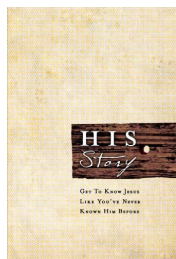


Community Group Curriculum
Participant's Guide

CHANGING LIVES WITH THE TRUTH



Week 10-14



The Follow Series is being used with the book HIS Story

Follow - Book 3 - Participant's Guide
Know Jesus Like Never Before

WEEK 10: Jesus' Triumphal Return to Jerusalem.

Bible Passage for Group Discussion: Matthew 25:14-30

HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 10

Discussion Idea: Jesus promises to return. Following Jesus means living in anticipation of his return, no matter how long it takes. It means recognizing he has entrusted resources to those who follow him. We are challenged to be responsible stewards with what he has entrusted to us.

WEEK 11: The Upper Room and Passover

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: John 13:31- 36 & Matthew 26:26-29.

HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 11

Discussion Idea: Jesus stated that loving others as he loved would give a distinction to his followers. Jesus, then, gave his followers a new ceremony to remember the new covenant he was making through his blood. As Followers of Jesus we are to live this way of love and remembering.

WEEK 12: Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer, Trials, and Death

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Matthew 27:45-56

HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 12

Discussion Idea: Jesus' death changes everything. Nature, men, women, spiritual realms, relationships are all impacted by his death. His death opens up access to God the Father for each person.

WEEK 13: Jesus is Alive!

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Luke 24:1-12

HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 13

Discussion Idea: There was an empty tomb! Jesus told his disciples he would be raised from the dead. Jesus' words and promises did not make sense to his followers. Our own not understanding does not change the truth of who God is and his promises.

WEEK 14: Jesus' Great Commission

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Acts 1:3-12

HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 14

Discussion Idea: Jesus gives his followers assurance of his presence and return. He gives them a purpose and he promises power to accomplish what he has given them to do and be. Our journey with Jesus' story, to know him like never before, leaves us with a few things to ponder.

Will you know him, love him, follow him? Will you be changed by his word and His Spirit? Will you love others as he did? Will you join his mission with his other followers to reach the world with his good news of forgiveness and redemption? Will you walk as his witnesses by the power of his Spirit, where ever you are?

THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

We exist to reach the world for Jesus, one person at a time. We feel that is best done in small, relational environments, where biblical disciples can be made. Community groups are the primary vehicle by which we may carry out the vision of Victory.

VISION:

Reaching the world for Jesus, one person at a time.

MISSION:

We will be a church that makes disciples, who make disciples of Jesus

METHODOLOGY & STRATEGY:

We will create Biblical disciples in relational environments.

John 15:4: *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

Matthew 22:37:39: *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*

Matthew 28:18-20: *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Acts 2:42-47: *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: GROUP GUIDELINES

Setting some basic group guidelines for how we will honor one another in our group discussions is important.

- Ground rules give boundaries for people to operate within.
 - They help with the flow and pace of discussions.
 - They help us value one another.
 - They help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.
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SAFE GROUP: We strive to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their struggles and victories.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth, and point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are

honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (*there are many others*).

- If someone sins against you – ***Matthew 18:15-20***
- Restoring someone in sin - ***Galatians 6:1-5***
- Forgive a sinner - ***Colossians 3:12-13***
- Reconciling differences – ***Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5***

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

USE “I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church”, “us”, “we”, etc.

Follow - Week 10
Jesus's Triumphal Return

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 10** from HIS Story or:

Day 1: HIS Story pages 203-209 - Jesus enters Jerusalem on a colt.

Day 2: HIS Story pages 209-214 - Jesus challenges at the Temple.

Day 3: HIS Story pages 214-220 - Jesus questioned by Jewish leaders.

Day 4: HIS Story pages 220-225 - Jesus talks final return with disciples.

Day 5: HIS Story pages 225-230 - Jesus encourages faithfulness until His return.

Scripture covered in reading: *Matthew 26:17-35; Matthew 23:40-26:16; Mark 11-14:11; Luke 19:29-22:6; John 12:12-50*

GROUP TIME:

SUMMARY - *This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:*

Jesus enters the city with triumph. He knows that his time has come. He knows that he is the Son of David; he is the Messiah and he must die to bring forgiveness and justice for his kingdom people. During this last week he experiences being rejected by the very ones he came to save. He, also, prepares his followers to stay faithful until his return.

DISCUSSION IDEA - *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus promises to return. Following Jesus means living in anticipation of his return, no matter how long it takes. It means recognizing he has entrusted resources to those who follow him. We are challenged to be responsible stewards with what he has entrusted to us.

BACKGROUND - *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus spent the day confronting the teaching and character of the Jewish leaders. He challenged their reliance on performance and the temple, even saying the temple would be destroyed. That night his disciples asked him how they would recognize the end and what it would be like before He returned. He taught them he would return; there would be challenges, and the kingdom of heaven was for those who remained faithful.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: *Matthew 25:14-30 (HIS Story: pages 226-228)*

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out.

Matthew 25:14-30: *Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'²² "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'²³ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'²⁴ "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'²⁶ "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸ "So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (Adjust the questions as needed for your group)

1. What do you notice about the master?
2. What do you notice about the servants?
3. What does this parable show you about God/Jesus and His followers?

4. The master entrusted each servant with some of his resources before he went on his long journey. What have you been entrusted with? List as many as you can think of?
5. Each servant responded to the master and what he gave them. One servant specifically stated that his perception of the master determined what he did. How are your perceptions of who God is impacting your choices of how you steward (i.e. live your life)?
6. How does Jesus' promise to return affect you on a regular basis?
7. How are you intentionally investing what you have been entrusted with for the kingdom of God? How would you like to grow in this?
8. What adjustments do you want to make because of our discussion?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK: Read Chapter 11 of HIS Story

The Upper Room and Passover

Bible Passages for next community group discussion: *John 13:31-36 & Matthew 26:26-29*

Follow - Week 11
The Upper Room and Passover

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 11** from HIS Story or:

Day 1: His Story pages 231-237 - Jesus' time and passover.

Day 2: HIS Story pages 237-239 - Jesus gives a new covenant.

Day 3: HIS Story pages 240-244 - Jesus' last teaching before suffering.

Day 4: HIS Story pages 244-247 - Jesus promises Holy Spirit.

Day 5: HIS Story pages 247-249 - Jesus prays for His disciples.

Scripture covered in reading: *Matthew 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-31; Luke 22:7-34; John 13-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

GROUP TIME:

SUMMARY - *This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:*

Jesus enters the city with triumph. He knows that his time has come. He knows that he is the Son of David; he is the Messiah and he must die to bring forgiveness and justice for his kingdom people. During this last week he experiences being rejected by the very ones he came to save. He, also, prepares his followers to stay faithful until his return.

DISCUSSION IDEA - *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus promises to return. Following Jesus means living in anticipation of his return, no matter how long it takes. It means recognizing he has entrusted resources to those who follow him. We are challenged to be responsible stewards with what he has entrusted to us.

BACKGROUND - *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus spent the day confronting the teaching and character of the Jewish leaders. He challenged their reliance on performance and the temple, even saying the temple would be destroyed. That night his disciples asked him how they would recognize the end and what it would be like before He returned. He taught them he would return; there would be challenges, and the kingdom of heaven was for those who remained faithful.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: *John 13:31-36 & Matthew 26:26-29 (HIS Story: pages 237-239)*

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out.

John 13:31-36: *When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. ³³ “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. ³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” ³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”*

Matthew 26:26-29: *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (Adjust the questions as needed fro your group)

1. What do you notice about these interactions between Jesus and his followers?
2. Jesus and the disciples celebrate Passover, which the Jewish nation has celebrated for thousands of years. Jesus does some new things. What is the new covenant he is giving to them? What is Jesus asking His followers to remember?
3. What does the word ‘covenant’ mean?
4. Think of how Jesus has loved you, maybe even express some specific ways. What motivates you to or what is challenging in loving others the way Jesus loves you?
5. “Communion” is the ceremony we practice from what Jesus did this night. How does celebrating communion help you remember what Jesus did for you? What do you think about when you participate in communion?
6. What is helping you grow in loving others like Jesus?

7. What are practical, intentional ways to love one another in your family this week? Those in your home group? People in your community?
8. Share communion together in your group as a celebration of the covenant relationship we have with Jesus. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK: Read Chapter 12 of HIS Story

Jesus' Gethsemane Prayers, Trials, and Death.

Bible Passages for home group discussion: Matthew 27:45-56 (pages 264-267).

Follow - Week 12

Jesus' Gethsemane Prayers, Trials, and Death

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 12** from HIS Story or:

Day 1: His Story pages 250-253 - Jesus prays and betrayed

Day 2: HIS Story pages 253-258 - Jesus tried by Jews & Peter denies Jesus.

Day 3: HIS Story pages 258-263 - Jesus tried by Pilate and Herod, flogged, and condemned.

Day 4: HIS Story pages 263-266 - Jesus nailed to the cross.

Day 5: HIS Story pages 266-270 - Jesus' final moments and impact.

Scripture covered in reading: Matthew 26:36-27:32; Mark 14:32-15:22; Luke 22:39-23:32; John 18:1-19:17

GROUP TIME:

SUMMARY - *This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:*

Jesus and eleven disciples journey to the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus invites three disciples to watch and pray with him. He wrestles with what his Father is asking him to do, submitting his will to the Father's. Guards, along with Judas, come to arrest him. Jesus experiences six different trials between the Jewish leaders, Pilate and Herod. Peter denies him; Judas is remorseful; Pilate tries to avoid executing him. Jesus is beaten and crucified. Even during his crucifixion Jesus gives forgiveness and trusts his Father. Both, nature and people are impacted by Jesus' death.

DISCUSSION IDEA - *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus' death changes everything. Nature, men, women, spiritual realms, relationships are all impacted by his death. His death opens up access to God the Father for each person.

BACKGROUND - *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus has been betrayed, tried, beaten, condemned to death and crucified. He has been telling his followers that this would happen and it has.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: *Matthew 27:45-56 (HIS Story: pages 264-267)*

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out.

Matthew 27:45-56: *From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”(which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). ⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” ⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!” ⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (Adjust the questions as needed fro your group)

1. Describe what happens at this time. What seems to be affected by Jesus’ death?
2. What is the significance of the curtain being torn in two? (Note: Hebrews 9:1-14 and 10:19-22 might be helpful)
3. What stands out to you about the crucifixion of Jesus? Share what is impacting you, this season, and what is significant about it.
4. How does pondering Jesus’ crucifixion affect your relationships with your family? Those in your home group or church? People in your community?
5. How are you and your family intentionally remembering Jesus’ death this year?
6. Who in your world needs to hear about the good news of Jesus’ death? What is your next step in loving and sharing with them?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK: Read Chapter 13 of HIS Story

He is Alive!

Bible Passages for community group discussion: ***Luke 24:1-12.***

Follow - Week 13
Jesus Is Alive!

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 13** from HIS Story or:

Day 1: His Story pages 274-275 - Discovering the empty tomb.

Day 2: HIS Story pages 275-277 - Jesus with Mary at the garden tomb.

Day 3: HIS Story pages 277-279 - Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Day 4: HIS Story pages 279-280 - Jesus comes to His disciples.

Day 5: HIS Story pages 280-281 - Jesus shows Himself to Thomas.

Scripture covered in reading: Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-14; Luke 24:1-43; John 20:1-31

GROUP TIME:

SUMMARY - *This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:*

After the Sabbath, women who have loved and followed Jesus go to his tomb. When they find the tomb empty they are told, "He is not here. Go tell his disciples." The disciples are afraid and uncertain what has happened. Jesus appears to Mary, to disciples on the road to Emmaus, to those followers gathered in the evening, and later to Thomas.

DISCUSSION IDEA - *The target for today's group discussion:*

There was an empty tomb! Jesus told his disciples he would be raised from the dead. Jesus' words and promises did not make sense to his followers. Our own not understanding does not change the truth of who God is and his promises.

BACKGROUND - *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

After Jesus died on Friday he was hurriedly placed in a tomb. The next day his followers observed the Sabbath. On the third day the women headed to the tomb to properly care for the body.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: *Luke 24:1-12 (HIS Story: pages 275-277)*

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out.

Luke 24:1-12: *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” ⁸ Then they remembered his words. ⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (Adjust the questions as needed for your group)

1. What did Mary (and the other women) experience? What did Peter experience?
2. What were the different reactions to the empty tomb?
3. What could have been some of the reasons for Peter’s response?
4. What do you find hard or challenging to comprehend about who God says he is? What are some things that make that challenging for you?
5. What have you discovered about Jesus in the last few months? (Maybe it is a truth or promise). How is that affecting what you believe or how you live?
6. Have you ever shared who Jesus is with someone and had them not believe? (Or maybe they believed!) Consider sharing the story with your group.
7. What promise or truth are you weaving into how your family functions? Share ways you are finding ways to do that.
8. Start a conversation with someone about what they think about Jesus. Don’t try to debate or teach. Just listen and hear where they are at.

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK: Read Chapter 14 of HIS Story

Jesus' Appearances, Commission, and Ascension.

Bible Passages for community group discussion: ***Acts 1:3-12.***

Follow - Week 14
Jesus' Great Commission

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 14** from HIS Story **or:**

Day 1: His Story pages 282-285 - Jesus meets His disciples who went fishing.

Day 2: HIS Story pages 285 - Jesus commissions His followers.

Day 3: HIS Story pages 286 - Jesus says wait for the Holy Spirit.

Day 4: HIS Story pages 286-289 - Jesus departs with promises and instructions.

Scripture covered in reading: John 20:26-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:6-7; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12

GROUP TIME:

SUMMARY - *This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:*

Jesus meets a group of disciples who have returned to fishing for fish. He restores Peter. For forty days he walks with his disciples, being seen by 500 of his followers. He gives his disciples a new commission to make disciples and be his witnesses to the world, yet he cautions them to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. As he ascends into heaven it is promised that he will return.

DISCUSSION IDEA - The target for today's group discussion:

Jesus gives his followers assurance of his presence and return. He gives them a purpose and he promises power to accomplish what he has given them to do and be. Our journey with Jesus' story, to know him like never before, leaves us with a few things to ponder. Will you know him, love him, follow him? Will you be changed by his word and his Spirit? Will you love others as he did? Will you join his mission with his other followers to reach the world with his good news of forgiveness and redemption? Will you walk as his witnesses by the power of his Spirit, where ever you are?

BACKGROUND - *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus walked with his followers for over three years before he was crucified. He rose from the dead and physically walked with them for forty days. As he prepares to leave them, physically, he lets them know that their journey is not done; really, it has just begun. He will return, and we have been given an adventure to live until he

does.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: *Acts 1:3-12 (HIS Story: pages 286-287)*

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out.

Acts 1:3-12: *After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” ¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (Adjust the questions as needed for your group)

1. What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?
2. Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit. What is significant about that promise?
3. What does Jesus say is next in following him?
4. What helps you abide with Jesus, walk with the power of his Spirit?
5. Where are the places Jesus has given you, specifically, to be his witness? Think of specific relationships in your family, neighborhood, places of work & play, even places where you regularly frequent. Is there a part of the world or a people group that sparks your attention or interest?
6. How does Jesus’ promise to return impact you?

7. What have you discovered about Jesus and following him? What is your next step in following in Jesus?
8. How can we, as a group of Jesus followers, as a home group, reach out to our Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria, and the ends of the earth?

PRAYER TIME