



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY



LESSON 4 / WEEK OF JANUARY 28, 2007

Key Scriptures: John 17:13-17; Matthew 13:23, 34-36; Mark 10:17-34; Matthew 24:1-14; John 11:1-44

Memory Verse: "I have given them Your Word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world." John 17:14

COMMENTARY / This portion of the lesson is for the leader's personal study.

Review

For the past three weeks we have been studying what it means to follow Jesus, to be His disciple and how following Him results in disciple-making. The foundation of being Christ's disciple is belief in the person of Jesus Christ—that He is who He says He is. This belief compels us to multiply ourselves through Christ's method of disciple-making by sharing the Word with others. Last week, we looked at how Christ not only shared the Word verbally but showed the Word physically. This week we are going to study the next component of disciple-making, teaching the Word.

Disciple-making progression:

Sharing the Word, Showing the Word, Teaching the Word.

The accompanying message in the service this week will be based on John 17:13-17. In this passage Jesus continues His prayer for His disciples. In verse 13, Jesus acknowledges to the Father that He will be coming to Him (God) soon. Jesus says in verse 14 that He has given the disciples God's Word. How has Jesus given the disciples God's Word? He has shared the Word and showed the Word to them. This week we will see how Jesus teaches the Word.

Not of the World

In verse 15 Jesus prays that God would protect the disciples from the evil one (Satan). He acknowledges in verse 16 that the world hates the disciples



because they are no longer of the world. Why are they no longer of the world? Because they have followed Christ and become His disciples. They are now set apart for a higher purpose—the God-given purpose to make disciples of all nations.

Set Apart

Notice their identification with Christ in verse 16. In the same way that Christ is not of the world, neither are they. In verse 17 Jesus asks the Father to sanctify the disciples by the truth. The word sanctify in the Greek means to *set apart, to make holy*. Jesus goes on to say that “Your Word is truth.”

Jesus has given the disciples God’s Word. The Word sanctifies them or sets them apart from the world. In turn, the world now hates them because they are no longer of the world. Since God’s Word has been given to them, they are now responsible to teach it to others, despite the cost. This is why Jesus is praying for them. He knows the cost of obedience.

Now We Have the Responsibility

This truth has huge implications in our lives today as disciples of Christ and as disciple-makers. If we have repented of our sins and placed our faith in Christ, we too are no longer of the world. We have been set apart, made holy. We are sanctified by the truth just as the disciples were. We have been given the Word, just as Christ gave the Word to the disciples. We are now responsible to teach this Word to others. Not only do we share the Word and show the Word; we teach the Word.

Beyond a Classroom

It is especially here that we see disciple-making go from accidental to intentional. With Christ, class was always in session. His life was the class. As the disciples observed Him (showing the Word) they also listened to His words (teaching the Word). True disciple-making cannot occur in a classroom setting one hour each week. It will happen as we live daily with the intentional purpose to reproduce ourselves in the lives of others. This will move us from being self-centered Christians to God-centered disciples of Christ. What God teaches us will no longer be only for us, but also for the benefit of the disciples God has entrusted to us.

Takin’ a Tour

In today’s lesson, we will be taking a tour of the Gospels to see how Christ created “teaching opportunities” out of both large and small events in His life. From raising the dead, to parables, to common conversation, Jesus was always teaching His disciples. Observe as you study today that Jesus’ teaching was always more than verbal—it was *training*—instruction by word and example.

See the Examples

What follows are four examples of these teaching opportunities from the Gospels. This week we want to observe the Scripture from the perspective of the disciples. As you prepare and lead your group, continually be asking yourself and your students the questions, “What was this event like for the disciples? What were they learning from Jesus by what they saw and heard?”

The key this week is to help your group understand that Jesus took *every opportunity to teach* His disciples. They constantly benefited from His ministry to others because as He showed the Word to others, He taught the Word to them. It will be helpful for you to read each passage before you read the commentary for it. During your teaching time you will be breaking the class into smaller groups and assigning each group one of these examples to read,

examine and discuss. Then you will bring the groups back together to share what they learned. The commentary will be helpful as you facilitate discussion as each group shares.

A handout for each group is included at the end of the lesson. You may want to make a copy of the handouts and complete one for yourself as you prepare and study. Even if you do not typically do small group discussion within your group, we ask that you do so at least this one time—this lesson is formulated for students to discover these truths from the Word themselves through this interaction.

Each example is listed by the event that occurred, what Jesus taught the disciples through this event and the Scripture reference.

Event: The Parables

Teaching: Mysteries of God Revealed

Matthew 13:1-51

Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus teaching the crowds with parables. What we want to focus on in this passage is how Jesus uses parables to teach the Word to His disciples. As we examine this passage from the perspective of the disciples, what do we learn?

First, we see that Jesus told the parables to large crowds but He only explained the full meaning of these parables to His disciples. Verse 2 says that such a large crowd gathered around Jesus that He got in a boat to teach while they stood on the shore. Verse 3 goes on to say that He told the crowd “many things in parables.”

Verse 10 tells us that the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him why He taught the crowd in parables. In verses 11-17 we see Jesus intentionally teaching the Word to His disciples in a different way than He taught the crowd. He uses their question about parables to explain the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 6:9-10).

Then in verse 16 Jesus begins to teach His disciples that they are blessed because God’s Word has been revealed to them. Many righteous men have longed to understand the truths that Christ is revealing to them. The mysteries of God are being entrusted to the disciples. They are not just being told parables like everyone else; they are being taught God’s Word. Notice how this relates back to Jesus’ prayer in John 17:14 when Jesus says He has “given them Your Word.” It is this Word that sanctifies them.

We further see the distinction in how the disciples are taught in verses 18-23 as Jesus explains to the disciples what the parable means. Do not miss the intentionality of Christ in this passage. He shares the Word with the crowd by telling the parable. Then He maximizes the opportunity to teach the Word to His disciples when they question Him in verse 10. Notice that they did not ask Him what the parable meant. They asked Him why He speaks in parables. This question leads to a lesson about the treasure that is being entrusted to them. Then He explains the meaning of the parable.

Throughout the rest of chapter 13, we see Jesus telling many parables to the crowds. As we skip down to verses 34-36, we again see Jesus teaching the Word to the disciples as they question Jesus in private about the meaning of the parable of the weeds in the field. In verses 37-43 Jesus explains the meaning to His disciples. Verse 51 further illustrates Jesus’ intentionality as





He asks the disciples the question, “Have you understood all these things?” He did not want the disciples to merely hear the Word; He wanted to make sure that they understood so that they could teach the Word to others. It was in the times after the crowds scattered that the disciples had the opportunity to ask questions. Christ recognized these times as precious opportunities to teach the Word.

Event: The Rich Young Ruler

Teaching: Eternal Life

Mark 10:17-34

You may have heard the story of the rich young ruler contained in the beginning of this passage. Again, we want our focus today to be on how this event played out in the lives of the disciples. In verse 17 a man comes to Jesus and asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. In verses 18-22, Jesus has a conversation with this man about God’s commandments and what he lacks. Jesus instructs him to go and sell all of his possessions and give the money to the poor, then he will have treasure in heaven. Verse 22 tells us that the man went away sad because he had great wealth.

Notice the intentionality of Jesus’ instruction to this man. Beginning in verse 23, Jesus begins to teach His disciples about how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. In verse 26 the disciples begin to question who can be saved. This leads to a lesson in verses 27-31 about the cost and blessing of eternal life. In verse 30 Jesus promises both blessing and persecution in the present age and eternal life in the age to come.

Then, in verse 32, we again see Jesus take the disciples to the side to teach them. This time Jesus begins to share with them what is to come—His betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection. Notice how Jesus is revealing the mystery of God’s will to these men. What started out as a conversation between Jesus and the rich young ruler has now become an intimate moment of revelation in the lives of the disciples.

Event: Preaching at the Temple

Teaching: Signs of the End of the Age

Matthew 24:1-14

This passage picks up after Jesus has been preaching to His disciples and the crowds at the Temple (Matthew 23). Chapter 24 begins by telling us in verse 1 that Jesus is leaving the temple when His disciples come to Him to call His attention to the buildings. Mark 13:1 describes the same event by saying that the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

In this passage, Jesus uses their fascination with the temple as an opportunity to teach the Word. In verse 2 He tells them that not one stone of the temple will be left standing. Naturally, the disciples question Jesus in verse 3. They want to know when and what will be the sign of His coming at the end of the age.

In verses 4-14 Jesus begins to teach the disciples about the signs that will come. In verse 9, Jesus teaches His disciples that they will be persecuted, hated by all nations, and even killed because of Christ. Remember what we studied last week about the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples and bringing them power to be Christ’s witnesses (Acts 1:8)? We learned last week that the Greek definition of “witnesses” in this verse is *to testify unto death; to martyr*.

What began as a conversation about architecture has now become Christ teaching and preparing His disciples for what lies ahead. He is again revealing the mystery of God's will to them in a distinctive way. In verses 10-13 Jesus tells them that many will turn away from the faith in the face of the persecution and suffering to come, but those who endure to the end will be saved. Verse 14 says that the Gospel will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to the nations—the same nations that will hate them. Who will preach the Gospel to the world? How will all that Jesus is teaching the disciples make it to the entire world? Through the lives of the disciples.

Remember Jesus' prayer for their protection in John 17:13-17. He does not pray that they would be taken out of the world that will hate them according to Matthew 24:9, but that they will be protected from the evil one (John 17:14) as they surrender their lives to Christ's mission to make disciples of all nations.

Event: Raising Lazarus from the Dead

Teaching: Belief

John 11:1-44

This passage is a great example of how Jesus' disciples benefited from His showing the Word to others. This is a familiar story to many, but as we examine it from the perspective of the disciples we can see how Christ had them in mind, even as He ministered to Lazarus and his family.

Jesus tells His disciples in verses 7-10 that they are going back to Judea to check on Lazarus. The disciples question this decision because the Jews there have been trying to kill Jesus. They are fearful to go back. In verse 11 Jesus explains that Lazarus has "fallen asleep" but He is going to "wake him up." They think Jesus means literal sleep instead of death. In verse 14, Jesus plainly tells them that Lazarus is dead.

In verse 15 Jesus says, "And for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him (Lazarus)." For the sake of the disciples, Jesus is glad He wasn't there with Lazarus when he died. Why? So that they would believe. Jesus knows that raising Lazarus from the dead will increase the faith of His disciples when they witness the miracle. They too will benefit from this miracle. We know from verse 16 that the disciples did go with Jesus back to Judea. Verses 17-44 tell the story of how Christ raised Lazarus from the dead.

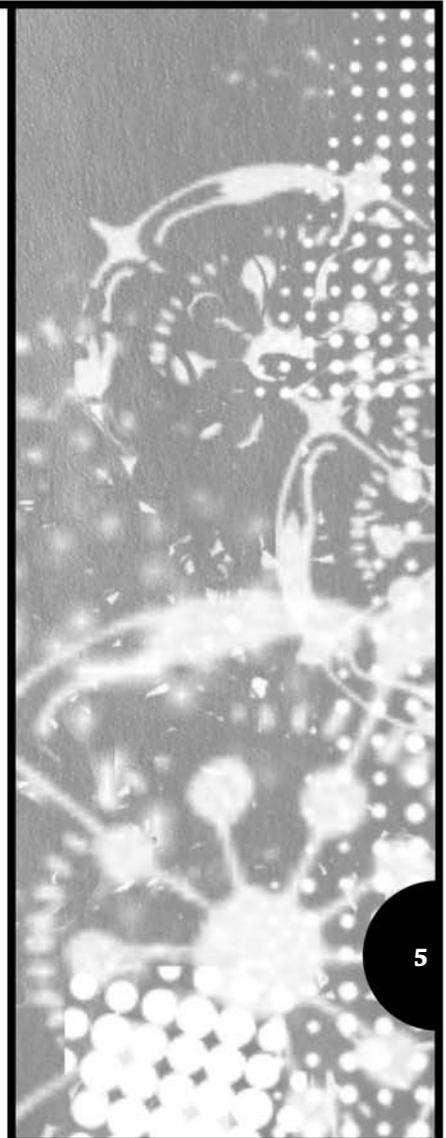
This passage demonstrates for us that even as Christ ministered to others with miracles, His disciples were still the focus of His ministry. Everything Christ did was to reveal God's Word to His disciples.

Application

From preaching to crowds, to a conversation with a rich man, to viewing magnificent architecture, to raising the dead, Jesus was constantly teaching the Word to these twelve men. No event was too large or too small to be a teaching opportunity. So what does this mean for us today?

Lifelong Learners

As disciples, we are lifelong learners and followers of Christ. Like those twelve men who Jesus called to follow Him, class is always in session for us, too. We may not learn from the physical presence of Christ, but we learn from His Word through the Holy Spirit. Some of us also learn from people who disciple us by multiplying themselves in our lives.





Because the Word of God has been revealed to us, we have been entrusted with the mysteries of God's will. For centuries, righteous men longed to understand what Christ has revealed to us. In the same way that Jesus' disciples had a responsibility to take what He had given them and invest it in the lives of others, we have that same responsibility. As disciple-makers, our lives become a classroom to those we disciple. As we follow Christ, we intentionally teach our disciples what we learn, both verbally and physically. As we show the Word to the world, our disciples can benefit greatly from our ministry to others if we choose to maximize the teachable moments God gives us.

Jesus prayed in John 17:17 that God would sanctify His disciples by the truth of His Word. He knew what lay ahead for them. He knew they would be hated, persecuted, and even killed because of their obedience to His mission for the Gospel to go to the ends of the earth. He had approximately three years to prepare them for this future. Knowing the cost of true discipleship, Christ took every opportunity God gave Him to teach these men. Then He prayed that the Father would protect them as they lived what they learned from Him after He left the earth.

Christ prays for us in the same way. Romans 8:34-37 says that Christ is at the right hand of the Father in heaven interceding for us. For His sake we face death all day long, we are considered sheep to be slaughtered according to verse 36. We will face hardship and persecution if we choose to live out this mission, but we have an advocate who has faced all of this Himself and has overcome. Therefore, as Romans 8:37 says, we are more than conquerors in all of these things.

The question for us today is whether or not we can say with Jesus, "Father, I have revealed You to those You have given me out of the world" (John 17:6). Can we say to the Father, "I have given them Your Word," as Jesus prayed in John 17:14? Since God's Word has been given to us, it is our responsibility and privilege to intentionally teach it to others. If we are followers of Jesus Christ we are sanctified, set apart, made holy. The mysteries of God are in our care. There is a world of lost people who will benefit from the truth we have living in us. The choice is yours to make. Will you keep what you know for yourself, or will you surrender everything for the God-given mission to make disciples of all nations?

LESSON / This portion of the lesson is for the entire group.

Opening Activity / 5 minutes

Prior to your group time, contact a student from your class and ask them to be prepared to teach another class member how to do something simple. Examples include how to braid hair, cross stitch, paint, play an instrument, or make something. The idea for this activity is to have the student show the entire group how to do it (by doing it in front of the class), but be teaching one other class member (who is standing with him/her) as he/she does it. This will illustrate how Jesus showed the Word to crowds but explained and taught the Word to His disciples. You could do this yourself if you can't find a student to do it. At the end of the activity, ask the group who would be best equipped to teach someone else how to do the activity—the entire group, or the person who was standing with the person and getting more detailed instructions?

How Jesus Taught

Explain that today we are going to continue our study of disciple-making by looking at how Jesus taught the Word to His disciples.

Key Study / 35 minutes

As you begin your study time in God's Word, pray that God would make the entire class receptive to what He wants to reveal to the group today as you discuss His word. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the class into all truth (John 16:13) so that He will be glorified through the discussion. Pray that each person's life will be changed as a result of the truths you learn today (James 1:22).

Using the commentary section on John 17:13-17, explain to the group our basis for study today. Make sure to include information about John 17:14. Also define *sanctification* in verse 17. Explain that today we will observe the Scripture from the perspective of the disciples to see how Jesus used every opportunity to teach them the Word.

Tell your group that you will be dividing them into 4 smaller groups (adjust based on class size). Explain that each smaller group will be given one passage of Scripture and a handout with some questions. Each smaller group should select one person who is willing to speak for them to share what they learn with the entire group. Remind them to focus on each passage from the perspective of the disciples as they answer the questions.

Small Group Discussion

Lead a discussion of each passage using the handouts and allow each group leader to share what they learned. Before they begin to answer the questions, have each smaller group leader share a quick overview of their assigned passage to put the questions in context for the rest of the group. It is not necessary to cover every question listed on the handouts. Use the lesson commentary for each passage to help guide the discussion. You may even want to make lists of key points for each passage on the white board.

After each smaller group has shared, ask the following questions:

- In these passages, how did Jesus use both the common and the extraordinary to teach the Word to His disciples? How was He intentional?
- How did the disciples benefit from Christ sharing and showing the Word to others?
- Based on the passages we studied today, in what ways did Jesus' disciples learn from Him? Name as many ways as you can think of.
- What do you think it was like to be one of Christ's twelve disciples? Discuss both the benefits and the hardships.

Application / 5 minutes

Using the commentary portion of the lesson, explain to the group that as disciples of Christ today, the Word has been given to us, just as it was given to the twelve disciples. We too have been entrusted with the mysteries of Christ. We have been set apart from the world. Explain that that Romans 8:34-37 teaches us that Christ intercedes for us, just as He prayed for His twelve disciples in John 17.

Lead a discussion about how what we see in the life of Jesus as a disciple-maker applies to us today. Remind your students about the names they wrote down on the index card at the end of last week's lesson. What can we apply from these passages of Scripture that will help us be more intentional about teaching the Word to those in our spheres of influence. Use the following questions to help guide the discussion:

- Jesus considered both the ordinary and the extraordinary moments of life to be opportunities to teach His disciples. Think about your life. What are some examples of ordinary, everyday events that could be transformed into teachable moments? Include examples such as family life, career, neighbors, etc.





- Share some examples of “big” life events that God has used to conform you to Christ’s image.
- How can you be intentional in these types of life events to teach others God’s Word, just by how you walk through them?
- How can you be intentional as you minister to the world to teach those in your sphere of influence? How can your disciples benefit from your showing the Word to others?
- What are some practical ways that you can begin to recognize opportunities to teach the Word that you might not have noticed before?
- How does something as simple as filling out the sermon outline every Sunday provide you with a resource to teach others?
- How does learning for the purpose of teaching others change the way we learn?
- How does believing that what God teaches us is not only for us change the way we view our salvation? How does it change the way we view people? How does it change the way we view ourselves?

Close your time together by praying for your group.

Small Group Relationships and Teaching

As a reminder, the very Small Group you are facilitating provides ongoing opportunities to teach the Word by speaking and example. The relationships you and others build within and beyond your Small Group give you opportunities to put teaching the Word into practice every week.

The Reteaching Guide

Dr. Platt and the staff have made available a simple *Reteaching Guide*, which explains how to take a lesson—like this Small Group lesson or the Sunday message—and study and reteach it to others during the week. Free copies of the *Reteaching Guide* are available in the lobby, or online as a PDF download at www.brookhills.org/disciplemaking.

MESSAGE MERGE / Putting the sermon and the Small Group study together.

Lead-in Questions / If your class meets *before* worship

- What have you learned today that is new to you?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- How does today’s lesson expand on what you learned last week?
- What will you be listening for today during the message?
- How can your classmates pray for you as you go into worship?

Post-teaching Questions / If your class meets *after* worship

- How can you apply what you have learned tomorrow at home/work/school?
- What portion of the message was most impacting for you?
- Were any areas of the message unclear or confusing? Which and why?
- What have you learned today that you can pass on to others?
- What Scripture is the most important for you today?
- What did you learn in Small Group that added to what you heard during the worship message?

Student Handout / Group 1

Read Matthew 13:1-23 and answer the following questions:

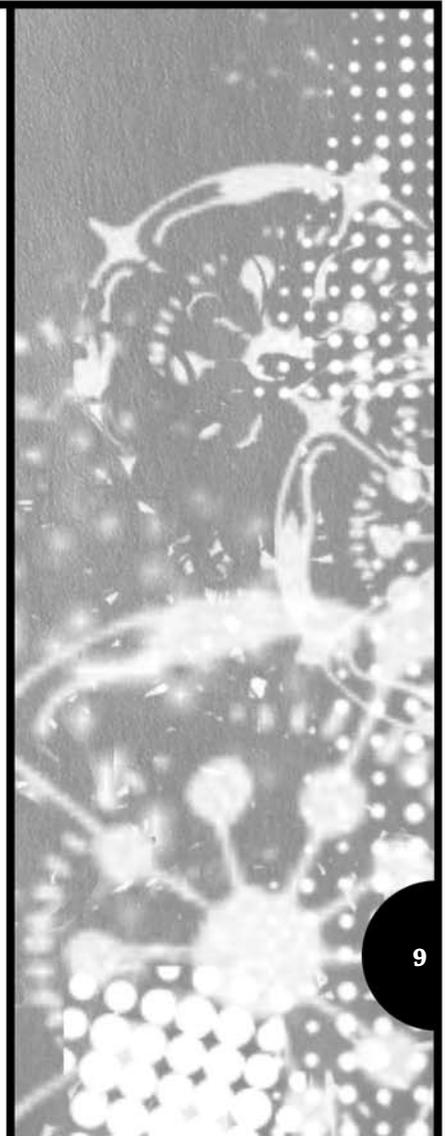
- According to verse 2, describe the size of Jesus' audience for this sermon.
- What is the disciples' question to Jesus in verse 10?
- What is His answer in verses 11-15?
- What does Jesus tell His disciples has been given to them in verse 11?
- Because this has been given to them, how does Jesus describe them in verses 16-17?
- What does Jesus do for His disciples in verses 18-23 that He didn't do for the crowds concerning the parable of the sower?

In verses 24-33, Jesus continues to teach the crowds in parables. Skip down and read Matthew 13:34-36 and answer the following questions:

- What question do the disciples again ask Jesus in verse 37?
- Where does this occur? Is it in public?
- According to verse 37, does Jesus answer their question?

In verses 44-50, Jesus continues to teach in parables. Skip down and read verse 51 and answer the following questions:

- What does Jesus ask His disciples in this verse?
- In this passage, what difference do you see in how Jesus taught the crowds, and how He taught His disciples?
- Did His disciples hear the parables as Jesus taught the crowds? How do you know? (Hint: The questions they asked Him in private)
- If they heard the parables along with the crowds, why do you think Jesus explained their meaning in more detail to the disciples?
- Put yourselves in the place of the disciples. Describe the event from their perspective. What did they see, hear, learn, etc. from just being with Christ in this passage?
- How does this passage show Jesus' intentionality in teaching the Word to His disciples?





Student Handout/ Group 2

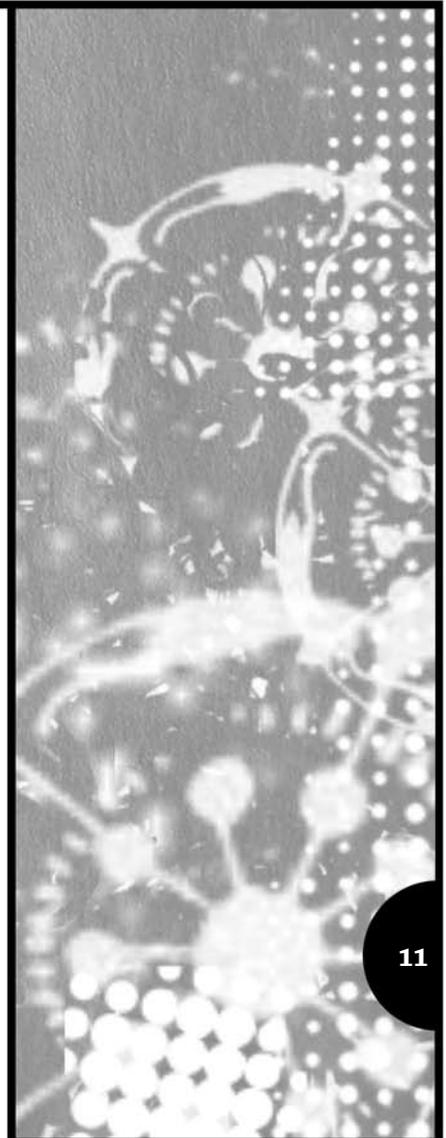
Read Mark 10:17-34 and answer the following questions:

- Describe what transpires in verses 17-22.
- Who was with Jesus when this conversation occurred according to verse 23?
- What does Jesus say to His disciples in verses 23-25?
- What is the disciples' reaction to this statement in verse 26?
- What truth does Jesus teach His disciples in verses 27-31?
- What does Jesus do in verse 32?
- What did Jesus share with His disciples in verses 33-34?
- Why do you think Jesus took the Twelve aside to share these things with them?
- What does that tell you about His relationship with His disciples?
- Put yourselves in the place of the disciples. Describe the event from their perspective. What did they see, hear, learn, etc. from just being with Christ in this passage?
- How does this passage show Jesus' intentionality in teaching the Word to His disciples?

Student Handout / Group 3

Read Matthew 24:1-14 and answer the following questions:

- What do the disciples point out to Jesus in verse 1? (It might be helpful for you to read Mark 13:1, which gives a more detailed account of this verse.)
- How does Jesus answer them in verse 2?
- What questions does Jesus' statement bring from the disciples in verse 3?
- Describe Jesus' answer in verses 4-14. Make sure to include what you learn from verse 9.
- What does Jesus say will happen in verse 14?
- How will verse 14 be fulfilled after Christ returns to heaven? Who will carry on His ministry of the Gospel?
- Why do you think Jesus shares the details of the end of the age with His disciples? Why do they need to know? How does this relate to the previous question?
- Put yourselves in the place of the disciples. Describe the event from their perspective. What did they see, hear, learn, etc. from just being with Christ in this passage?
- How does this passage show Jesus' intentionality in teaching the Word to His disciples? They began talking about the architecture of the temple. How does Jesus create a teaching opportunity from this conversation?





Student Handout / Group 4

Read John 11:1-44 and answer the following questions:

- What does Jesus say about Lazarus' sickness in verse 4? Why is he sick?
- How does verse 5 tell us Jesus felt about Lazarus and his sisters?
- Even though Jesus loved him, what does verse 6 say Jesus did when He found out Lazarus was sick?
- Describe Jesus' conversation with His disciples in verses 7-16. Pay special attention to what Jesus says in verse 15.
- Compare verses 4, 6 and 15. What do you see?
- According to verse 16, did the disciples go with Jesus to see Lazarus?
- Describe what happened when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in verses 21-44.
- How does Jesus describe Himself to Martha in verses 25-26?
- What question do the Jews ask in verse 37?
- Put yourselves in the place of the disciples. Describe the event from their perspective. What did they see, hear, learn, etc. from just being with Christ in this passage?
- What did Jesus mean in verse 15? How did the disciples benefit from this miracle?