****

**Chapter 1 Study Guide: The Birth of Hope**

**Icebreaker**: In this series “HIS Story,” the goal is to know Jesus like you’ve never known Him before.” How well would you say you know Jesus? If you had to write a biography about Jesus based on what you know today, what kind of details would be included in the book?

1. What do you personally want to learn about Jesus? What questions do you have about Him?
2. During this study, we encourage you to read the chapters in advance and underline anything that jumps out at you as important and mark a “?” next to questions you have. Is there anything in the reading this week that jumped out at you?
3. On pg. 4 the writer says he’s followed the life of Jesus carefully from the beginning and interviewed eyewitnesses to write an orderly account about Jesus. Why do you think the author went to so much trouble to get it right? How important is it to have certainty when it comes to Jesus? (explore consequences of NOT having certainty compared to rewards of having certainty)
4. On pg. 5 it says, “Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us.” What do you think this means? What does it say about God’s heart for His people? For us?
5. On pg. 10 an angel is sent to Zechariah to announce that God has answered his prayers and will give him a son. Then on pg. 11, the angel says that because Zechariah doesn’t believe that God has answered his prayers, he will be unable to speak until his son is born.

Why do you think Zechariah could pray about having a son but could not believe that God really answered this prayer? What do you pray about that you’d be surprised that God answered?

1. In ancient writings, the birth story of an important person set the stage for the purpose of their life. What do these following circumstances say about the purpose of Jesus’ life?
	1. Pg. 15, God used a poor, unwed couple to give birth to the Messiah.
	2. Pg. 16, the angels appeared to shepherds who were lower-class citizens. Since working in the field kept them from observing the regulations of the law, they were social outcasts in a religious society.
	3. Pg. 18, God led the Magi (where we get our word magic…some versions say “wise men”) with a star to Jesus even though they were involved in pagan practices of the day such as astrology and astronomy. This in no way endorsed these pagan practices but instead illustrates that indeed “every knee will bow” as even these pagan Magi worshipped baby Jesus.
	4. Pg. 11, 15, 16, 19, are a cluster of angelic appearances.
2. When you consider the events surrounding Jesus’ birth, where do you see evidence of God’s Upper Story of redemption? How does recognizing God’s power and control help our faith in the midst of our daily lives?
3. One of the few details the Gospel writers share about Jesus’ childhood was the incident with Jesus in the temple and His parents that happened when Jesus was twelve years old (pg. 21). How was Jesus able to obey His heavenly Father (John 5:36-37) without disobeying his earthly parents (Ephesians 6:1-3)?
4. Jesus was obviously educated and gifted enough to astonish those who observed Him in the temple as a twelve year old! What does this say about the potential of our youth to do great things for God (1 Timothy 4:12)?

****

**Chapter 2 Study Guide: Jesus’ Mission Begins**

**Ice Breaker:** “Two Truths and a Lie” Ask the group to share two true facts about themselves and one lie. Give them a few moments to think of the facts and the lie (leader, be ready to go first). Now get the rest of the group to vote on which fact is false.

As we continue to learn about Jesus, it’s important to keep in mind what is true about Jesus and not just popular notions of Him that may not be accurate. So let’s see what we learned about Jesus this week…

1. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
2. The beginning of chapter 2 gives us a fuller picture of John the Baptist’s ministry. The theme of his message was “repentance” (pg. 27-28). What does repentance mean and how do you know if you have done it? How important is repentance in our lives (see Acts 2:38)?

On pg. 28 John says, “Prove by the way you live that you have repented.” What does this mean and why does it matter?

1. On pg. 29 it says that people started to look to John as the Messiah. How did John respond to this? What does this response say about John’s heart and what example does it set for us (See James 4:6)?
2. Why does Jesus say He is being baptized (pg. 30)? What does His baptism say to us about humility and submission to God’s will in our lives?
3. On pg. 30 it tells us that “immediately” after His baptism Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil. How does the fact that Jesus was tempted to sin allow us to relate to Him better (See Hebrews 4:15-16)?
4. How is Jesus able to effectively resist the temptation to sin (pg. 30-31)? How does this help us in our temptations (See 1 Corinthians 10:13)?
5. When Jesus meets his first disciples He invites them to “come and see” (pg. 33) then “follow me” (pg. 34). How does this compare to when you first met Jesus?
6. Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding (pg. 34-35) is both compassionate (toward wedding party) ***and*** revealing (Jesus’ authority). What impresses you the most about this miracle, His compassion or His authority? Why?
7. Why did Jesus react so sternly in the temple (pg. 36)? How does this contradict the common perception of Jesus?
8. What does Jesus tell Nicodemus a person must do in order to see the kingdom of God (pg. 37)? What does it mean to be “born from above?”
9. On pgs. 41-42 Jesus encounters a woman at Jacob’s well. From the Samaritan woman’s perspective, how would you describe Jesus to your friends?
10. Jesus says that whoever drinks that water He gives will never thirst again (pg. 41). How is our need for salvation and eternal life like thirst?
11. Where do you see Jesus fulfilling the “upper story” or His mission in this chapter?

****

**Chapter 3 Study Guide: Jesus Calls Disciples to Follow Him**

**Icebreaker:** We are in week 3 of our study now and have come to the final stage in the first year of Jesus’ ministry. What has impressed or surprised you the most about Jesus in our study so far?

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading that you want to discuss?
2. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
3. On pg. 45 we learn that Jesus preached “the gospel” which means the “good news.” Why do you think some people accept Jesus’ message as good news while others do not?
4. Why weren’t the people of Nazareth able to accept Jesus (pg. 46-47)? When does “familiarity” with certain things about Jesus cause us to be closed to His message?
5. When Jesus calls the group of fisherman to be His disciples (pg. 49), what does He say they will be doing as they follow Him?
6. How did these fishermen respond to Jesus’ call to follow Him? What does Jesus expect us to give up to follow Him?
7. Because of His miracles, Jesus became so popular that crowds prevented some needy people from reaching Him. What is the first thing that Jesus noticed about the man who came through the roof to meet Jesus (pg. 52)? What is the connection between God’s work in your life and faith?
8. Why do you think that sinners liked Jesus so much (pg. 52-53)?
9. What inherent dangers exist when a believer hangs out with unbelievers to witness to them?
10. What does Jesus mean by “those who are healthy don’t need a physician, but those who are sick do?” How does this apply to your life?
11. Jesus uses an illustration from winemaking to teach that it’s impossible to take Jesus’ new way of life and cram it into the old way of living (pg. 54). In the case of the Pharisees, the old way was living by lifeless rules and codes. What “old ways” do you try to hold onto while still trying to live Jesus’ new way?

****

**Chapter 4 Study Guide: Jesus’ Revolutionary Teaching**

**Icebreaker**: This chapter contains a lot of Jesus’ teaching and people loved Him. Who was the best teacher you ever had? What characteristics made them such a good teacher?

1. What stuck out to you from the teaching or reading this week?
2. This chapter begins with Jesus healing a man who was disabled. Why were the Jewish leaders questioning the man who had been healed (pg. 59)? Why were they persecuting Jesus (pg. 60)?
3. Why might someone prefer rules and regulations to freedom?
4. What authority does Jesus appeal to on pg. 60? Why is it important to understand who sent Jesus?
5. Why do you think that Jesus continued to break the Pharisees rules about the Sabbath (pg. 62-63)? How does this connect to Jesus’ mission and the “Upper Story” of God’s plan?
6. Why do you think Jesus spent all night in prayer before he appointed the twelve apostles (pg. 64)? What can learn from His example when it comes to making important decisions (See James 1:5-6)?
7. When you read through the “Beatitudes” on pg. 65-66, which one do you relate to the most and why?
8. Our role in HIS Story is to influence our world for Christ. To illustrate this, Jesus uses two examples, the first being salt (pg. 67). What are some of the ways that salt is useful and how does this apply to being a Christian?
9. The second illustration Jesus uses to illustrate being a Christian is light. What are the useful properties of light and how does this apply to being a Christian?
10. Jesus makes clear that He’s here to fulfill the Law, not to abolish it (pg. 67-68). What warning does He issue to those who disregard God’s Law? How do we “bend” and “break” God’s Law and what does it mean to live by God’s commandments?
11. Jesus issues six radical commandments on pg. 68-70. Can you identify each of the six? How is it possible to live according to Jesus’ commands (See Ephesians 4:20-24, 30 and 5:18)?
12. Jesus commands us to give in secret and pray in secret (pg. 70-71). Why do you think Jesus is so concerned about our motives? Why is it so hard to keep from living for other people’s approval?
13. When Jesus teaches us to pray, He addresses five types of prayer that we need to practice in our lives:
	1. Praise – “Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored”
	2. Purpose – “May your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”
	3. Provision – “Give us today our daily bread”
	4. Pardon – “Forgive us our debts (sins) as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors”
	5. Protection – “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”

Which of these types of prayer do you currently practice? Which types do you need to start practicing?

1. Why does Jesus say we shouldn’t worry (pg. 64)? What things do you worry about that you need to learn to turn over to God?
2. What warning does Jesus issue for those who judge others (pg. 72)? What are some of your pet peeves that you tend to judge more harshly than others? What advice does Jesus give about overcoming judgmentalism?
3. Is there ever a time a Christian should judge another person (pg. 73; See John 7:24; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13)?
4. How does Jesus say we will recognize a false prophet (pg. 74)?
5. According to Jesus, who will enter into the kingdom of heaven (pg. 74)?
6. What is the difference between the wise and foolish person according to Jesus (pg. 75)?
7. Why were the people amazed at Jesus’ teaching (pg. 75)?

****

**Chapter 5 Study Guide: Crowds Grow as Jesus Reveals Power**

**Icebreaker**: If Jesus were here today, what miracles do you think He would perform and why?

1. What stuck out to you from the teaching or reading this week?
2. In Jesus’ encounter with the centurion (pg. 76), what characteristics of the centurion’s attitude and request would be helpful to remember when we ask God for help?
3. When Jesus first saw the widow from Nain (pg. 77), what emotion does it say Jesus felt for her? How could this picture of Jesus help us to come to Him more?
4. Is it difficult for you to believe that Jesus really brought this dead man back to life? How would believing in God’s power to raise the dead strengthen our faith?
5. Even though John the Baptist has been faithful to God’s will in his life, he still has doubts while in prison (pg. 77). How can you relate to his questions and doubts?
6. Jesus had severe words for the towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida because even though Jesus did miracles in their midst, they still did not repent (pg. 79-80). What do you think Jesus would say if He came and preached in our city today?
7. **Background**: Jesus violated social taboos to reach out to those marginalized not only racially, economically and religiously – but also morally. The woman Jesus forgave and allowed to anoint Him (pg. 81-82) could have been a prostitute and was at least a woman with “loose morals.” What does this show about Jesus’ love for us?
8. In order to rebuke Simon’s attitude, Jesus tells a story. Why do you think Jesus uses a story to get his point across and what is the point of the story? Do you see your faith more like Simon’s or more like the woman’s?
9. Jesus says, “For the mouth speaks from what fills the heart” (pg. 84). So what does it say about the heart when:
	1. What you say does not match with what you really believe to be true?
	2. You give thanks to God?
	3. You are critical of others?
	4. You confess your faith in Christ?
10. Based on question #8, if you are being hurtful with your words, what needs to change?
11. In His parable of the soils, Jesus says some people receive God’s Word but fall away because of trouble, persecutions and testing (pg. 87). What troubles or persecutions cause some to fall away today?
12. How can you make sure that the worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the other desires of the world will not choke the life out of your Christian walk?
13. Jesus says, “Whoever has will be given more, but whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him” (pg. 88). This means that we are accountable for what we do with the “light” we have already been given and if we don’t obey what we have already received, we will never receive more. How can we make sure that we put into practice what we already have received?
14. How do the parables about the seed and yeast (pg. 89) help us better understand what the kingdom of God is like?
15. What can we learn about Jesus from the calming of the storm (pg. 91-92)?
16. How do the demon-possessed man’s actions after Jesus delivered him serve as an example to us?
17. Jesus tells the woman who had been suffering for twelve years with a hemorrhage, “Your faith has made you well” (pg. 94). He also tells Jairus to “just believe” and his daughter “will be healed” (pg. 95). What connection is there between a person’s faith and whether God heals him or her of a sickness?

****

**Chapter 6 Study Guide: Jesus Calls for Commitment**

**Icebreaker**: What’s the toughest commitment you have ever had to make and actually followed through on? (examples: exercise, college, waking up earlier, eating, etc.)

1. What stuck out to you from the teaching or reading this week?
2. As Jesus travels and preaches throughout the towns and villages, he feels compassion on them because they seem spiritually lost and helpless (pg. 98). How would you describe the spiritual condition of the unbelievers you know?
3. Jesus sends the disciples out to minister to the crowds on His behalf. What dangers does He warn them about (pg. 99-102)?
4. What does Jesus say to His disciples that would bolster their courage (pg. 99-102)?
5. How can we learn to be both “innocent” and “wise” in our interactions with the world?
6. What do you think it means to lose your life for Christ’s sake (pg. 102 top)?
7. Herod had arrested John the Baptist because John publicly rebuked Herod for marrying his own sister-in-law (pg. 103). What responsibility do Christians have to confront non-believers with their sin and to tell them of the remedy that Christ offers?
8. How do you think Christians can keep one another accountable (James 5:16)?
9. Once again, Jesus has compassion on the crowds so He taught them, healed them and also fed them (pg. 105). What does this say about how Jesus’ feelings towards us?
10. It becomes clear that the people follow Jesus and want Him to be their king because He gave them free food (pg. 107-109). Why doesn’t Jesus comply with the crowd’s request for more food?
11. What wrong motives for following Jesus can you name? What are the right reasons to follow Jesus?
12. Why do you think some people deserted Jesus after His teaching on the bread of life? How does this same thing happen in today’s world?

****

**Chapter 7 Study Guide: Jesus Trains His Disciples**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading that you want to discuss?
2. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
3. This chapter begins with the religious leaders questioning Jesus in an effort to trap and discredit Him (pg. 114). Why do you think they were so intent on discrediting Jesus? How do people attempt to discredit Him today?
4. In response to their questions, Jesus points out their hypocrisy which was prophesied long ago by Isaiah. The Pharisees and experts of the law justified disobeying God’s real commands (honor your Father and Mother) by following human traditions of the day (pg. 115). Why do you think people often look for rationalizations and loopholes to avoid doing the right thing?
5. Why do you think Jesus wasn’t as concerned about offending the Pharisees as His disciples were (pg. 115)? What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ example?
6. What does Jesus mean when He says, “What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person.” (pg. 115-116)?
7. During a meeting with the Syrophoenician woman, Jesus calls her faith great (pg. 117). What characteristics make her faith so great (pg. 117)? How can we learn to have faith like this?
8. In HIS Story we’ve learned that the message behind the miracle is even greater than the miracle itself. The people in the Decapolis region were completely astounded when Jesus healed a deaf man who had trouble speaking (pg. 118). What message do you think Jesus is trying to send when He healed this man?
9. Jesus miraculously feeds a large group of people for a second time (this time 4,000 – pg. 118-119). How can we learn to have the same amount of compassion for people that Jesus did?
10. Jesus blesses Peter for proclaiming the truth about His identity – that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (pg. 121). What are some different opinions that people in our world today have about who Jesus is? How would you answer someone who asked, “Who is Jesus to you?”
11. Jesus places a radical condition on discipleship when He calls His followers to lose their lives in order to gain eternal life. He also spells out very heavy consequences for not doing so (pg. 122). What celebrities recently seem to have “gained the whole world” yet lost or forfeited their very selves? In what specific ways do you need to learn to “lose your life” for Jesus?
12. Jesus reveals His glory to Peter, James, and John as He is transfigured before them on the mountain (pg. 122-123). If you had been present during Jesus’ transfiguration, how do you think you would have reacted?
13. When Jesus comes down off the mountain, he meets a father who desperately wants his son to be healed (pg. 124-125). How do you relate to his statement, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”?
14. What does Jesus say we must do if a person sins (pg. 127-128)? What is the hardest part about following this particular command?
15. Jesus tells a powerful story about forgiveness at the end of the chapter (pg. 129-130). What do you like about this story? What challenges you? Is there anyone you need to forgive “from your heart” right now?

****

**Chapter 8 Study Guide: Jesus Sends His Disciples Out**

**Icebreaker:** Since we’ve been talking about Jesus’ travels through His ministry, we’re going to discuss our own travels.What is the most interesting place you have ever traveled and why?

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading or teaching you want to discuss?
2. Chapter 8 begins with a debate between the crowds and religious authorities about who Jesus is. In response, Jesus makes an absolute statement: “If anyone wants to do God’s will, he will know about my teaching (pg. 133).” How would people in today’s world respond to a statement like this? How do you respond to it?
3. Jesus invites anyone who is spiritually thirsty to come to Him and promises to give the gift of God’s Spirit to them (pg. 135). We’ll learn in chapter 11 that the promise of God’s Spirit isn’t actually fulfilled until Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension. Acts 2:38-39 says this promise is fulfilled at the believer’s baptism and is available for every one in every generation who will believe in Jesus.
	1. Why do you think we need the Holy Spirit in order to have contentment and satisfaction in life?
	2. How have you found that Jesus has satisfied your thirst and longings in life?
4. According to the law, the woman caught in adultery should die for her sin (pg. 136). Even though the religious leaders pretend to be defending God’s holiness, what is their true motivation? How do you think the woman felt about being used by these men in order to get to Jesus? How do you think she felt about the way Jesus defended her?
5. What condition does Jesus give for being a real disciple and knowing the truth (pg. 138)?
6. What does Jesus mean by “everyone who practices sin is a slave of sin?” How does Jesus say we are able to be free from slavery to sin (pg. 138)?
7. What was Jesus really saying on pg. 140 when he told the Judeans, “Before Abraham came into existence, I am!”? (See Exodus 3:14) Why did they try to kill Him after He said this?
8. Jesus’ miracle of healing the man born blind created quite a stir and prompted many questions (pg. 140-143).
	1. Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus about the connection between sin and this man’s blindness? How does Jesus’ answer instruct us about the cause of suffering and the opportunity it presents?
	2. How do you respond to the healed man’s answer to the Pharisees: “I do know one thing – although I was blind, now I can see”?
	3. What do you think Jesus meant by saying He came so that those who are blind may see and those who can see may become blind?
	4. How would you describe “spiritual blindness”?
9. In what way is Jesus like a shepherd? A gate (pg. 143-144)?
10. Jesus refers to the “Sign of Jonah” (pg. 151) and is referring to His resurrection. Why does Jesus say this will be the only sign this generation needs?
11. What does it mean to be “overly concerned” about what you will eat, drink or wear (pg. 155)? How can you learn to “not worry about such things?” (See also Psalms 55:22; Philippians 4:4-7; 1 Peter 5:7)
12. Jesus says, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (pg. 163).” What does this mean in everyday life? How can we learn to be more humble?

****

**Chapter 9 Study Guide: Jesus Teaches About True Discipleship**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading that you want to discuss?
2. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
3. According to Jesus, what consequences result from failing to count the cost before building or going to war (pg. 165)? What costs do we need to count when responding to Jesus?
4. Why were the Pharisees and experts in the law complaining about Jesus and how did Jesus answer them (pg. 166)? Why do you suppose Jesus answered in the manner in which He did?
5. What do the parables about the lost sheep, coin, and son show us about the heart of God for people who are lost?
6. What does Jesus mean by saying, “You can’t serve both God and money” (pg. 169)? How can make sure we stay devoted to God alone?
7. What do we learn about Jesus from what happened with Lazarus (pg. 172-174)?
8. What can we learn about being thankful from the story about the ten lepers being healed? What can you do to be more intentional about thanking God for His work in your life (pg. 175-176)?
9. Jesus tells two parables to help us understand persistent prayer (pg. 177-178). Why do people stop praying? What does it mean to be persistent in prayer?
10. What does Jesus want everyone to understand about marriage and divorce (pg. 179)?
11. What characteristics do children have that God wants everyone to have (pg. 179)?
12. Jesus told the rich man who approached Him to sell everything and give it away, yet the man couldn’t do it (pg. 180). If we truly believe that God will one day reward his children in heaven, why are we reluctant to make sacrifices for God?
13. How do you respond to the parable Jesus tells about the landowner (pg. 181-182)? What principle is Jesus trying to teach us?
14. What strikes you the most about Zacchaeus conversion story (pg. 185-186)?
15. Why do you think Jesus was so moved by what Mary did for Him (pg. 188)?

****

**Chapter 10 Study Guide: Jesus’ Triumphal Return to Jerusalem**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading that you want to discuss?
2. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
3. Chapter 10 opens with Jesus returning to Jerusalem on a donkey (pg. 193). This is often called the “Triumphal Entry.” Why did Jesus request a donkey instead of a big white stallion or a chariot?
4. On pg. 196 Jesus is so angry at the merchants in the temple that He cleanses the temple for a second time. What does this teach us about the potential good that can come from anger? (See Ephesians 4:26)
5. What lesson do you think Jesus is trying to teach us when he talks about the seed dying before it can produce grain (pg. 196-197)?
6. According to pg. 197-198, why couldn’t the leaders believe in Jesus even though they had seen miraculous signs? Why makes a person blind towards spiritual truth?
7. The religious leaders try to trap Jesus with their questions (pg. 203-205). How can we learn to answer spiritual questions from the example Jesus sets for us?
8. Jesus has very harsh words for the religious leaders (pg. 206-208). As a group list out all the reasons that Jesus gives for confronting these leaders. Then answer this question: What can we learn from Jesus’ critique?
9. Jesus ends this chapter with many predictions about His Second Coming but also about the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (pg. 209-218). He uses a lot of “apocalyptic” language which has led many to be confused and to misuse these Scriptures. However, the major lessons He teaches here are:
	1. Jerusalem will be destroyed by its enemies soon (this happened in A.D. 70 at the hands of Rome).
	2. There will be a final judgment where people will be held accountable by God.
	3. God will judge us by: our faith in Jesus; how we have served “the least of these”; and how we used what He gave us on this earth.
	4. No one knows when Jesus will return so we need to be ready and stay ready.
	5. Don’t believe it when people claim that Jesus has already returned or claim they know when He will.
	6. Believers will experience persecution at the hands of unbelievers until Jesus returns.

****

**Chapter 11 Study Guide: The Upper Room and Passover**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading or teaching you want to discuss?
2. The central emphasis of the Passover meal was traditionally the sacrificial lamb; where did Jesus place His emphasis? What new meaning does the sacrificial lamb take on after Jesus’ death?
3. Typically most households had a servant who was in charge of washing the dirty feet of the guests since people traveled a great distance often on foot to arrive. According to the Bible, why did Jesus wash his disciples’ feet (pg. 223-224)?
4. Jesus’ command for us to wash feet isn’t about our serving through a certain act; it is about serving with certain attitude. What are some examples of how we can serve one another in this way?
5. Why do you think Jesus predicts Judas’ betrayal and even seems to communicate to Judas He knows about the betrayal? (pg. 224-225)
6. During this final supper, Jesus’ instructs His disciples to remember Him when we take communion (pg. 226). How can you learn to make communion more special on Sundays?
7. Jesus predicts all the disciples will abandon Him at some point and Peter will deny him (pg. 227). Peter is adamant this won’t happen but indeed ends up denying Christ. Why is human willpower inadequate to keep us from sinning? What is the only power that can keep us from sinning against Christ (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)?
8. Jesus says that apart from Him, we can accomplish nothing (pg. 230). What do we need to do in order to stay close to Jesus?
9. Jesus warns the disciples that the “world” will hate them (pg. 231). What do you think Jesus means by “world”? Look up Colossians 2:8 and 2:20.
10. Jesus again promises the gift of the Holy Spirit and says He will teach us (pg. 232). How does the Holy Spirit teach believers?
11. Jesus promises that the disciples’ grief will be turned to joy (pg. 233). What grief or sorrow in your life has God turned to joy?
12. In Jesus’ prayer for Himself, His disciples, and all believers He prays for unity among believers (pg. 235). How is the Father’s relationship with the Son an example for us to follow in our relationships with other Christians?

****

**Chapter 12 Study Guide: Jesus’ Gethsemane Prayer, Trial and Death**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading or teaching you want to discuss?
2. This chapter begins with Jesus retreating with his disciples to pray in the midst of his impending death (pg. 237). How might a faithful prayer life keep you strong in the faith?
3. During the prayer time his disciples keep falling asleep. Why do you think they couldn’t stay awake with Jesus? What are the barriers to your prayers?
4. During the various trials before the Jewish authorities and Roman authorities, Jesus shows amazing poise. Why do you think Jesus was able to maintain such strong faith in these trials?
5. What was the difference between Peter’s reaction to his failure and Judas’ reaction? See 2 Corinthians 7:10-11.
6. What do you think about Pilate’s role in sentencing Jesus to death? How much responsibility should he bear and what could he have done differently?
7. As He predicts, Jesus takes an enormous amount of abuse and punishment during His trial and on the cross. Why does Jesus choose to undergo this kind of punishment? What does God promise Him as a result (Hebrews 12:2)?
8. Jesus’ death fulfilled many prophecies. What two specific prophecies are mentioned on pg. 253-254? How does it strengthen our faith to know that Jesus’ death happened exactly as God planned?
9. Even though Joseph helps Jesus, we learn he is a “secret” disciple (pg. 254)? What’s wrong with being a secret disciple?

****

**Chapter 13 Study Guide: Jesus is ALIVE!**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading that you want to discuss?
2. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
3. Imagine being at the tomb of Christ on that first "Easter morning." What emotions would you be feeling?
4. If you were in the room when others came to report Jesus is alive, what would be your reaction?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 50-52. What is the significance of Jesus’ resurrection for Christians?
6. Read Romans 8:11. What attitude should we have in light of the fact of Jesus’ resurrection?
7. Why did Jesus explain the Scriptures to the two men on the road to Emmaus (pg. 264)?
8. Thomas asks for evidence before he is willing to believe Jesus is alive. What sort of evidence for the truth of Christianity has HIS Story given us?

****

**Chapter 14 Study Guide: Jesus’ Appearances, Commission and Ascension**

1. Is there anything in this week’s reading that you want to discuss?
2. What stuck out to you from the teaching?
3. Why do you think it’s significant that the disciples are fishing when Jesus finds them after His resurrection?
4. What happened when the disciples did what Jesus told them to (pg. 268)? What is the application for a Christian today?
5. It’s clear Jesus is trying to restore Peter after his famous denial (pg. 269-270). What does this show about the heart of Jesus?
6. What does Jesus mean by “feed my lambs” (pg. 272)?
7. Why does Jesus tell the disciples to stay in the city (pg. 272)?
8. What did Jesus do for the apostles during the forty days He spent with them (pg. 272)? Why was this necessary to fulfill their mission?
9. It says that Jesus spoke to the apostles about matters concerning the Kingdom of God (pg. 272). What specific information do you imagine they discussed?
10. How did Jesus answer the disciples’ question about the end times (pg. 272)? How does this apply to us?
11. What does Jesus promise to give His disciples that will help them fulfill His mission (pg. 272)?
12. Jesus commissions His disciples to take the good news to all nations. Below is the “Great Commission” He gives to them and to us:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

What stands out to you about this commission? How can we be more faithful in carrying out Jesus’ charge?

1. Since we are at the end of His Story, how have you grown closer to Jesus through this study?