

The Good News

Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1 – Jesus Has Come to Restore Our Broken Relationship with God	1
Lesson 2 – Jesus Has Come to Defeat the Devil for Us	3
Lesson 3 – Jesus Has Come to Save Us	5
Lesson 4 – Jesus Has Come to Give Us a New and Secure Life in Him	7
Lesson 5 – Jesus Has Come to Fill Our Emptiness	9
Lesson 6 – Jesus Has Come to Give Us a New Identity	11
Lesson 7 – Jesus Has Come to Make Us Children of God	13
Lesson 8 – Jesus Has Come to Calm the Storm of Life for Us	15
Lesson 9 – Jesus Has Come to Free Us from Spiritual Slavery	17
Lesson 10 – Jesus Has Come to Make Us Fruitful for God’s Kingdom	19
Lesson 11 – Jesus Has Come to Make Us Royal and Holy	21
Lesson 12 – Jesus Has Come to Defeat Death for Us and to Glorify Us	23
Resources	25

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 1 – Jesus Has Come to Restore Our Broken Relationship with God

Opening Questions

1. What are some negative results of a broken relationship?
2. What are some differences between good advice and good news?

Introduction

Imagine that you were in a pumpkin-carving contest, and the winner would get a free airline ticket to go to anywhere in this world. You were advised by your friends to practice hard. The bad news was that you did not win the contest. Another person won. The good news was that person was your best friend, and he/she gave you the airline ticket. The whole Bible has one theme: the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ for us. The Bible uses the word “gospel” which literally means good news. It is not good advice about what we should do in our lives but is about what Jesus has done and accomplished for us.



To think about:

People of any religion try to achieve their own good future—their own “airline ticket to heaven.” However, the Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ is our best friend and Savior who gives us the ticket to heaven if we believe in what he has done for us and trust our lives to him.

From the Bible



Genesis 3:1-13

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Discussion Questions

1. What did the serpent say to Eve, and what was her response (v.1-3)?
How is it different than what God originally said to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17?
2. What did Satan say to Eve about God’s Word (v.4-5)?
Why do you think Satan mixes the truth with lies?
3. What was the first result of their sin (v.7)?
4. What were the further results of their sin (v.10, 12-13)?



Notes

Christ: a title of Jesus which means *the promised Savior*.

The Gospel: *the Good News* about God’s plan to save us from sin and evil by sending Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself and died for us.

Serpent: Satan entered into *a large snake* and tempted **the woman**. He made Eve confused by creating doubt in God’s word.

Her husband: Adam.

Loincloths: a single piece of cloth.

Genesis 2:16-17
And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Genesis 3:14-24

¹⁴The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” ¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” ¹⁷And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” ²⁰The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. ²²Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Discussion Questions

1. What was God’s punishment for the serpent (v.14)?
2. What did God say would happen in the future (v.15)?
3. What was God’s punishment for Eve (v.16)?
4. What was God’s punishment for Adam (v.17-19)?
5. What is the meaning of Eve’s name (v.20)?
6. What did God make for Adam and Eve (v.21)?
Why do you think God would do that for them after they disobeyed him?



Closing Points

1. Adam and Eve were the first human beings in this world. God created them to have a joyful and loving relationship with God and with each other. Because of their sin against God, it started to corrupt themselves and break the good relationships they had with God and with each other. The Bible teaches us that all of us were born out of Adam and Eve with a corrupted or sinful nature. We demonstrate thoughts, words, and acts of selfishness or self-centeredness in our lives towards God and one another.
2. Although Adam and Eve acted selfishly against God, he still loved them. He made new clothes for them. They received it as a gift. This is God’s *grace* for them. Grace is an act of mercy and kindness to someone who does not deserve it. God also taught them that he had to kill an animal instead of killing them. An innocent animal was killed as a substitute for them. This animal is a temporary substitute that points to a permanent substitute to bear all sins of Adam and Eve, as well as all our sins.
3. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions. We deserve to be punished. God is a just God, and he must punish our sins. This is the bad news for us. The gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is not good advice about how we should live our lives so God will receive us—achieving our own “airline ticket to heaven”—but is good news about what Jesus has accomplished for us. Jesus has lived the life that we should live, and he has taken the death punishment for all our sins that we deserve as our substitute. When we believe in what he has done for us and trust our lives to him, we receive a new life with him, and our joyful and loving relationship with God is restored.

Notes

He: God’s promise that a specific offspring (a man) will defeat Satan. This is the first promise of the gospel (good news) in the Bible that God would send Jesus Christ to save us from the power of evil.

Us: The Triune God or the Trinity is one God in three persons (God the Father, God the Son—Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit). They are equal in substance and glory.

Cherubim: a winged angel.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 2 – Jesus Has Come to Defeat the Devil for Us

Opening Questions

1. What are some common temptations we have received? What are some consequences when we give in to temptations?
2. Can we outsmart the devil on our own? Why?

Introduction

In Lesson 1, we learned how Adam and Eve fall into sin. The devil gave them three major areas of temptation: (1) the lust of the flesh—the fruit was good for food; (2) the lust of the eye—the fruit was pleasing to the eye; (3) the pride of life—the fruit was desirable for gaining wisdom or knowledge separately from God. The devil led Adam and Eve to “the road of temptation.” Slowly, everything became foggy to them, and they could not see the truth of God. They were following the road that led them away from God, and they fell into temptation and sin. Consequently, all mankind—born of Adam and Eve—has fallen into sin. However, God has a plan to save mankind. He has promised a Savior to save us.



To think about:

Jesus came from heaven and was born as a man with a purpose to save us from sin and darkness. To be our Savior, Jesus needed to experience temptations and struggles as a man. He needed to become our model and hope to overcome these. He prevailed. He has defeated the devil for us.

From the Bible



Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,” and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Discussion Questions

1. How long did Jesus fast in the wilderness? What was his condition after fasting (v.1-2)?
2. What did the tempter [the devil] say to Jesus (v.3)? What was Jesus’ answer to him (v.4)? Why do you think the devil said, “If you are the Son of God?”
3. Where did the devil take Jesus to, and what did he say to Jesus there (v.5-6)? What was Jesus’ answer to him (v.7)?
4. Where did the devil take Jesus to and for what purpose (v.8)? What did he say to Jesus, and what was Jesus’ answer to him (v.9-10)?
5. Who came to Jesus after the devil left him? What did they do (v.11)?



Notes

The devil (Satan): a rebellious angel who is the leader of evil spirits (demons).

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

The Trinity or the Triune God: One God in three persons (God the Father, God the Son, and **God the Holy Spirit**). They are equal but have different roles in the work of saving us from sin and evil.

The Son of God: Jesus’ spiritual title to emphasize his divinity. He is fully and truly God.

It is written: quotes from the Old Testament Bible in Deuteronomy 8:3, Psalm 91:11-12, Deuteronomy 6:16, and Deuteronomy 6:13.

1 John 3:8 “The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”

John 8:12 (Jesus says), “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:44 (Jesus says), “He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

1 Peter 5:5-11

⁵... Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the reason that Jesus came from heaven to this world (1 John 3:8)?
2. What did Jesus say about himself? What will happen to those who become his followers (John 8:12)? What do you think it means?
3. What does Jesus say about the devil (John 8:44)?
4. What kind of attitude should we have in our daily lives? Why (1 Peter 5:5-6)?
5. What comfort do we have when we are anxious (v.7)?
6. What should we do in facing our daily spiritual war (v.8-9)?
7. What confidence do we have in God’s love and care for us (v.10-11, see also Phil. 1:6)?



Closing Points

1. The devil gave Jesus three major temptations: the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and the lust of the eye. Three times Jesus was tempted, and three times he used the word of God to defeat the devil. Jesus’ ultimate battle with the devil is at the cross. Jesus’ mission was to sacrifice himself and to die for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute. The devil tempted him to abandon his mission to save us, but Jesus did not abandon us, so that we can be saved from the penalty of our sins and the enslaving power of sin and have a new life in him.
2. Temptation usually starts with a suggestive, enticing, and tempting thought in our minds. Jesus has defeated the devil for us. His victory is our victory as well. He is our Savior. The devil leads us to his road of temptation, but Jesus leads us to his road of victory. We can walk on this road by believing in Jesus by faith, trusting our lives to him as our Savior and Guide.
3. Jesus says “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” He is *the Light* of the entire world, and not just *the Light* of a particular nation. He is the Light of all nations. He is *the Light* who came from heaven to this world. He tells us the reality that each of us walks in spiritual darkness, separated from God because of our sins. We cannot see the light of God. Jesus came to this world to save us from our sins and spiritual darkness. He came to bring us his light, so that by believing in him and following him by faith, our sins can be forgiven, and we can have him, *the Light of God*, in our lives.

Notes

The Son of God:

Jesus’ spiritual title to emphasize his divinity. He is fully and truly God.

Followers of Jesus are also called sons or children of God.

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 3 – Jesus Has Come to Save Us

Opening Questions

1. What are some reasons that we avoid helping a needy stranger on the street?
2. What kind of behaviors or characteristics are needed for friendship to last a long time?

Introduction

The human heart is in constant rebellion against God. We do not want God to be in and to rule our lives. We want to rule our own lives. We make our own gods and reject the one true God who has created this universe and us. Jesus came from heaven to this world with a purpose to teach us about the true kingdom of God, the love of God for us, and what God desires from us. Jesus needed to sacrifice himself to accomplish his purpose.



To think about:

God offers us a loving friendship with him, and many people do not want it. They just want God's gifts or blessings for them, including his heaven. Are we worth saving? Does God have to save us? When we offer a good friendship to someone, but the person does not want it, what do we do naturally?

From the Bible



Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him [Jesus] to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Discussion Questions

1. What did the lawyer ask Jesus, and how did Jesus respond to him (v.25-26)?
2. What was the lawyer's answer, and what did Jesus say to him (v.27-28)?
3. What did the lawyer ask Jesus, and why did he ask that (v.29)?
4. In Jesus' story, what happened to the man who was traveling (v.30)?
5. What could be some reasons that the priest and the Levite—both were religious workers—did not help the needy man (v.31-32)?
6. Who was the third person who saw the man, and what did the person do (v.33-35)?
7. What did Jesus ask the lawyer, and what was his answer (v.36-37)?
8. Why do you think the lawyer did not directly say, "the Samaritan"?
9. What did Jesus say to him (v.37)? Do you think he could do it?



Notes

Eternal life: to live in heaven (God's dwelling place) forever.

In true biblical meaning, it is to live *lovingly* with God in *holiness*.

Jerusalem, Jericho: Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel and was the center of religious activities. It is about 17 miles (27 km) from Jericho.

Levites: religious persons who helped the work of **priests** (religious leaders) in the temple of God.

Samaritans: were mixed raced people who lived in the northern part of Israel. They were Jews who had intermarried with foreigners. The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other.

Denarius (denarii—plural): an ancient Roman silver coin; a fair wage for a full day of work.

John 3:16-21

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment [based on this fact]: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his [sinful] works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

John 8:12 (Jesus says), “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Discussion Questions

1. How does God prove his love for us? What will happen if we believe in Jesus (v.16)?
2. Why did God send Jesus to this world (v.17)?
3. What is the consequence if we do not believe in Jesus (v.18)?
4. What is the reason people do not believe in Jesus (v.19-20)?
5. Who will come to the light or believe in Jesus (v.21)?
6. What did Jesus say about himself? What will happen to those who become his followers (John 8:12)? What do you think it means?

Closing Points

1. Jesus taught the lawyer that knowing what God wanted him to do—to love God and to love other people—was not sufficient. He must do what God wants him to do. To love God means to desire for a personal and loving relationship with him and not just wanting the things that he can give us.
2. Like the priest and the Levite, the lawyer failed to love his neighbor. We all fail to love other people as we should. To love other people means to show mercy to everyone, including strangers and foreigners. The Bible teaches us that only if we truly love God and have a loving relationship with him, could we truly love other people and have a good relationship with them.
3. Jesus identifies himself as the Good Samaritan in the story, and we are the person who is dying on the road. We need God to show his mercy to us by saving us from our sins. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions, and deserve his punishment. We are rebellious people and are spiritually dead in our sins. We love darkness rather than God. We are not worthy to be saved by God. God does not have to save us. God is a just God, and he must punish our sins.
4. God is also a loving God, and he wants to save us from darkness and our own sins. Jesus came from heaven to this world to save us by sacrificing himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute so that by believing in him and trusting our lives to him, we can receive God’s forgiveness and be saved from his holy judgment. Jesus is the Good Samaritan who saves us with the cost of his own life. “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Without Jesus, we are left dead in our sins. We owe him our lives.
5. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God also gives us a new life—a personal and loving relationship with him through Jesus for eternity—and gives us a new heart that enables us to truly love him and other people. Jesus came to save us because he loves us. He died for us so that we may have eternal life with him.

Notes

The Son of God:
Jesus’ spiritual title to emphasize his divinity. He is fully and truly God. Followers of Jesus are also called sons or children of God.

People loved the darkness, their works were evil:
similar in meaning; because we are sinful people, we reject God and do not believe in God. In our sinfulness, we prefer spiritual darkness and evil rather than believing in God.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

Works have been carried out in God:
the works of true believers or followers of Jesus are done out of love for God.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 4 – Jesus Has Come to Give Us a New and Secure Life in Him

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever felt unsafe? When and how?
2. Have you ever seen sheep? Have you ever seen shepherds taking care of their sheep?

Introduction

Everyone wants to feel safe. Feeling secure is one of the greatest necessities for every person. Ever since we were born, we have wanted to feel safe. Not feeling safe is emotionally unhealthy for us. It makes us anxious, afraid, and unable to sleep well. This world is a broken world and is full of bad people who can harm others. We feel safer when we are at home than outside. Even when we are at home, we still lock our doors. We depend on police officers or the government to give us a sense of security, but there are still many crimes and many places where we do not feel safe to go to, especially alone.



To think about:

In this broken world, where there are many crimes, uncertainties, and struggles, we often do not have peace in our minds and hearts. Who can give us true peace? Where should we look for hope? The Bible tells us that we can find true hope and peace in Jesus. If we believe in him and trust our lives to him by faith, he gives us his peace; peace that will guard our minds and hearts. Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

From the Bible



John 10:1-10

¹ “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between one who climbs into the sheepfold and one who enters by the door of the sheepfold in their identities and purposes (v.1-2)?
2. How do you think the sheep can recognize the voice of the shepherd? Is there an important meaning in calling the sheep by name (v.3-4)?
3. Why will the sheep not follow strangers (v.5)?
4. What does Jesus say about himself, and what will happen to the sheep who enter by him (v.7-9)?
5. What is the purpose of Jesus coming to this world? What will happen if we truly follow and believe in him (v.10)?



Notes

They know his voice: true followers of Jesus have a personal and close relationship with him. They listen to him and follow him.

I am (AM) the door: Jesus used a special expression “I AM,” (“ego eimi” in Greek) indicating an eternal present (no past and no future). He describes himself as the door for the sheep (us) to enter the fold (God’s kingdom).

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly: Jesus says that all people are spiritually dead being separated from God. He came to give us a new life, living joyfully and peacefully with God—a personal and loving relationship with him. He is the door of this new life.

John 10:11-18

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”



Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus say about himself and how would he prove it (v.11)?
2. What will a hired hand do when a wolf comes to attack the sheep (v.12)? Why (v.13)?
Imagine that you were one of the sheep. Do you want to be in the care of your shepherd or a hired hand? Why?
3. How does Jesus describe the close relationship he has with his sheep (v.14)?
How does he further explain that his relationship with his sheep is very close and personal (v.15)?
4. Will Jesus' other sheep, who are not Jewish people, listen to his voice (v.16)?
How do you think Jesus speaks to them, and how can they listen to his voice?
5. Several times Jesus speaks about laying down or sacrificing his life (v.11, 15, 17, 18).
What may be a significance of it? What authority does he have for his own life (v.18)?

Lesson Summary

1. Jesus came to this world with a mission to give us a new life in him, living joyfully and peacefully with God. He is the door to this new, abundant, and eternal life. This new life is a personal and loving relationship with him for eternity. Unlike other religious teachers, Jesus is God and can speak to us in our hearts. If we hear his voice calling us to come to him, and we give our lives to him, it will be the most joyful day in our lives.
2. To accomplish his mission to bring a new life to us, Jesus needed to sacrifice himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute, so that by believing in him and trusting our lives to him, we can receive God's forgiveness for all our sins and a new life with Jesus. Jesus is our good, beautiful, and perfect Shepherd.
3. The wolves point to evil power or our enemies in this sinful world, including evil spirits, who try to attack and scatter us. Their purpose is to prevent people from coming and believing in Jesus who is the door or the way to God's kingdom. They use many ways to deceive, manipulate, and attack people. However, we do not need to be afraid of them. If we have a personal and loving relationship with Jesus, he is always with us. He has sacrificed himself for us and has brought us to his fold (God's kingdom). He himself is the door of this fold. He protects and watches over his sheep (people).
4. When we have Jesus in our lives, our lives are secured in his hands. He loves us and watches over our lives. We will have true hope and peace regardless of troubles or struggles in this world because he is always with us in our circumstances, guiding, strengthening, and walking with us. There is nothing that can separate us from Jesus' love for us. His love for us gives us true hope and peace and overcomes all our struggles and uncertainties in this broken world.

Notes

I am (AM) the good shepherd: Jesus used the same special expression “I AM.”
“*Agathos*” and “*kalos*” are two Greek words that mean “good.” Jesus used “*kalos*” that means good, beautiful, and perfect – “I AM the *kalos* shepherd.”

Know: in the Bible, knowing someone means having a personal and close relationship with the person; not just knowing *about* the person.

Other sheep: followers of Jesus from other nations (non-Jewish people). Jesus explains that His sheep are people from all nations.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 5 – Jesus Has Come to Fill Our Emptiness

Opening Questions

1. Why is water very important to all living beings in this world?
2. Why do some people feel (a) lonely or (b) their lives are empty or without purpose?

Introduction

Most people will feel loneliness at some point in their lives. We can feel alone or feel a lack of support in some circumstances. Even worse, people can feel their lives are empty or without purpose. These situations are not good for our health physically and mentally. Knowing that there is someone who is always with us and loves us unconditionally will make our lives full of purpose. We will become more of people-oriented persons rather than self-centered and self-oriented persons.



To think about:

Jesus has come to this world for us. He loves us unconditionally. He wants to fill our lives with his love and joy and makes our lives purposeful for God's kingdom. He offers us a personal and loving relationship with him. If we have him in our lives, we will have his promise, "I will never leave you alone."

From the Bible



John 4:5-18 [selective]

⁵ So he [Jesus] came to a town of Samaria called Sychar ... , ⁶ ... wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ ... ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

Discussion Questions

1. Where did Jesus go to bring the good news of the kingdom of God? How was he when he arrived there? About what time did he arrive (v.5-6)?
2. Who came from the town, and what did Jesus ask of her (v.7)?
3. How did she respond to Jesus' request, and what was her attitude (v.9)?
4. How did Jesus respond to her (v.10)? Do you understand what Jesus was saying?
5. How did she reply to Jesus (v.11-12)? To what degree do you think she understood that Jesus was speaking spiritually about *living water*, *the gift of God*, and *who he is*?
6. What did Jesus say to her (v.13-14)? How did she respond (v.15)?
7. What did Jesus ask of her, and how did she respond? How did Jesus reveal her broken relationships and broken life (v.16-18)?



Notes

Samaria: a region in northern Israel.

Samaritans: were not pure Jews, but mixed-race people born from intermarriage between Jews and foreigners.

The Jews outside Samaria hated them and would not travel through Samaria. The Jews even considered sharing utensils with Samaritans as unholy or unclean. Jesus, however, purposefully went to Samaria, had a conversation with a Samaritan woman, and asked for a drink using her cup.

The sixth hour: Ancient Jews used the sun as their time. It starts at 6 am our time. The first hour is 7 am. The sixth hour is 12 pm noon.

Jacob: an ancestor of Jewish people. Jacob's sons became the twelve tribes of Israel.

John 4:19-26, 28-29, 39-42

¹⁹The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” ²⁶Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,

²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Discussion Questions

1. What did she think about Jesus now (v.19)? What did she say to him (v.20)?
2. What did Jesus say about where and how we should worship God (v.21-24)?
3. What did she say to Jesus (v.25)? How did Jesus respond to her (v.26)?
4. How did she begin to become *a spring of water* for others and her life was no longer empty but purposeful (v.28-29)?
5. How did many other Samaritans believe in Jesus and receive his *living water* (v.39-41)?
6. What did they say to her about Jesus (v.42)?



Closing Points

1. God is our spiritual *Living Water*. He is the Source and the Giver of our lives. Without knowing him and having a loving relationship with him, we are empty and spiritually dead in our sin.
2. “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” God is not limited to a location. We can sincerely worship God at any time anywhere from our hearts out of love for him and with proper understanding of him as he has revealed himself in the Bible. Everything in the Bible (the Word of God) is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training us in the righteousness of God, so we may have a personal, loving, joyful, and purposeful relationship with God that never ends.
3. Jesus has come to save us from our sins. He has sacrificed himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute. He is the gift of God for us. He is God himself, who has come to give us *Living Water*, so we can have a new, meaningful, and purposeful life—a personal and loving relationship with him that truly satisfies our souls and brings true joy and happiness to our hearts. He invites us to believe and trust our lives to him. He is our Savior and the Savior of the world.
4. Faith in Jesus Christ is rational and personal. The Samaritan woman had a rational conversation with Jesus discussing religious topics. She was smart. She was also lonely and had five broken relationships. Jesus addressed her personal need and revealed who he is. She trusted her life to him and began to be *a spring of water* for others, sharing her testimony for God’s kingdom. Her life was no longer empty but purposeful. When we receive Jesus, *the Living Water*, in our lives, we will be like her.

Notes

Prophet: a messenger of God.

Jerusalem: the capital city of Israel and the center of religious activities.

The Triune God (the Trinity): one God in three distinct persons (**God the Father**, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). They are in unity and are equal in substance, power, and glory.

Salvation: being saved from sin and evil.

Messiah (from the Hebrew word) and **Christ** (from the Greek word): Jesus’ title which means *the promised Savior*

I am (AM): Jesus used a special expression “I AM,” “ego eimi” in the Greek Bible, which means “I exist,” indicating an eternal present (no past and no future). It is the same expression that he (the Son of God) used to introduce himself to Moses about 1,400 years before he was born as a man in this world.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 6 – Jesus Has Come to Give Us a New Identity

Opening Questions

1. What is the purpose of our lives, and what does a meaningful life look like to you?
2. If you must choose one, do you prefer to receive a lot of money or a lot of love? Why?

Introduction

The Bible teaches us that without a personal and loving relationship with God, we are lost. We are lost people, wandering in this broken world, without truly understanding where we are going or what is the ultimate purpose of our lives. We may try to work hard, develop a career, and build a family, but at the end of our lives, we are not ready to meet the true God, the Creator of the universe and our Maker. However, those who have a personal and loving relationship with God understand their purpose of life because they build their identity on the love of God for them and not on their academic achievements or career. They have a joyful life in their personal and loving relationship with God.



To think about:

What is my identity? If we build our identity on our achievements, we will despair when we fail. If we build our identity on God's love for us, we will never despair, no matter if we succeed or fail in our work, if we have a good boss or a bad one, or if we face good things or troubles in life, because God still loves us. God is always with us in our lives. We are never alone.

From the Bible



Luke 15:11-19

¹¹ [Jesus was teaching people and telling a parable] And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

Discussion Questions

1. In Jesus' parable, what did the younger son ask of his father? What does this request mean? Is this a polite request? What did the father do (v.11-12)?
2. When their neighbors hear about this, what would they think about the younger son?
3. Where did the younger son go, and what did he do there (v.13)?
What kind of person do you think he wanted to be? Can money truly give us happiness and a sense of identity?
4. What happened to him later, and what did he do then (v.14-15)?
5. Do you think he wanted that job? What happened to him there (v.16)?
6. What does "he came to himself" mean? What was he thinking he would do (v.17-19)?
7. Was there a change in his attitude? Why do some people change only after encountering difficult situations in their lives?



Notes

Share of property: inheritance.

The younger son asked his father for an inheritance before his father died. In the culture at that time, an older son received two thirds of his father's inheritance, and a younger son received one third of it. To give the younger son an inheritance, the father needed to sell one-third of his land and give the money to him.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Luke 15:20-32

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Discussion Questions

1. What did the father do when he saw his younger son at a distance? What do you think about the father's act (v.20)?
2. How did the son express his regret? Did the father question or rebuke him for what he did? What did the father do for his son (v.21-22)?
3. What else did the father do for his son (v.23)? What significance would this have?
4. What did the father say about his son (v.24)? Why do you think he said that?
5. How did the older brother react to his father celebrating the return of his younger brother? Why (v.28-30)?
6. What did the father say to his older son (v.31-32)? What do you think about it?



Closing Points

1. Many people, including religious people, build their identities on their achievements. In the parable, Jesus identified the Jewish religious leaders in the person of the older brother. They thought they could inherit the kingdom of God by obeying their religious rules, like the older brother obeying his father's command. The older brother was as lost as the younger brother. The older brother wanted only his father's property, just as the younger son did. In the end the younger son wanted the love of his father and a loving relationship with him, but the older son never wanted that. The religious leaders did not want a loving relationship with God but wanted only what God can give them—a good life, heaven, etc. They were self-centered and as lost as other people.
2. Jesus wants us to be like the younger son. We are all lost in this broken world. We try to make our own lives. We try to get good degrees and good jobs. Working hard is good, but if we forget that the most important thing in life is to have a personal and loving relationship with God, we will always struggle to find true joy and happiness.
3. Without a loving relationship with God, we are always lost. Jesus came from heaven to this world to sacrifice himself and die for the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute. He loves us. He offers us a loving relationship with him. He says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). When we believe in him, trust our lives to him and receive his love for us, he gives us a new identity. We become children of God. Our identity is received and not achieved.

Notes

Fattened calf: In that culture, only a big celebration had a fattened young cow. It means neighbors were invited to celebrate. The father restored the honor and social status of his son, not only to his family, but also to the community.

Dead, lost, found: Jesus purposefully used these terms to describe that we are not just lost in this dark and corrupted world, but also are *spiritually dead* because of our sins. We are separated from God. Jesus came to this world to find and save us from our sins by sacrificing himself. We are *spiritually lost* and cannot save ourselves, but we are *found* by Jesus who saves us.

Angry: the father's remaining property and wealth would be the older son's inheritance. He did not want to take his brother back and sacrifice any of his property.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 7 – Jesus Has Come to Make Us Children of God

Opening Questions

1. What privileges do children who have parents have compared to orphans?
2. If no one loved us, how would it impact us? Why do we need to be *truly* loved?

Introduction

Many orphans struggle with mental or emotional problems because they grow up without experiencing the love of their biological parents. They often feel a deep sense of loneliness. In contrast, children who experience genuine and nurturing parental love are more likely to grow up mentally and emotionally healthy. Of course, not all parents are good parents. Some do not love their children genuinely, beautifully, or wisely as they should. As a result, this may lead to unhealthy relationships that can affect their children's mental and emotional health.



To think about:

We all have parents who are not perfect. There are no perfect parents in this world. All our parents have weaknesses, and so do we. However, there is one perfect Father for us all. God is our heavenly Father who, unlike earthly fathers with their weaknesses, can love us truly, perfectly, and beautifully. That is why only God can truly satisfy our hearts and make us joyful.

From the Bible



John 1:1-5, 9-13

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become *children of God*, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Discussion Questions

1. John explains the mystery of the Triune God in sweet and short sentences. He invites us to meditate on who Jesus Christ (the Son of God) truly is. What can we know about *the Word* (v.1-2)? What are some essential truths or realities that John wants us to know?
2. What else can we know about *the Word* [the Son of God] (v.3-4)? What do you think it means?
3. Life was in *the Word*. *The Word* is *the Life* and *the Light*. *The Word* is the source of all life and all light that enables us to live and see. What can we learn about *the Word* as *the Light* (v.5)? What do you think it means?
4. What is the significance that the Word (the Son of God) is the true light that all other lights, including the sun, point to (v.9)?
5. Jesus was the human name given to the Son of God when he was born as a human being (a man). What was the reality or the tragedy that he faced when he came to this world (v.10-11)? Why do you think he was willing to experience that?
6. What would Jesus do for those who believe and receive him by faith, trusting their lives to him (v.12-13)?



Notes

The Word (the Word of God): the Son of God or Jesus Christ; the second person of the Triune God.

The Triune God (the Trinity): one God in three distinct persons (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). They are in unity and are equal in substance, power, and glory.

God: a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

God describes himself in the Bible (the written word of God) as one God in three distinct persons.

Each person of the Triune God loves the other two perfectly and receives love from them from eternity. Love is a characteristic of God, and so are truth, light, and life. God says, "I am love. I am truth. I am light. I am life. I am *the ultimate* love, truth, light, and life."

Matthew 6:25-33

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet *your heavenly Father* feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and *your heavenly Father* knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Discussion Questions

1. Why should we not be anxious about our lives? Does our happiness or joy depend on our food and clothes? Is life just about food and clothes (v.25)? What is your life about? What is the purpose of your life?
2. What example does Jesus use to teach that we are valuable in God’s eyes (v.26)? Is there a significance in Jesus’ emphasis referring to God as “your heavenly Father” rather than as “your Creator” or “your King” or even simply “your God?”
3. Can we add a single hour to our lives by being anxious (v.27)? Why? What is Jesus’ point in asking this rhetorical question?
4. What is Jesus’ point in asking us to consider the beauty and wonder of the lilies of the field in comparison to King Solomon’s glory (v.28-30)? How will God clothe us—provide our basic needs?
5. If we are God’s children, what assurance or comfort do we have (v.31-32)?
6. What does Jesus teach us to focus on in our lives (v.33)? What do you think it means?



Closing Points

1. Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). As the Son of God, Jesus came from heaven to this world to sacrifice himself, bearing the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute. When we believe in him and trust our lives to him, he frees us from spiritual darkness and brings us to his kingdom. He makes us children of God, spiritually born again in God’s kingdom—the kingdom of light—out of God’s mercy and grace.
2. Jesus commands us not to worry about our lives, food, drink, and clothing for several reasons: (1) God feeds birds, even though they do not work, and we are more valuable than birds in God’s eyes. (2) Worry is meaningless and does not add a single hour to our span of life. (3) God clothes the grass and makes wildflowers look beautiful, so he will more than take care of our clothing. (4) God knows all our needs. As our good heavenly Father, God always gives us what we need but not what we want. God always gives us good things. When we trust our lives in the hands of our heavenly Father, who is sovereign and truly loves and cares for us, we find peace and joy.
3. Jesus commands his followers to *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*. This means that we are to love God with all our hearts. Our lives should be for God, his kingdom, and his righteousness. We are to seek first to be made right before God by believing in Jesus and trusting our lives to him, for he alone can make us children of God. Then all the necessary things in life will be added to us by our heavenly Father.

Notes

Solomon: a great and very rich king of Israel.

Glory: great honor; great beauty or magnificence.

Gentile: a non-Jewish person; here refers to a person (with pagan beliefs) who does not believe in the God of the Bible.

Happiness vs. Joy: **Happiness** is an outward expression that comes because of pleasant circumstances.

Joy is an inner feeling that comes from trusting God, knowing him, and having a personal and close relationship with him.

Rhetorical question: a question that you ask without expecting an answer. The question might be one that does not have an answer. It might also be one that has an obvious answer, but you ask the question to make a point.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 8 – Jesus Has Come to Calm the Storm of Life for Us

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever been in a boat on the ocean? Have you ever rowed a boat?
2. What are some characteristics of a trustworthy person?

Introduction

Life in this broken world can be challenging. Unexpected troubles may suddenly come into our lives. Children depend on their parents to help them face difficult situations. Most adults rely on themselves or on other adults when they need help overcoming challenges. It is frightening when we have no one to call for help. Many Christians who have a close relationship with God experience greater peace in their lives, knowing that God (their heavenly Father) loves them and is always with them. As God's children, they know and often experience his care in their daily lives. When sudden and difficult situations arise, God is usually the first one they talk and pray to.



To think about:

Jesus told a story about a wise man who built his house on solid rock and a foolish man who built his house on sand. When the storm and flood came, the foolish man's house was destroyed, but the wise man's house stood firm. Jesus says, "I am the solid rock foundation. If I am the foundation of your life, you will never fall when storms come into your life, not because you are strong, but because I am strong. I hold your life in my hands." Jesus invites all of us to have him as the foundation of our lives.

From the Bible



John 6:16-21

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

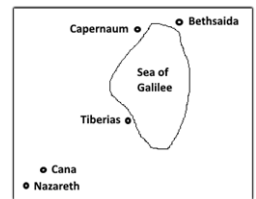
²¹ Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Discussion Questions

1. Where did Jesus' disciples go? Was it during the day or night? Was Jesus with them (v.16-17)?
2. Jesus often spent time alone praying to God without being accompanied by his disciples. What happened with the sea? Why (v.18)?
If you were one of the disciples in the boat, how might you feel?
3. How far did the disciples try to row the boat? How long do you think it might take them, given the sea was rough? What or whom did they see, and how did they feel seeing it (v.19, see also Mark 6:49)? What did Jesus say to calm them down (v.20)?
4. What suddenly happened as Jesus stepped into the boat, and how did the disciples feel (v.21, see also Mark 6:51)? How do you think their feelings this time compared to their feelings when facing a rough ocean?
5. Have you ever faced a big "storm" (a very difficult situation) in your life?



Notes



Evening: the evening after Jesus multiplied food to feed over 5,000 people near Bethsaida.

Capernaum: a small fishing town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel.

Immediately: here most likely it means *soon* and does not mean that there is no gap of time.

Mark 6:49-51

⁴⁹ but when they saw him [Jesus] walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰ for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded.

John 6:22-29

²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

Discussion Questions

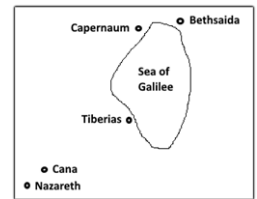
1. Why did the crowd not see Jesus the next day? Where was Jesus the night before (v.22, 16-17)?
2. Where did the crowd go to find Jesus (v.23-24)? What do you think was the reason they were looking for Jesus?
3. Do you think they were surprised to see Jesus there? What did they ask him (v.25)?
4. Did Jesus give them the answer to their question? What did Jesus say to them (v.26-27)? Why do you think he said that?
5. What question did they ask Jesus (v.28)? What was Jesus’ answer to them (v.29)?
6. What do you think about Jesus’ answer that the *works* they need to *do* for God are not to do a lot of religious works but simply to *believe* in him (Jesus)? Why do people like to work and gain self-achievement in general?



Closing Points

1. Jesus’ miracle of walking on the sea and calming the storm reveals his divine power and identity. He is the Creator of the universe and has control over nature. He is the Son of God who came from heaven. He is fully and truly God and fully and truly human.
2. Once Jesus came into the boat, his disciples found that their trouble had passed. There was no more storm. They had joy and peace. Similarly, once Jesus comes into our “boats” (lives), he will give us joy and peace. He will help us to overcome our troubles. He does not promise to take away all troubles from our lives, but he promises to be with us—in the boat together—to face our troubles.
3. Jesus teaches us that the biggest storm that each of us can potentially experience is the wrath and judgment of God against our sins. Jesus came from heaven to this world with the purpose to sacrifice himself and to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute. When we believe in him, God forgives all our sins and credits Jesus’ righteousness to us. God treats us as righteous people and even adopts us as his children. John 1:12 tells us, “But to all who did receive him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”
4. Jesus told the crowd to simply believe in him. Is Jesus trustworthy? Many man-made religions teach things that people need to do and accomplish, so they can *earn* their way to their gods. The only thing that Jesus wants from us is to believe that he is our Savior who came from heaven and who has sacrificed himself and died for us because he loves us. Then, out of love for him as children of God, and not for gaining anything, we serve and love others to bring honor and glory to God.

Notes



The crowd: people who received food from Jesus near Bethsaida the day before.

Tiberias: a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The city was built in honor of Tiberius, the second Roman emperor.

Capernaum: a small fishing town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel.

Rabbi: a Jewish teacher or scholar.

Sign: miracle, wonder.

The Son of Man: Jesus’ favorite title to emphasize his humanity and heavenly kingship.

Seal: a stamp used as evidence of authenticity.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 9 – Jesus Has Come to Free Us from Spiritual Slavery

Opening Questions

1. How do people define freedom?
2. Are we able to be good all the time in our thoughts, words, and actions? Are we able to be completely free from pride and self-centeredness or selfishness? Why?

Introduction

The Bible teaches that every person is born a sinner with a sinful nature, without a personal and loving relationship with God. Our sinful nature manifests itself in our self-centeredness, including pride and selfishness. We sin against God daily because we are sinners. Sin is also a powerful evil force that enslaves us to obey its desires—to rebel against God. Unless God frees us from the slavery of sin, we remain enslaved by it.



To think about:

Is our fight against our own sinful nature a battle we can win? Can we overcome it without God's help? What does our sinful nature do to us? Why is it that so often we cannot overcome our own pride, selfishness, or anger? Why are we so self-centered? Who can free us from sin's tyranny? God can!

From the Bible



Romans 6:12-14 NLT

¹²Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. ¹³Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. ¹⁴Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

Romans 7:14-20, 24-25 NLT

¹⁴So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. ¹⁵I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. ¹⁶But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. ¹⁸And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. ¹⁹I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

²⁴Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. ... In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Discussion Questions

1. What should we not do (Romans 6:12-13)?
2. How will sin have no power over us when we live under God's grace (v.14)?
3. God's law is spiritual and good, but we are not. We are under sin and enslaved by it. How does sin's enslavement show itself in our thoughts, words, and actions (7:14-15)?
4. Without God's help, can we win our battles against the sin that lives in us? Are we hopeful or hopeless (v.16-20)?
5. When we have Jesus Christ as our Lord, sin is no longer our lord or master, and we are freed from its slavery. How can this truth transform our lives (v.24-25)?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with. Because of our sinful nature, we daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Dead: we are spiritually dead, separated from God since we were born because of our sin.

Under the requirements of the law: law-keeping, rule-keeping, or work-based belief system, in which we are accepted or saved by God by keeping laws or rules.

Grace: undeserved favor; an act of mercy and kindness to someone who does not deserve it.

Under the freedom of God's grace: we are accepted, saved, and loved by God because of what Jesus has done for us and our faith in him. This is God's grace for us.

Romans 8:1-11 NLT

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. ⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. ⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Discussion Questions

1. What is our status before God if we become true followers of Jesus (v.1)?
2. What will the Holy Spirit do for us when we become God's children (v.2)?
3. What has God done for us out of his grace (v.3-4)?
4. What is the difference between those who live according to their sinful nature and those who live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit (v.5)? Why (v.6-8)?
5. What is the significance of not having the Holy Spirit living in us (v.9)?
6. What is the significance of having the Holy Spirit living in us (v.10-11)?



Closing Points

1. Each of us was born with a sinful nature and is spiritually enslaved by the sin that lives within us. Because of our sinful nature and tendency, we are often selfish and proud. On our own, we cannot overcome our sinful nature or its sinful desires—we will lose again and again. Sin enslaves us, and we daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions. Because of our sins, we deserve to be punished by God and are condemned to eternal punishment. This is the bad news.
2. The good news is that God loves us. He sent Jesus Christ to save us. Jesus came from heaven to this world and was born as a human being. He is fully and truly God and fully and truly man. He came to sacrifice himself and die as our substitute, taking the punishment for all our sins. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God forgives all our sins and restores our spiritual relationship with him by his grace. There is no longer any condemnation for us. God frees us from the spiritual slavery of sin. Sin is no longer our master—God is.
3. God also gives us his Holy Spirit to live in us—to guide and raise us as his children. The Holy Spirit grows us in God's holiness and righteousness from the inside out. He gives us strength to fight our daily battles against evil forces and our sinful nature that still remains in our bodies. God has promised to completely deliver us from sin and our sinful bodies. When Jesus returns, he will give our souls new heavenly bodies free from sin's corruption. We will be completely holy and live eternally with the holy God.

Notes

Christ: Jesus' title which means the promised Savior.

The Holy Spirit: the third person of the Triune God—God in three persons (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit); also called as **the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ**.

The law of Moses: God's law for his people given through Moses.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 10 – Jesus Has Come to Make Us Fruitful for God’s Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. What is one character quality that you would like to develop more in yourself? Why?
2. How do we overcome or defeat evil with good? Give an example!

Introduction

Growing in maturity is not easy. Most of us want to grow and mature, but it takes a long time. We constantly battle with our own sinful nature and weaknesses. Being true and faithful followers of Jesus helps us become fruitful people for God’s kingdom. Jesus has come into this world to build God’s kingdom for us. He saves us from sin and darkness and brings us into his kingdom when we believe in him and trust our lives to him. He helps us grow to be productive and fruitful, impacting the lives of others for his kingdom. Jesus has come not only to save us and bring us into his kingdom but also to appoint us as his kingdom’s *ambassadors*, representing him in this world. This is a great honor for us.



To think about:

How can we become like a fruitful tree that produces not just a little fruit but much fruit, bringing honor and glory to God as his people, both individually and communally? God teaches us, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law [the Word of God; the Bible] he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers [he is fruitful]” (Psalm 1:1–3). By developing a close and loving relationship with God daily through prayer and Bible reading, we become fruitful and produce much fruit for God’s kingdom.

From the Bible



Galatians 5:16-24

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think to “gratify the desires of the flesh” means (v.16)?
2. Why are the desires of the Spirit against the desires of the flesh (v.17-18)?
3. What are the works (or sinful desires) of the flesh? What happens to people who continuously live in these sins (v.19-21)?
4. What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is produced in the lives of God’s people? Notice that it is *fruit* (singular) and not *fruits* (plural). What do you think this means (v.22-23)?
5. What does the Bible say about God’s people—those who truly belong to Jesus and are in union with him (v.24, see also Galatians 2:20)? Why is this truth important for us?



Notes

Walk by the Spirit:

live our lives according to the will of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The flesh: our sinful nature that is still attached to our bodies and souls.

Under the law:

Followers of Christ or God’s people no longer live under a law-keeping, enslaving, religious salvation system but under the grace of God in which the Holy Spirit has led us to saving faith and freedom in Christ.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

John 15:1-11

(Jesus says to his disciples) ¹ “**I am the true vine**, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ **I am the vine**; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.



Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus say to his disciples to describe himself and God the Father (v.1)?
2. What does the vinedresser do to the branches? Why (v.2)?
3. Spiritually speaking, how can a branch bear much fruit in his/her life (v.4-8)? How does this look like in our daily lives?
4. How did Jesus encourage his disciples (v.9)?
5. How do followers of Jesus abide in his love (v.10)?
6. What is the result of abiding in Jesus' love (v.11)?

Closing Points

1. When we were spiritually dead in sin, we were separated from God without having a personal and loving relationship with him. But when we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God frees us from the slavery of sin and darkness, adopts us as his children, and brings us into his kingdom of light. God makes us a new creation in the image of Jesus and spiritually unites us with him. We are spiritually born again in Jesus. God gives his Holy Spirit to live in us and to help us grow to become more like Jesus.
2. True Christians are in union with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who lives in them. They are God's children and will produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Everyone will produce fruit, although some will produce more than others depending on their obedience to God.
3. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is one fruit with nine “flavors” or character qualities. Another interpretation is that the fruit of the Spirit is *love*, which includes all the other godly character qualities. God is love. Love is the essence of God. God has created us out of love and wants us to be like him—able to love others with the true love he has given us in our new nature when we are spiritually born again in Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus claims to be the true vine—the only vine that is genuine and life-giving. He is the one to whom we, the branches, must remain connected. Jesus is the only true source of life and the firm foundation for our lives. All other “vines” (sources or foundations) that we try to place our hope in—such as money, wealth, status, power, governments, religious leaders, or anything else—will one day collapse or disappear. They are not the true vine for us. Only Jesus, the Son of God, remains the true vine for those who trust their lives to him. As we grow in our personal relationship with him and love him more deeply, he helps us become productive and fruitful, impacting the lives of others for his kingdom and giving us his joy so that our joy may be full.

Notes

I am (AM) the true vine: Jesus used a special expression “I AM.” In the Greek Bible, the phrase “**ego eimi**” means “I am” or “I exist,” indicating an eternal present (no past and no future). Jesus describes himself as the true vine (the *only* vine) that we (the branches) should be connected to. He is *the true life-giving Source*.

Fruit: act of love that brings honor and glory to God.

You are clean: you are in a condition fit to bear fruit.

The word: the whole teaching of Jesus.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 11 – Jesus Has Come to Make Us Royal and Holy

Opening Questions

1. What do you think of a person who is a royal or noble?
2. Have you ever participated in a project to improve your community, such as a campus or neighborhood clean-up? Have you ever at least helped clean your house?

Introduction

Because we were born as sinners with a sinful nature, we are spiritually dead and separated from the holy God. We are guilty of our sins and deserve God's judgment. However, when we believe in Jesus Christ and trust our lives to him—who sacrificed himself on the cross, bearing the punishment for all our sins as our substitute—God forgives all our sins and saves us from the slavery of sin and darkness. He justifies us and credits us with the righteousness of Christ. God causes each of us to be spiritually born again as a new creation in the image of Christ and spiritually implants Christ's nature in us. God adopts us as his children and makes us royal. He gives us his Holy Spirit to live in us, raise us, and guide us. God begins to remake us from the inside out, making us more and more holy like Christ. This process is called *sanctification*. The Bible tells us that God "who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).



To think about:

When we work on something, we may not be able to finish it well because we have many weaknesses, but God is perfect and has no weaknesses. If we are truly his children—if we have truly trusted our lives to Jesus—God will finish and complete his work in us because he is a perfect heavenly Father. What about our weaknesses (our disobedience and self-centeredness)? God is patiently teaching and sanctifying us with his unconditional love for us.

From the Bible



1 Peter 2:5, 9-12

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Discussion Questions

1. What illustrations are used for God's people, both individually and communally, in God's kingdom (v.5)?
2. What is our communal identity and purpose of life as one people of God (v.9-10)?
3. Spiritually speaking, what are we (our status or identity) in this world (v.11a)? Why is this important to understand?
4. What should we do therefore (v.11b)?
5. What else should we do together (v.12)?



Notes

Living stones, spiritual house: all followers of Jesus from all nations are *living stones* and being built up as a *spiritual house* (God's kingdom). It is a metaphor to describe strong relationships.

A holy and royal priesthood: As one people of God, we are holy and royal priests of God, whose job is to mediate between God and people.

A chosen race, a holy nation: In God's kingdom, we who are from different races and nationalities, become one race and one nationality.

Sojourner: a foreigner who lives as a permanent resident rather than a temporary visitor or tourist.

Flesh: the sinful desire in our body.

Gentile: non-Jewish person; here refers to a person who does not believe in the God of the Bible.

Day of Visitation: the day Jesus returns to this world.

John 17:12-26

[Jesus was praying to God the Father in the night before he sacrificed himself to die and save us by bearing the punishment of all our sins and the judgement of God on the cross] ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."



Discussion Questions

1. Jesus protects his people in God's name and gives his own joy to us (v.13).
What do you think Jesus' joy is like? What may be the result of receiving his joy?
2. Jesus says that he and his people are not of the world (v.14). What does this mean?
3. What does Jesus ask God to do for his people (v.15-17, 19)?
4. What do you think Jesus sends his people to the world for (v.18)?
5. What does Jesus ask God for concerning all his people in all nations (v.20-23)?
6. What does Jesus desire and want to have (v.24)? Why do you think he desires this?
7. What is Jesus' purpose in continuing to guide and teach all his people (v.25-26)?

Closing Points

1. Jesus wants us to know that: (1) he has come from heaven to this world to save us; (2) he has authority over all people and has given us eternal life; (3) God the Father has given us to him and him to us; (4) he loves us so much and never stops praying for us even now in heaven; (5) he watches over our lives and guides us patiently; (6) he nourishes and sanctifies us by his word as we read and study the Bible; and (7) he always gives us his joy as we remain in a personal and close relationship with him. He knows that we will experience struggles and troubles in this sinful and corrupted world. He wants us to know that he is always with us. If he did not abandon us when he carried our cross and died for us, he will never, ever leave us alone.
2. After Jesus prayed for all his people, the next day he carried our cross—not his cross—and sacrificed himself, dying on our cross as our substitute. Jesus took our death to save us so that we can have new life with him and in him. After he died and was buried, Jesus rose again from the dead because death has no power over him. He returned to heaven, and now he continues to pray for us before God the Father as our *Great High Priest*, who understands all our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:14–16).
3. Jesus desires for us to be with him forever in his kingdom. He will return and renew this world, making it a perfectly holy place for his people to live with him eternally. He will give us a new heavenly body and will destroy death and all evil.

Notes

My joy (Jesus' joy): divine or godly joy that is unchangeable and unaffected by any circumstances.

Of the world: God's people live in the world but not of this sinful world.

Sanctify: to purify; to make holy and righteous.

Your word is truth: The Bible is the word and truth of God. God's people are sanctified by God's word.

Hebrews 4:14-16
Since ... we have a great high priest ... Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [belief]. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Good News: Why Jesus Came and What He Has Done for Us

Lesson 12 – Jesus Has Come to Defeat Death for Us and to Glorify Us

Opening Questions

1. How do you feel when you get very sick? Do you wish you would never get sick?
2. If you knew you would die tomorrow and meet God your Creator, would you be ready?

Introduction

In the Bible, death is defined in two ways: physically and spiritually. Physical death is when our bodies die. Spiritual death is separation from God—no personal and loving relationship with him. Adam was the first person created by God. When Adam sinned and rebelled against God, all human beings (his descendants) were born as sinners with a sinful and rebellious nature, without a personal and loving relationship with God. We were born spiritually dead in our sin. But when we believe in Jesus, trust in his sacrifice on the cross for us, and trust our lives to him, we are spiritually reborn. God forgives all our sins and makes us a new creation (person), giving us a personal and loving relationship with him. The Holy Spirit of God lives in us to raise us up and guide our lives as God's children. Our souls still live in our current sin-corrupted physical bodies with weaknesses. We will grow old and die. However, physical death is not the end of our lives. When God's people die, our souls go to heaven and are purified from the corruption of sin in the presence of the Holy God, our heavenly Father. When Jesus returns to this world, he will give us a new heavenly body—like his—and unite each of our souls with this new body. There will be no sin left in us. We will be holy as God is holy. Jesus will also destroy sin and all evil and renew this world, making it a holy and heavenly place for us to live with him forever.



To think about:

Have you ever thought of death as an enemy—an enemy you cannot defeat? However, Jesus has defeated death through his resurrection, and he will defeat death for us. Death cannot hold us. One day, death will be destroyed and will be no more. This is the promise of Jesus to all who believe in him.

From the Bible



1 Corinthians 15:17-25

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the consequences if Jesus Christ had not been resurrected (v.17-19)?
2. What is one major significance of the truth that Jesus has been resurrected (v.20)?
3. How is Jesus compared to Adam (v.21-22)?
4. When will the resurrection of those who belong to Jesus take place (v.23)?
5. What will happen after that (v.24-25)?
6. What is the last enemy to be destroyed (v.26)?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

His coming: Jesus' second coming. At his first coming, he came to sacrifice himself and to save his people. When he returns to this world (his second coming), he will: (1) judge all people, (2) renew this world and unite it with heaven (heaven on earth; the Kingdom of God) for his people, and (3) give a new heavenly body to his people.

The end: Jesus will bring an end to this world when he returns.

1 Corinthians 15:40-58

⁴⁰There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴²So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.



Discussion Questions

1. There is a difference between our current earthly bodies and our future resurrected bodies. Our earthly bodies are corrupted by sin, but our resurrected bodies will be spiritual and heavenly (v.40). What is one illustration that explains this (v.41)?
2. What are some additional differences or contrasts between the two bodies (v.42-44)?
3. What are some differences or contrasts between Jesus and Adam (v.45-49)?
4. What is the mystery of the resurrection (v.50-53)?
5. How is death defeated by God for his people (v.54-57)?
6. Knowing our end, how should we live our lives now (v.58)?

Closing Points

1. The sacrifice, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the foundation of Christianity. This is the Gospel (good news) for us. Jesus sacrificed himself to bear the punishment for all our sins against God. He died on the cross, bearing God's judgment as our substitute. He was buried but rose again on the third day, defeating death for us. In Adam, we were born in sin. In Jesus, we can be spiritually born again, receiving a new life with him that never ends and a new heart that loves him who loved us first.
2. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, we are justified by God. God gives us the righteousness of Jesus and treats us as righteous in his sight. He adopts us as his children, and his Holy Spirit lives in us. The Holy Spirit begins the work of raising us and making us more and more like Jesus, sanctifying us daily as we obey him. When we die, our souls will go to heaven to be with Jesus and be purified in his holy presence. When Jesus returns, he will glorify us by giving our souls a new heavenly body. We will live with him in a renewed world—heaven on earth. This is the Gospel (good news) for us. This is what Jesus has done and will do for us.

Notes

The Kingdom of God: refers to the completion of God's kingdom when God unites heaven (the spiritual world) with the renewed earth (the physical world), heaven on earth.

Resources

Barton, Bruce B., Philip W. Comfort, David R. Veerman, and Neil Wilson. *John*. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993.

Hendriksen, William. *John*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953.

Keller, Timothy. *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*. New York, NY: Dutton, 2008.

Matthew to John. Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 5. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.

The Westminster Standards. Suwanee, GA: Great Commission Publications, 2011.