

5. Group Discussion Questions

A/ This is the Son of God – John 1-3

- When do we seek other's opinions or reviews? Whose opinions do we most highly regard? Why?
- In this section, John is giving us the opinions or reviews of a variety of people about Jesus. We might call it their "testimony".
- **Old Testament connection:** Compare 1v1 with Genesis 1v1. What is John saying about Jesus by this parallelism?
- Read 1v11. How does the miracle reveal God's glory?
- In 1v11 John records "the disciples put their faith in Him." What did that mean practically for his disciples at that time?
- Recount the different testimonies about Jesus to one another:
 - John the Baptist (1v29-36, 3v27-36)
 - The disciples (1v41,45,49)
 - The people (2v23)
 - Nicodemus (3v2)
- How do you regard Jesus? Why?
- Maybe you are reading this and not sure that you believe in Jesus. Pray for God to help you to see who Jesus really is.
- **Pray** for those you know who are yet to believe and be born again (3v3-8,16).

B/ I am the “Messiah”/”Christ” – John 4-5

- **Old Testament connection:** The Jews anticipated the coming of the Messiah. “Messiah” is a Hebrew word meaning “Anointed One”: the Greek word is “Christ”. The Messiah was to bring freedom (eg. Isaiah 61v1-3).
- In what ways does Jesus bring freedom in this section? The following are areas to talk around: the Samaritan woman's shame; the Samaritan's worship; the mixing of Jew and Samaritan; the mixing of male and female; the official's son; the invalid.
- Jesus offers “life” in 5v21. How are life and freedom connected?
- Jesus makes several statements about himself (4v25-26, 5v17-18, 5v26). What does Jesus point to as the evidence that these are true? (5v31-40)
- What signs of faith do you see in these episodes?
- If you feel able, encourage each other with stories of how Jesus has set you free.
- What freedom or “life” do you need to receive from the Christ? In what ways do you need to respond in faith? Pray for one another.
- **Pray** for those like the Samaritan woman who are outside of mainstream society and carry shame. Jesus is ready to help ... anyone else?

C/ I am the Bread of Life – John 6-7

- **Old Testament connection:** (there are many for this)
 - In Exodus 16, God provides the Israelites in the desert with “manna” which Moses describes in 16v15 “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat”. Some of this “manna” was placed in the Ark of the Covenant which represented the presence of God.
 - In Deuteronomy 8v3, Moses says that the above provision of manna was “to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”
 - It could be seen that Jesus is therefore being presented as the new Moses – especially given that Moses a central part of the discussion.
 - In Isaiah 55v1, the prophet call the thirsty to come to God to drink, and in Exodus 17v1-7, Water comes from a rock for the Israelites.
- Feeding the 5000 – What would you have gone away thinking/feeling if you had been a) in the crowd, b) the boy who gave the food, c) one of the disciples?
- Walking on the Water – As a disciples of Jesus, how would you apply this episode to your life?
- “Bread of Life”
 - Why do people search for Jesus today?
 - What is the connection between social action and evangelism?
 - Jesus was doing God’s will (6v38-40). How do you know if you are doing God’s will or not?
 - Jesus is clearly talking about spiritual food. How do you / can you feed on this food today?
 - What does Peter mean by “you have the words of eternal life”? (6v68)
- Streams of Living Water
 - Why does Jesus provoke strong responses? (7v12,13,15,20,30-32,40-41,43-44)
 - What do the streams of water symbolise? When do you most know the fountain of living water within you?
- Millions today do not have enough food to eat or easy healthy water to drink: what am I doing to help? Millions today do not have the Bible in their mother tongue: what am I doing to help those who are translating and distributing Bibles?
- **Pray** for those who are hungry both physically and spiritually. Pray concerning your own spiritual diet.

D/ I am the Light of the World – John 8-9

- This section has much about sin and forgiveness, darkness and light, blindness and sight.
- **Old Testament connection:** Isaiah makes frequent reference to Israel and the Messiah as a “light to the nations” eg Isaiah 9v2, 42v6, 49v6, 60v1. The imagery was that of bringing hope and showing the way to live. The Psalmist also picks up this imagery (eg Psalm 27v1, 36v9, 89v15, 119v105)
- What are the consequences of sin (or not sinning) and what does Jesus do about sin in the following episodes:
 - The woman caught in adultery (8v1-11)
 - Jesus’ discussion (9v12, 15-16, 21-26, 31-36, 44-46)
 - The blind man (9v1-5, 16, 24-25, 30-34, 39-41)
- In the light (!) of all this, what does Jesus mean by “I am the Light of the World”? What is the darkness and blindness?
- What is the crucial implication of what Jesus says in 8v58-59? See Exodus 3v14. What are the consequences of believing / not believing? (8v23-24)
- What does this mean I need to do about sin in my life?
- **Pray** for those who need spiritual light at this time. Pray for each other that you would be able to walk in the light of Christ (1 John 1v5-7)

E/ I am the Shepherd & Gate for the sheep

- This section is about how Jesus treats his sheep.
- **Old Testament connection:** Moses was a shepherd (Exodus 3v1) and David was a shepherd (1 Samuel 16v11-13) and these are both trailblazers of who Jesus is. Israel saw itself as a flock with God as their shepherd (eg Psalm 23v1, 100v3, Isaiah 40v11)
- Jesus likens himself to a gate to the sheepfold (10v7-10). In what way does this passage say he is a gate?
- In the rest of the chapter, Jesus likens himself to a shepherd. What are the characteristics of this Good Shepherd? What does that mean for us his sheep?
- Jesus makes an extraordinary claim in 10v30. How do the Jews respond in v31-32. Why? What determines whether we believe in him or not? (10v25-28).
- Share how this passage assures you in your salvation?
- Share how you listen to his voice (10v27).
- **Pray** for those who are currently “lost sheep” and need bringing into Christ’s pen. Pray for each other to have the assurance the Psalmist has in Psalm 23 and to listen to his voice well.

F/ I am the Resurrection and the Life – John 11-12

- This section includes the “7th sign” in the gospel which is the raising of Lazarus
- **Old Testament connection:**
 - In Moses’ closing speeches in Deuteronomy 30-32 there is an emphasis on God placing the way of “life” before the people and indeed him being their “life” (eg 30v15-20, 32v39-47).
 - The Psalmist describes God as the “fountain of life” (Psalm 36v9).
 - In Isaiah 53v11 we see prophecy of Jesus rising from the dead as he sees “the light of life”.
 - Daniel refers in 12v2 to the raising of the dead to eternal life.
 - The raising of the dead was also not new as Elijah raises a boy in 1 Kings 17v17-24 and Elisha raises a boy in 2 Kings 4v32-37.
- What does the suffering and death of Lazarus teach us about these human realities and God’s purpose and timing?
- What does the attitude of the religious leaders after the raising of Lazarus teach us about suffering and death?
- As Mary anoints Jesus, we see that this is a prophetic act (unexpectedly to Mary). Are there instances in your life which have turned out to be prophetic?
- Jesus sees glory in his death (12v23-25) Why is this? What is Jesus’ view of life after death in 12v24-25, 32-33? How should we respond?
- Are we living for the resurrection?
- **Pray** for those who are suffering or mourning at the present time. Pray for our hearts to be focussed on the future resurrection.

G/ I am the Way, the Truth and the Life

- This section is a transition to a discussion with the disciples in the upper room rather than with the world around. In it, Jesus sets the example and lays out the way his followers should live.
- **Old Testament connections:** The pillar of cloud and fire showed Israel the way through the desert, and Moses calls on the people of Israel to live in the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 10v12, 26v17, 30v16). The Psalmist calls on the Lord to show him God's ways (Psalm 25v4). It is a familiar theme for Isaiah too as he looks forward to a "Way of holiness" (Isaiah 35v8) and God declares that he shows the way (Isaiah 48v17).
- Jesus sets the example in his attitude to his disciples in 13v1-17. Note that Jesus knows that Judas is about to betray him (18-30) and Peter is going to deny him (31-38). What is his example? How does this match with his command in 13v34-35? What does that mean for you today?
- What is Jesus' destination? Do you know you are going to such a personal encounter?
- Jesus is "doing the Father's work" (14v9-14). What does that say about what we do and pray?
- Why does true love for God result in obedience? (v15-27)
- Jesus is going to be replaced by the Holy Spirit. What benefit does the Holy Spirit bring according to this section?
- **Pray** for your group of believers: that the example of Jesus would be followed.

H/ I am the Vine

- **Old Testament connections:** Israel is often referred to in the Old Testament as “God’s Vine” – he planted it, cared for it, took fruit from it (eg Psalm 80, Isaiah 5v1-7, Jeremiah 2v21). In each case, the vine has not produced the fruit it should have done (justice, righteousness, attitude to God) and it is going to be trampled on or cut down or burned up as God is not going to care for it any more. This explains Jesus saying he is the TRUE vine: he is the one who is going to stay true and uncorrupted (see particularly Jeremiah 2v21). Note too that Psalm 80v17 seems to be prophetically looking towards Christ as the “son of man”.
- Jesus talks about “fruitfulness” from being in the Vine. What sorts of things is this fruit image for? (there are several things which may be regarded as fruit in this section as a whole)
- What is the way by which we remain in the vine?
- It seems natural to see the Holy Spirit as the sap from the vine into us. What are the benefits he brings us in this section? (15v26-16v16)
- Jesus’ prayer covers 4 key themes of unity with God, unity with others, protection from the Evil One and sanctification. Discuss what is meant in each case.
- Are Jesus’ prayers answered? Why or why not?
- **Pray:**
 - Israel was the vine, but has been discarded. Paul indicates the opportunity for them to be re-grafted in (Romans 11). So let’s pray for the Jews and Israel.
 - Pray over one another the things Jesus prayed for.

I/ I am a King

- Old Testament connections: Jesus is the fulfilment of the promised king from David's line (eg Isaiah 11v1-10)
- If Jesus is King, he should be in charge. How do you see this evidenced in this section?
- What evidence do you see in this section that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep?
- We can often end up with dilemmas in life> What was Pilate's dilemma? Why was this a dilemma for him? (Keeping peace was a key part of a Roman ruler's job). If you had been appointed to a key role like this with opportunity for further promotion, what would you have done?
- What do Jesus' words "It is finished" mean for you?
- Do you and I expect to be treated better and have a more comfortable life and death than our King? Are you ready to follow your king?
- Pray:
 - for the persecuted church who have such terrible suffering. You may like to support Barnabas Fund or Open Doors who support the persecuted church.
 - Give thanks for Christ's suffering for you.

J/ He is Lord

- **Old Testament connections:** In the Old Testament, Yahweh was the very special name of God which was given to Moses (Exodus 3) and was very very special to the people of Israel. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, but the Greek translation (“Septuagint”) used the Greek word “Kurios” to translate “Yahweh”. This is the same Greek word translated “Lord” in our English Bibles.
- What are the key evidences in this section for the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead?
- What are the personal connections with Jesus as Lord that you see in this section? (Mary, Thomas, Peter)
- What is “Lord I love you” ultimately going to mean for Peter?
- Are you prepared to declare “My Lord and my God” with Thomas and “Lord I love you” with Peter? What may that mean for your life?
- Peter is told by Jesus three times to “look after his sheep”. What does that mean for you today?
- **Pray** for a growing personal connection and commitment to the Lord.