

Have you ever felt lost in life? Is there one who can shed light for this journey ahead?

The legacies Jesus left for his disciples continue to light their way after his death. What are legacies? Legacies are treasures left behind or handed down by someone who has passed on. In his last week on earth, Jesus shared many precious truths with his disciples. These helped them to understand his teachings and mission better and prepared them for life without him. These legacies will serve as pointers and light to help us in our journeys too.



FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS, MALAYSIA

Working amongst youth of college and university-going age, FES has many years of experience and many stories of young people who have grown and matured in the Lord. This series is just an extension of our ministry to encourage the encounter of God through the Word.

BREAKTHROUGH → SMALL GROUP SERIES

6 in the series for Individuals or Groups

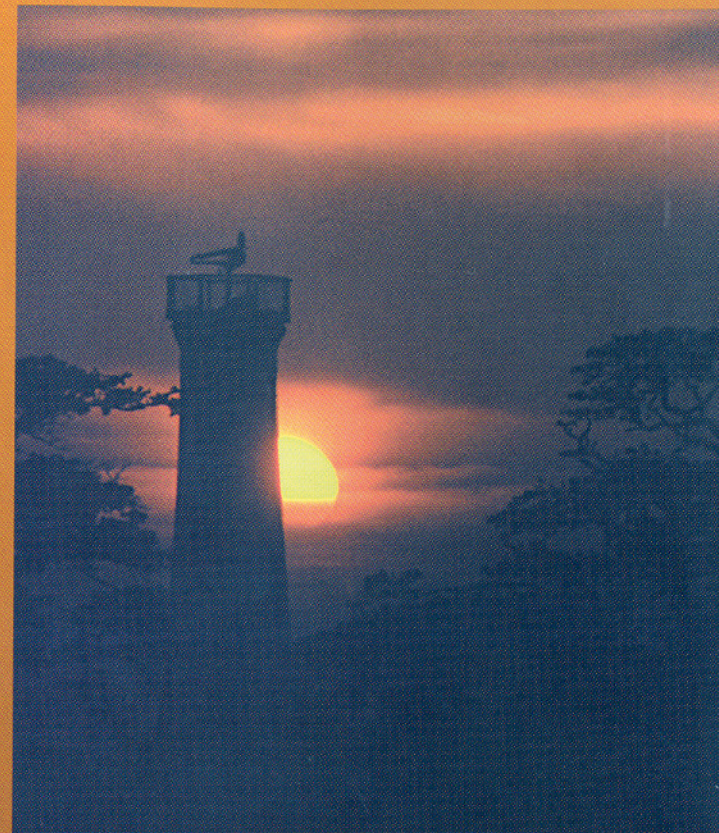
"BREAKTHROUGH" based mainly on the Gospel of John, reveals Jesus at his most radical, bringing timely breakthroughs into lives and situations. In each encounter, he seems to scratch where people itch, revealing to them that God does not remain at a distance. Here we meet Jesus making outrageous claims about himself, though they do not seem so outrageous on closer examination. His life when it seemed to come to an end, merely signified a new beginning. He left behind a legacy of new hope and light for us to journey on, unravelling a new way to live!

1. Not From A Distance
2. Scratching Where It Itches
3. I AM 4 U
4. The End Or The Beginning?!
5. Light For The Journey
6. A Whole New World

ISBN 983-2393-04-3

LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY

BREAKTHROUGH →
SMALL GROUP SERIES



fes
FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS
RESOURCES

LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY

By:



Fellowship of Evangelical Students, Malaysia

6 studies for Individuals or Groups

Contents

	page
The Journey- "BREAKTHROUGH"	ii-iii
Foreword	iv-v
Introduction	v
Using The Guide	vi
① Mediocre, Or Honorable Ambitions? John 12:20-36	1
② Hero With A Towel John 13:1-17	4
③ Love - A Radical Testimony John 13:34-35; 15:9-17	7
④ Alone But Not Abandoned John 14:15-26; 16:5-16	10
⑤ Be Prepared! John 15:18-16:4	13
⑥ In The World, With A Mission John 17:6-26	16

ISBN 983-2393-04-3

Published in 2001 by Fellowship of Evangelical Students, Malaysia.

Fellowship of Evangelical Students (FES) Malaysia
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Selangor, Malaysia

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Cover photograph : Meng Yew Choong
Cover scanning & final touch up : Kevin Thomas

Printed by Printmate Sdn. Bhd., 16 Jalan Industri P.B.P. 7, Taman Industri Pusat Bandar Puchong, 47100 Puchong. Selangor, Malaysia.

The Journey ~ "BREAKTHROUGH"

You must be wondering by now, why this series is called the "Breakthrough series" and what "Breakthrough" is all about. Well, "Breakthrough" is nothing more than our journey with the students in trying to bring the "evangelion" or Good News to our friends.

Challenges Open Doors To "BREAKTHROUGH"

We were stuck!

"What does FRIENDSHIP evangelism look like in real life? After friendships, what next? After sharing the Gospel outline, what next? How does one ease in to share the Gospel with a friend? It seems like nothing is happening!"

These were often heard complaints amongst the students we minister to. It began with the challenge of helping our students evangelise through friendships and making it intentional. What seemed a challenge then, opened doors to this "Breakthrough"! Hearing what our friends in the UK were doing gave us ideas to start our own.

Reaching Out Through Enriching Friendships

We did not want to treat people as targets, but rather persons whom God is interested in. Genuine, enriching friendships is one way we can "build highways" for the Lord to breakthrough into people's lives.

Thus, "Breakthrough" is a holistic endeavor focusing on FRIENDSHIPS, bearing the VOICE of the Gospel wherever God places us, and in sharing the MESSAGE of Jesus (through the gift copies of the Gospel of John). This also means that we are not in a hurry with our friends but are willing vessels in this process.

What Have We Here?

The "Breakthrough series" are Bible study guides intended as companions to the gift of the Gospel of John. Having given the gift, we hope to pray for opportunities for our friends to "investigate" this Jesus.

Our vision and prayer is that the guides become vehicles in order that

- you may behold the Lamb of God!
- you may see and believe!

The TEAM That Journeyed On

Yes, the team has journeyed on. We first mooted the idea in FES (*Fellowship of Evangelical Students*) in late 1999. When we felt that this was the way the Lord was leading us, we started work on getting the copyrights, working out campus strategies, writing the Bible study guides, etc. This has taken us more than one year in "brewing the stew"! We thank God for good partnership with both the UK and Malaysian Bible Societies. More than that, we thank God for each other in the FES team who have worked tirelessly just to see others given the opportunity to encounter the Word of life! The greatest glory and thanks goes to our very God Himself who moved mountains for us and brought in much needed resources.

"Breakthrough" - JOHN'S Gospel

1. Printing the John's Gospels in Malaysia - Mary Vergis
2. Anglicised Contemporary English Version of John - UK Bible Society
3. Malaysian copyright holder - Malaysian Bible Society

"Breakthrough" - Bible Study Series

1. Team of Writers - Annette Arulrajah, Audra Darshini, Chan Yoke Yee, Dan Fong Shin, Evelyn Wong, Kong Lee Ang, Loh Kim Cheng, Michael William
2. Layout for Guides - Dan Fong Shin & Evelyn Wong
3. Series Editors - Annette Arulrajah & Loh Kim Cheng
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Bringing "Breakthrough" To The Campuses

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2. Campus Strategies - Annette, Darshini, Fong Shin, Evelyn, Lee Ang, Kim Cheng, Michael
3. Publicity Handbills - Paula Wong & Kevin Thomas (SU)
4. Preparation of Training Modules - Annette, Darshini, Yoke Yee

* All names mentioned above are fulltime FES staff during the period of our production.

Foreword

One never knows what the e-mail may bring - a delightful surprise or more work! A polite message from FES Malaysia was both. "Before you come to Malaysia in August would it be possible for you to pre-edit a series of Bible studies we have written?"

I knew it would take many hours and much effort if it were to be helpful to the writers. But I didn't even pray about it. I knew it was the right thing to do. It has been the passion of my life to encourage young student workers anywhere in the world to make Bible studies the foundation of their evangelistic and discipling ministry.

It's g-r-e-a-t when these young workers can train their students in Bible studies. I think it's even greater when churches ask them for help in this same area. Over the decades from country to country I have seen churches revitalized or planted by graduates who learned to take the Bible seriously when they were students.

Last month I was in Poland for training university students in evangelistic Bible studies. The president of a fast-growing biblical seminary asked if I could do the same course for his theology students. It was a privilege. But what equally delighted me was to discover that we had met some 23 years ago when he was a student. "It was in that inductive Bible study course (at a European leadership conference) where I first learned to study the Bible. I didn't know it could be so exciting. That excitement for God's Word keeps growing. I want our students to know the same excitement so they can pass it on."

At our church this morning I started a new class. I dared to call it "In-depth Gospel Studies", because I think that our church is typical. People sincerely believe Jesus but know him only in bits and pieces. At best they have an album of popular Jesus photos. They need to see the down-to-earth Jesus as in a video, a moving drama. With that title I didn't know if anybody would come. To my surprise they kept coming and coming. What hunger these longtime Christians expressed! One of them, a lawyer, expressed it as "I want to know God more deeply, not just have a good feeling when I'm singing praise songs with others." At the end of the study in Luke 1, Tony asked if he could bring his not-yet-Christian girlfriend next week, because "I think she will dig this kind of study."

That's what the Bible studies in this series are about - scratching people where they're itching. When I did get to Kuala Lumpur last August I sat down with the writers for oral editing. It was a pleasure to work with them. They were highly teachable. And industrious. The sessions were fruitful. After that they re-worked their studies and helped each other in further editing.

Nothing pleases me more than to commend these Bible studies for your individual or group use on campuses, in homes, in workplaces, and in Sunday classes. If Bible studies are authentic (objective yet warmly personal), anybody - - Christian or seeker - - will benefit. For each study takes the biblical text seriously in helping people to see what it really says (not what they have pre-concluded); to think carefully about its meaning and to consider honestly its practical implications.

May this labor of love for our Lord and His church bring fruit, much fruit.

Sincerely in Christ,

Ada Lum
Honolulu, Hawaii
January, 2001

Introduction

"Light For The Journey" takes us to Jesus' last week before his death, looking particularly at the things he said. Jesus knew not only what awaited him, but what awaited his disciples as well. Therefore, from the time he started talking about his death, Jesus took every opportunity to explain different things that would prepare them for the time to come. Jesus amply supplied his disciples with challenges as well as words of comfort and hope.

We who are his believers today wonder if Jesus has left us on our own to face the seemingly difficult world we live in. From these studies we will soon realize the world we live in is not much different from that of the disciples'. Jesus' words to them may hold poignant truth to guide us too. Jesus' concern for his immediate disciples also flows to us through the words he left them.

Some of the words that Jesus left behind are indeed hard sayings - things which are hard to accept - then as well as today. However, when we find courage to apply them, we may indeed find light for our journeys too.

Using The Guide



Want to immerse yourself in the Word of God?



Want to leave the door open for SERENDIPITY (personal discovery) to take place?



*The Breakthrough Bible study guides are for you then!
Using the inductive approach, the process of O-I-A gives
you the opportunity for such happy encounters.*

O for Observation

To look at the text and pick up the facts (both obvious and hidden), searching for details. Asking questions of the text helps us see more facts.

I for Interpretation

To discover the implications and meanings of the facts, particularly to the original writer or hearers of the Bible. Knowing the background and context will sharpen the interpretation process.

A for Application

To find the meaning for us today, and see how we can put it to practice in our lives. We apply truth and principles that are timeless and universal.

Our format ...

This approach comes alive in our format and the phases we take you through.

Getting Started draws you into the study. Be free to share but do not spend too much time on this.

Come and See gets you to observe the text and see its implications. We have included background information which can help you see the context and understand the meaning of the passage.

What About You - A Breakthrough? helps toward making the study personal to your life. This is the most important part of the study, so please do not skip it.

ENJOY!

Study One

Mediocre, or Honorable Ambitions?

John 12:20-36

Getting Started

① Honorable ambitions? But, we don't really talk about having ambitions these days. Most people just think about how to earn enough money to live a good and easy life. On the other hand, someone once said that we should devote our lives to things that we consider worth dying for. What is to you worth living and dying for?

Jesus' popularity is at its peak. The people hold a big welcome parade for him when he enters Jerusalem. The Pharisees are worried that everyone is going after him (vv. 12-19). They have good reasons to. Even some Greeks at the Feast, who were followers of Judaism, had heard about Jesus and are keen to talk with him. Jesus, however, surprises everyone with his response.

Come and See

② What does Jesus say will happen to him now that "it is time" (vv.23-24, 27-28, 31-33)?

③ Jesus likened his death to a seed, which dies when a plant emerges from it. The plant will later produce many more seeds. In what way would Jesus' death be like the seed's (vv.24,32)?

④ Judaism of the day was primarily for the Jews. Its teachings and practices originated from the Law of Moses and the Traditions. Gentiles (non-Jews) who converted to Judaism had to follow the rigid customs and rituals of the Jews. However, they were often made to feel like 'second-class' believers. So then, how would Jesus' death be significant to the Greeks who wanted to talk to him (vv.24,32)?

⑤ Consider what Jesus says about how those who follow him must live. What are the implications for us (vv.25-26)?

⑥ Think of the function of physical light in daily life. What then is Jesus claiming to be (compare with 1:4-5,9; 9:5) ?

Notes

- v.20 *Greeks are people of the Hellenic race but sometimes the word is also used to indicate non-Jews and foreigners. These Greeks were probably interested in Judaism's one God concept but not willing to follow its nationalistic requirements such as circumcision.*
- v.32 *Jesus' death will result in all men, Jews and non-Jews, having the opportunity to know God and receive his salvation. This is the reason why Jesus came (v.27).*
- v.25 *It is a common Jewish expression to use superlative comparison i.e. to compare using extreme opposites. For example, love and hate are two extreme opposites. So "to hate" is "to love very much less in comparison."*
- v.20 *Feast here refers to the Passover, also known as Feast of the Unleavened Bread. The celebration begins with the Passover meal and lasts for one week (Lev. 23:5-8). Passover is celebrated to commemorate the time in Egypt when the LORD 'passed over' and did not destroy the occupants of the houses of the Israelites, which were painted with blood of a sacrificial lamb (Ex. 12:1-30).*
- v.31 *Jesus' death on the cross is a victory over Satan, the prince of this world.*

What about you - a breakthrough?

⑦ Jesus says those who believe in him will become "children of light"(v.36). In what way(s) can you be a child of light in your situation? Be specific.

⑧ What do you need to give up today to follow Jesus?

Study Two

Hero With A Towel

John 13:1-17

Getting Started

① We all look for heroes in life – someone to look up to, someone to admire and imitate. Think about someone you admire. What do you admire about this person?

Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover just like any other Jew during his time. Let us enter the scene where he shares one last Passover meal with his disciples.

Come and See

② Jesus knows that in a few hours, he will be betrayed and sentenced to death. Yet he remains evidently in control of the situation. Where does Jesus' confidence come from (vv.1-3, 11)?

③ During Jesus' time, meals were taken while reclining. Therefore, feet dusty from the journey needed to be washed upon entering the room before a meal. Jesus takes on the servant's role and starts to wash his disciples' feet during the meal. What moved him to do so (vv.1-5)?

④ In the above scenario, everyone settles down to eat even though their feet, sweaty and smelly from the long journey, remain unwashed. Nobody cares to do anything. Yet, Peter protested when Jesus starts to wash his feet. Why? (vv.6-8)

⑤ "A servant is not greater than his master." As Lord and Teacher, what seems to be the lesson Jesus wants his disciples to learn? (vv.12-17)

Notes

v.2 *It does not imply here that Judas was a mere pawn in the hands of the evil one. Judas himself blinded by greed for political power and disillusionment became vulnerable to the snare of the devil.*

v.6 *"The Lord" comes from the name Yahweh in Hebrew. It means "He is" or "He will be". It seems to imply that God will not be boxed in by our ideas of Him. He will be who he chooses to be.*

What about you - a breakthrough?

⑥ Servants are often assigned jobs we do not want to do. Recall a time when you had to do something you did not want to. What were your feelings?

⑦ What lessons about servanthood can you personally learn from Jesus and the way He served His disciples?

⑧ Think of some ways you can serve those around you, whether in or outside your Christian Fellowship/church.

Study Three

Love - A Radical Testimony

John 13:34-35; 15:9-17

Getting Started

① A famous Christian writer, Francis Schaeffer, once said, "Love is the final apologetic". Indeed, a loving community is the most visible and best proof of the Gospel. Share with one another one recent occasion when you experienced Christian love.

Come and See

Knowing that time is short before he leaves (13:33), Jesus issues a new commandment to his disciples .

② Something new usually captures our attention. According to Jesus' new commandment, how should we love one another and what will the outcome be (13:34-35)?

③ In 15:9-17, Jesus continues his exhortation (vv.1-8) and encourages them to remain in his love and have complete joy. How are we to experience this?

④ Jesus' command to the disciples echoes who he has been to them. What radical standard of love does Jesus call them to (15:12-13)?

⑤ According to Jesus, there is a change in his relationship with his disciples. Describe the change and how it is significant (15:13-16).

⑥ Essentially, Jesus is saying that it is he who enables us to bear fruit. What then is our part (15:16,17. Compare with 15:5-8)?

Notes

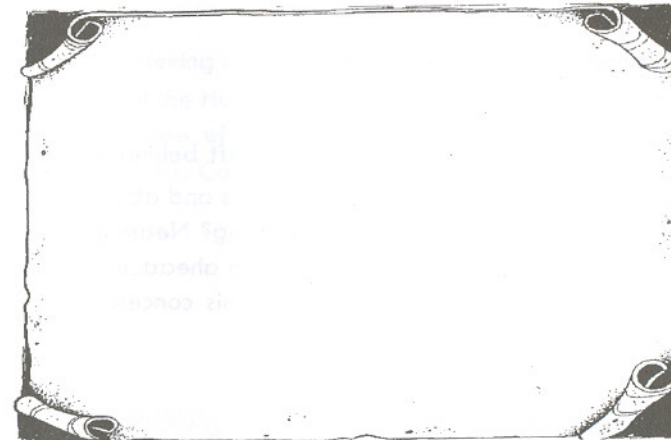
v. 34 *The root word in Greek for "love" here is "agape". We know it as "sacrificial love." It is a love that is rooted in the mind and will of the one who loves and it means to respect and value the one loved to the extent of doing that which benefits the one loved.*

v. 34 *This is not exactly a new commandment (Lev. 19:18) but it is new in the sense that we are now to love as God loves us, not just as a command to obey. It is also new in its sacrificial nature which should characterize the community.*

What about you - a breakthrough?

⑦ We are often blind to our own prejudices towards those who are different from us, e.g. someone of a different race or denomination. Identify some of these people whom you often come in contact with. How can you better love these people?

⑧ What difficulties do you face in loving one another the way Jesus loves us? Write a letter to God about your difficulties. Ask him to transform the way you love.



Study Four

Alone But Not Abandoned

John 14:15-26; 16:5-16

Getting Started

① Have you ever lost someone dear to you through death, or been separated from a loved one? Losing someone close to us leaves us feeling lost and vulnerable. Describe a time when you felt alone and abandoned.

What does one give to those who will be left behind by one's death? Part of grief is coping with the sudden loss and absence of a loved one. What hope is there to carry on living? Nearing death, Jesus' concern was not for himself or the suffering ahead. Instead his heart goes out to his disciples. He expresses his concern for the confusion and uncertainty they were feeling.

Come and See

② What two promises are made by Jesus to his disciples in verses 15-17 and verses 18-21? In what ways would these promises comfort or assure them?

③ What connection does Jesus draw between love and obedience? (14:15,21,23-24). In what ways does this reflect/not reflect the thinking of the world today? What are the privileges enjoyed by those who love Jesus?

④ In some versions of the Bible, the title Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit is translated as "Counselor", which comes from the Greek word, "*paraklete*" meaning "one called to walk alongside to help." How will the Holy Spirit take Jesus' place? List all that he will do for us (14:17-26, 16:12-16).

⑤ To the grieving disciples, Jesus says it is actually good that he is leaving. This is so that the Holy Spirit may come. How will this be meaningful to the disciples in view of the task they have, to teach and share him with the world (16:8-11. Compare with 15:26-27)?

Notes

vv. 8-11

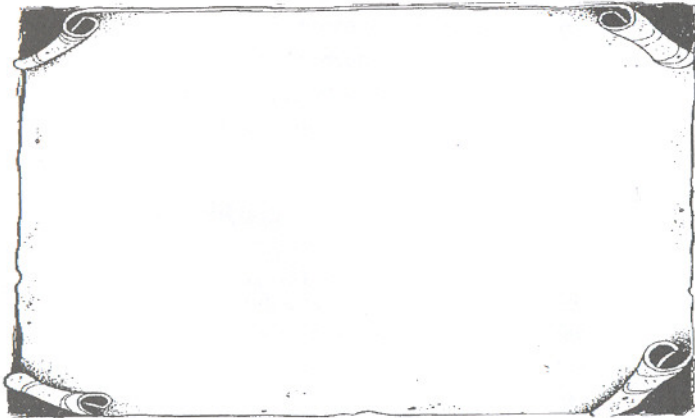
The spirit will expose the sin of unbelief (v.9). The Spirit will also show that Christ alone is blameless and upright, and all others fall short of God's standards (v.10). Finally, he will also show that people who do not repent and believe in Christ will be condemned together with Satan (v.11).

What about you - a breakthrough?

⑥ Think of a situation in your Christian life or a particular struggle you are going through where you feel very alone. Be still and invite Jesus' presence into your situation. What might he be saying?

⑦ Our obedience or the lack of it is an indication of how much we love God. What are some specific areas that you need to deal with now in order to be obedient?

⑧ Write a response to Jesus with regards to the area he is calling you to obedience.



Study Five

Be Prepared!

John 15:18-16:4

Getting Started

① Anne Frank was a Dutch Jewish girl who died in a Nazi concentration camp during the second world war. In her diary, which has been published, she records how her father, together with a friend, prepared a hiding place in his office and started moving furniture there long before they needed to go into hiding.

How about you? What would you do

...If you are told your exam is going to be very difficult?

...If you know that someone has decided you are his/her enemy?

...If you know that you and your family are going to face very trying times?

Similarly, Jesus attempts to prepare his disciples for the very trying times ahead!

Come and See

② Hostility seems to surround Jesus, especially from the Jews. Why are the Jews hostile towards Jesus (15:21-25; 16:3)?

③ The world too is hostile towards those who follow Jesus. What are the reasons for the world's hostility towards Christians (15:18-21, 16:2-3)?

④ Whatever our circumstances are, we have a mission to accomplish. What is our mission in this world? What help do we have (15:26-27)?

⑤ Jesus predicts how badly the disciples will be treated in the future. Why do you think Jesus is telling his disciples these things (16:1-4)?

Notes

vv. 22-25 *The Jews rejected Jesus despite having the privilege of knowing the Scripture and having Christ in their midst performing all the miraculous signs. This rendered them guilty without excuse.*

v. 2

Synagogues are places of assembly used for reading and teaching the Holy Scriptures. Sometimes they are also used for worship. Jesus and His disciples spent much time teaching in these places.

What about you - a breakthrough?

⑥ Describe your "world". What is its attitude towards Jesus and you as a Christian?

⑦ Recall a situation when you had difficulty standing up for your faith. What could you have done?

⑧ How can you and your Christian Fellowship/Christian community bring Jesus to the "world" you are in? What are some of your fears?

Study Six

In The World, With A Mission

John 17:6-26

Getting Started

① Swimming alone in a pool where it is calm is easier than swimming in the open sea where waves abound. Living the Christian life is like that too. It would be easier to be a Christian in isolation - away from the "real" world where distractions, temptations, threats and hostilities abound. What has made it most difficult for you to live the Christian life?

The clock is ticking. Jesus' time is almost up. Deeply concerned that his disciples will be facing many challenges, he prays for them.

Come and See

② In his prayer, Jesus tells his Father about all that he has done to prepare his disciples for the future. What are some of these (vv.6-8,12-19)?

③ Jesus also agonized about the kind of world he is leaving his disciples in. Describe the world and its relationship with the disciples (vv.6,14-18).

④ Jesus specifically prays for two groups of believers: his immediate disciples (vv.6-19) and those who will believe as a result of their testimony (vv.20-16). List all that Jesus has asked for them.

⑤ Jesus wants his disciples to be "set apart" or sanctified. What are they to be set apart for? Where is their mission field (v.18)?

⑥ Jesus is very concerned about the oneness of those he is leaving behind. What does "oneness" or "unity" among the believers testify to the world (vv.11, 20-23)?

⑦ In verse 24, Jesus says that those who belong to Him will see His glory and be where He is. What would this and Jesus' prayer for our protection (vv. 11,15) mean to us as we carry out our mission in a hostile world?

Notes

v.17 *New Living Translation says "Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth."*

v.19 *Jesus' giving of himself on the cross provided the means for the disciples to grow into his likeness that they may be set apart for God.*

What about you - a breakthrough?

⑧ In the light of the disharmony we often see in the Christian community, how can you, your church or your Christian Fellowship play a part in fostering unity among all believers? Be specific.

⑨ You too have been set apart. What is Jesus calling you to?