look up all the places where this theme is mentioned.

2. What do we learn about heaven through verses 2 and 3?
 - What does the first verse have to do with the second and the third?

1. In what circumstances has heaven become important to you?

2. What does Jesus mean by claiming "I am the way" (verse 6)?
 - What difference is there between someone saying "Here is the way", and saying "I am the way"?
 - Why can't anyone get to heaven except through Jesus?

1. What does it mean that Jesus is "the truth and the life" (verse 6)?

2. What do verses 7 to 11 teach us about the relationship between God and Jesus?
 - Why can't anyone be a Christian unless they believe that Jesus is God?

1. What were the disciples, to whom Jesus spoke all these words of encouragement, like (Cf. [John 13:37-38, 14:5,8,9](#))?
 - Why had the disciples learned so little about both themselves and Jesus during the three years they had spent together?

1. Jesus forbade his disciples to worry and yet he himself became overwhelmed with sorrow that very same night. (The leader may read [Matt.26:37-38](#).) How can you explain this discrepancy between the words and deeds of Jesus in this case?
 - What was it that Jesus was afraid of in Gethsemane?

GLAD TIDINGS: Jesus was afraid of nothing else except God's wrath and the wages of sin, which is death. Because he carried these things in our stead, he has the right to say to us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." Let these words be the special greeting from Jesus for you today.

18. THE TRUE VINE (John 15:1-11)

BACKGROUND: Israel had previously been the Lord's vine. He had, however, become disappointed with it, because it hadn't borne fruit for him (Is.5:1-7). Jesus claims in our text that he is the true vine, one which God can be satisfied with. A vine is pruned every winter by cutting superfluous branches. The more one prunes a vine, the stronger the stalk becomes.

1. Try to think of as many similarities between a vine and Jesus as possible.
 - What is common to both Christians and the branches of vine?

1. In your opinion, what is the Christian who bears much fruit actually like?
 - Consider the process of bearing fruit in the light of the first four verses. What are the responsibilities of the branches (us), the vine stalk (Jesus) and the gardener (God) in this process?

1. The leaves are the most conspicuous and beautiful part of a vine, and yet they must be cut off. What were some things you had wanted to "grow" in your own life, which God yet pruned away? (You can answer in your own heart.)

2. Think of various reasons why a branch might fall from a vine. (For example, what might hinder sap from flowing into branches?)
 - For what reasons might a Christian fall away from Jesus?
 - What especially puts you in danger of falling away? (You can answer in your own heart.)

1. What happens to those people who give up their faith? What does verse 6 mean in this regard?

2. Try to find from this passage as many conditions necessary for bearing fruit as possible.
 - How many times does the verb "remain" appear in this passage?
 - Where must a disciple "remain" in order to bear fruit?
 - How can the words of Jesus remain in us (verse 7)? (What might be the opposite of Jesus' words remaining in us?)

1. What does it show about a relationship if one part does not heed the other's requests (verse 10)?
 - What does it show about a Christian if he doesn't care for the commandments of Jesus?
 - What do you have to do if you realize that you haven't obeyed Jesus' commandments?

1. How do we remain in the love of another human being (verse 9)?
 - How do we remain in the love of Jesus (verse 9)?

1. The word to take home from this Bible-study is verse 9. What does it mean to you that Jesus has loved you as much as his Father has loved him?

GLAD TIDINGS: None of us has borne as much fruit as we should. Jesus was dealt with in our

place as a branch that didn't bear any fruit: though he had borne more fruit than anyone else, he was "thrown into the fire and burned" (verse 6).

19. SADNESS WILL TURN INTO GLADNESS (John 16:20-24, 32-33)

NOTE: Jesus speaks here about the effect on his disciples of his death – which would take place the following day.

1. Why would the world possibly rejoice about the death of Jesus (verse 20)?
2. What does Jesus want to say to us through the image of a woman giving birth (verse 21)?
 - Why is it always painful for something new to be born?
 - What new has been born into your own life, or into the lives of your loved ones, through pain you have experienced?
 - Jesus is probably referring to his own death in verse 21. What does he want to say about it through the simile of birth?
1. How can grief and joy belong together (verse 22)?
 - What kinds/sorts of things can take our joy away from us (verse 22)?
 - What is the joy that nothing and no one can take away from us?
1. According to Jesus, what condition is there for prayer being heard (verses 23,24)?
 - What difference is there between simply to praying to God and praying to him in the name of Jesus?
1. What does Jesus mean by his promise that his Father will give us whatever we ask him for (verses 23,24)?
 - Do you believe that the promises in verses 23 to 24 are valid in your case too? Give your reasons.
 - What has been the most wonderful answer to your prayers during your life as a Christian?
1. Jesus says in verse 33 that Christians will have trouble as long as they are in this world. What kinds of things is Jesus referring to by "trouble"?
 - Why are so many Christians looking for a life without any troubles?
1. What does it mean that we have peace in Jesus even in the midst of our sufferings?
 - In your opinion, can a Christian have peace in the midst of his sufferings, if he does not first believe that they come from the hand of God? Give your reasons.
1. What does it mean that Jesus has overcome the world (verse 33)?
 - Jesus wants to say verse 33 personally to you today. What do his words mean to you in your present circumstances?

20. JESUS IS PRAYING FOR HIS OWN (John 17:13-21)

BACKGROUND: This is the last prayer Jesus prays for his disciples while he is with them. He knows that soon they will desert him. There is a word in this passage, which is very common in the gospel of John, namely "the world". It appears in this gospel a total of 50 times. The leader may read the following instances: [John 1:9-11](#); [9:5](#); [15:18-19](#) and [16:33](#).

1. What would you pray for your loved ones if you knew that you would soon die?
 - What does Jesus ask for his disciples during his last night on this earth?

1. PROTECTION (verses 11,12,15)
 - What would you like God to protect you and your loved ones from?
 - What does Jesus promise to protect his own from? (Why doesn't Jesus pray for his Father to protect his disciples from suffering?)
 - What is the means by which Jesus will protect us?

1. THE WORLD (verses 13-18)
 - What does Jesus say about the world in this last prayer of his?
 - What is the biggest difference between Jesus' disciples and the world?
 - Why does the world hate Christians (verse 14)?
 - What are the two dangers in regard to a Christian's relationship to the world? (Why doesn't Jesus want to isolate his own from the world – for example by putting them into a monastery, cf. verse 18?)
 - Think about your relation to the world: is it as Jesus would like it to be?
 - How would you evaluate your Christian fellowship in this respect? Is its relationship to the world as Jesus prayed it would be in his last prayer?

1. JOY (verse 13)
 - Where does the full measure of joy of a Christian come from?
 - How can Jesus expect his disciples to be joyful while the world is hating and persecuting them?
 - Define the word "joy" – what does Jesus mean by it?
 - If you feel that you don't have any joy in your life, what do you think might be the reason?

1. GOD'S WORD (verses 14,17,19)
 - Is it difficult or easy for you to believe that God's word, the Bible, is true (verse 17)? Give your reasons.
 - What will happen if a Christian denies one portion of the Bible by claiming that it is no longer valid in our day?
 - What does Jesus mean when he says that the truth will sanctify us (verse 17)?

1. SUMMARY
 - What does the prayer of Jesus teach us about the so-called "spiritual warfare"? (If you are not familiar with the term, you can skip this question.)
 - What in this prayer touches your heart most deeply?

GLAD TIDINGS: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the WORLD!" ([John 1:29](#)).

"For God so loved the WORLD that he gave his one and only Son" ([John 3:16](#)).

21. JESUS IS ARRESTED (John 18:1-14)

BACKGROUND: Look on the map of Jerusalem for the Kidron Valley and Gethsemane. Concerning Judas, see [John 12:6](#). A couple of days after this incident Judas committed suicide. Note that the arresters here are mostly Jewish temple guards (verse 3).

1. Imagine, how things might have been for Judas in the company of Jesus the previous three years. What sorts of good experiences may he have had? What about disappointments? The answer comes outside of this text.
 - Do you think that Jesus loved Judas as much as he did his other disciples? Give your reasons.
 - Did Judas believe in the love of Jesus? Why, why not?

1. Why do you think Jesus had made Judas the keeper of the money bag ([John 12:6](#))?
 - Why can greed for money have such a power over human beings?
 - In what circumstances would you perhaps betray Jesus and your Christian faith?

1. Why do you think Jesus was arrested at night, not during the day?
 - Imagine the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, in the midst of many olive trees: the sound of the steps in the darkness, then the light of torches, shouts... Who seems to be terrified in this situation, and who strikes you as courageous (verses 3-6)?

1. Why did Jesus of his own accord step out of the darkness in full view of those who wanted to arrest him (verse 4)?
 - By saying "I am he" Jesus pronounced the name of God. ("Yahweh" = I am who I am). Why did those arresting him fall to the ground upon hearing it (verse 6)?

1. What was Jesus most concerned about at the time of his arrest?
 - Verses 8-9 describe a "glorious exchange": Jesus took the place of sinners and in doing so let them flee from the wrath of God. Imagine Jesus saying the words of verse 8 in front of Satan, while pointing to you and your loved ones. What is the meaning of these words for you when read in this way?

1. What was Peter's purpose in striking with his sword (verse 10)?
 - Other gospels tell us that Jesus, as his very last miracle, healed the ear of Malchus. Why did he do it?
 - What do you think Malchus told his family about the happenings of that night?

1. A few moments earlier Jesus had asked his Father three times to free him from the cup of suffering. Why did he now accept it freely and gracefully?
 - Who imparted this suffering to Jesus (verse 11)?
 - Could you speak about your own suffering in the way that Jesus did in verse 11?
 - What difference does it make from whose hand you receive your suffering, from the hand of Satan, bad people or your Heavenly Father?

GLAD TIDINGS: The cup in verse 11 contained all the sins and filth of this world: all the cruelty that newspapers tell about every day (cf. [Rev.17:4](#)). In drinking this cup it is as if Jesus poured into

himself all of that filth, and it became a part of him. That is how he became the Substitute of each and every sinner on earth, including you.

22. IT IS FINISHED! (John 19:25-30)

BACKGROUND: Crucifixion was perhaps the cruelest way ever invented for torturing a fellow human being. What made it painful for a crucified person to talk, was that while inhaling he had to put his weight on the nails in his feet. While hanging on the cross Jesus was in fact in hell, because he had been forsaken by God. The disciple whom Jesus loved was in fact John himself (verse 26).

1. Verses 25-27

- Why do you think it is that most of the friends of Jesus gathering under the cross were women? (Do you think there is a difference between men and women when it comes to witnessing suffering that can no longer be relieved?)
- Why couldn't Mary, the mother of Jesus, keep away from the cross of her Son?
- What do you think was most difficult for Mary in this situation?
- Which do you think Mary was hoping to happen in this situation; that a miracle would happen, or that her Son would die as soon as possible? Give your reasons.
- When witnessing the humiliation of Jesus, did Mary still believe that he was the Son of God? Give your reasons.
- What did the last words of her Son mean to Mary? Imagine the situation where Jesus died without saying anything to his mother.
- Why did Jesus want to leave his mother in the care of John, and nobody else? (How would Mary's situation have been different if she had returned to her four remaining sons after Jesus' death; note that they didn't believe in him yet?)
- What do you think Jesus would like to point out through this story about your relationship to your parents?

1. Verses 28-29

- Think of various reasons why crucified people became extremely thirsty.
- What else except water did Jesus thirst after on the cross?
- Jesus had once said in front of a crowd, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). Why did Jesus, the owner of Living Water, now have to succumb to thirst?

1. Verse 30

- The leader should read Matt.3:15 – Jesus' words immediately before his baptism. Compare them with verse 30.
- Do you believe that Jesus has fulfilled in your place all righteousness (i.e. all God's commandments)?
- What is the difference between these two expressions, "Jesus died" and, "Jesus gave up his spirit"?
- Compare the last hours of Jesus with the last ours of somebody you have seen die. (What was so unique in Jesus' behavior?)

23. OUTSIDE THE EMPTY TOMB (John 20:11-18)

BACKGROUND: The leader should read [Luke 8:1-3](#), which tells us something about the past of Mary Magdalene. Mary, unlike the disciples, stood by the cross to the bitter end and even witnessed Jesus' burial ([Matth.27:61](#)). The word "rabboni" (verse 16) appears only twice in the gospels. It has a stronger meaning than "rabbi" (teacher).

1. What do you think Mary's life was like while she was possessed by seven evil spirits. (What was each day like, how were her personal relationships, what about the "fits" that the evil spirits caused...?)
 - How do you think things were for Mary Magdalene during the years she traveled around the country with Jesus?
 - What kind of love did Mary have for Jesus? Look at the terms she used about him (verses 13,16,18).

1. What does it show us about Mary that she stood by the cross until the bitter end, and even watched Jesus' burial?
 - How do you think Mary had spent those two nights and one day after Jesus had died?

1. Why didn't Mary want to leave the grave even though it was empty (verse 11)?
 - Why was it so devastating for Mary that she couldn't see the dead body of Jesus and touch it any more?

1. Why didn't Mary seem to be surprised at all to see two angels in the grave? Think of various explanations (verse 12-13).

2. Why didn't Mary recognize Jesus when seeing him and talking to him – think of various explanations (verse 14).
 - Has it ever happened to you that Jesus was near to you in your grief, but you didn't recognize him? If it has, in what circumstances?

1. Why did both the angels and Jesus ask Mary why she was crying – they must have known the answer already?
 - Why does Jesus want you to tell him the reason for your tears, something he already knows anyway?
 - Do you think Mary's tears were in vain? Give your reasons.
 - How can we know if our tears are in vain or not?

1. What made Mary finally recognize Jesus (verses 15-16)?

2. Why didn't Jesus want Mary to be carried away by her feelings (verse 17)?
 - What can we learn from the behavior in this situation of Jesus as a man?

1. Women were not accepted as witnesses in courts at that time. Why did Jesus appear first to a woman, expressly making her the first witness of the resurrection?
 - Jesus was not bound by the unfair rules of his society, for example chauvinism or the strict regulations concerning the Sabbath, and yet he didn't make Mary his twelfth apostle after Judas. Why, do you think?

1. How do you think the resurrection of Jesus changed the rest of Mary's life?
 - What hope does the resurrection of Jesus bring to the rest of your life?

24. NO SEEING, NO BELIEVING! (John 20:19-29)

BACKGROUND: The words of Thomas are recorded only three times in the New Testament. The leader may read [John 11:7-8,16](#) and [14:5-6](#).

1. What were the good traits in the character of Thomas? What about the bad ones?
 - Why do you think Jesus had chosen a man like this as one of his disciples?
 - Think of various possible reasons why Thomas was not with the other disciples on the evening of Easter Sunday.

1. Some of the disciples had seen the empty tomb, the empty strips of linen and heard the witness of Mary Magdalene. Did these men believe in the resurrection of Jesus at that point (verse 19)?

2. Why had Thomas decided not to believe in the resurrection although three things proved that it really had happened: the prophecies of the Old Testament, the predictions of Jesus himself, and the unanimous witness of his 10 best friends (verse 25)?
 - Which is more understandable for you; that Thomas would have believed in resurrection because of all the evidence, or that he still couldn't do so?

1. What, for you, is the thing most difficult to believe without seeing? (You can also answer this in your heart.)

2. For the whole week that followed, Thomas was the only one among the rejoicing disciples who didn't have any reason to be happy. How do you think he felt during those eight days?
 - Why did Thomas nevertheless stick to the company of the other disciples instead of going his own way?
 - What would have happened to Thomas if he had left his friends at this point?
 - What will happen to us if we leave the Christian fellowship when we have some doubts about the truth of the Christian faith?

1. How do you think Thomas felt when, after a week, he heard his own words from the mouth of the risen Lord (verse 27)?
 - Do you think Thomas actually put his finger into the scars of Jesus? Give your reasons.
 - What new things did Thomas realize about the meaning of Jesus' cross through this incident?

1. Thomas was the first person in all the New Testament who calls Jesus "God", not just "the Son of God" (verse 28). Why is it so important to believe that Jesus is God Himself?
 - Can you make the same confession about Jesus as Thomas did?

1. What does verse 29 say to you personally today?
 - Why do we need to believe in God's mercy and help, even before seeing or experiencing it?

1. According to this passage, how does Jesus treat a person who wants to believe in him but can't?

- What is the difference between a faith that is fighting against doubts, and a faith that has never doubted?

GLAD TIDINGS: When Jesus was hanging on the cross, he believed without seeing. He could experience only the wrath of God at that moment, and yet he called God his own God ([Matt.27:46](#)). This is how he suffered the punishment of all doubting Thomases, and is able to help them even now.

25. DO YOU LOVE ME? (John 21:15-19)

BACKGROUND: Note that Peter had disowned Jesus as many times as he now confesses his love to him. See also [Matt.26:33](#).

1. Imagine that you have deceived your friend. When you meet him next time, he suddenly asked you: “Do you love me more than others do?” Out of what motives would you think he made you this question?
 - Why does Jesus ask whether Peter loved him more than the other disciples (verse 15)?

1. In the original Greek, Peter uses in his answer a different verb from the one Jesus used in his question. (Jesus: Do you truly love me...? Peter: Yes, I am your friend.) Why does Peter change the verb (verse 15-16)?
 - In his third question, Jesus changes the verb to the one Peter had used all the time. (Are you my friend?) Why does he do this? (verse 17)?

1. Why does Peter become sad when Jesus asks his third question? Think of possible explanations.
 - Before disowning his Lord, Peter had been 100% sure about his love towards him. Do you think that Peter’s love was real at that time? Give your reasons.
 - What is the reason for Peter’s love for Jesus now?

1. Jesus today poses the same question to you as: “Do you love me?”. Is it easy or difficult for you to answer this question? Why?

2. Why does Jesus ask this question publicly, in front of the other disciples?
 - Why does Jesus commission Peter three times?
 - If this discussion hadn’t taken place, how would Peter’s future perhaps have unfolded?

1. What does it mean in practice to feed the lambs, to care for the sheep and to feed the sheep in a Christian church?
 - What effect did this incident have on Peter’s preaching from then on?
 - Try to imagine a “shepherd” of a Christian fellowship who doesn’t actually love Jesus. How would he carry out his ministry?
 - According to this passage, what are the people to whom Jesus gives a task to do like?

1. Peter had disowned Jesus one month earlier out of his fear of death. In verses 18 and 19 Jesus predicts that Peter will die as a martyr. How do you think Peter took this revelation and lived with that knowledge for the rest of his life?
 - Why wasn’t Peter afraid of death any more?
 - How would you take it if you learned that you would glorify God not only with your life but also with your death (verse 19)?

1. It may be that you have also betrayed Jesus like Peter did. Be that as it may, Jesus says to you today the same as he commanded Peter “Follow me!”. What will you answer him?

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