



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
January 2016**

## “Thy Will Be Done” Mark 14:32-36

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

At the \_\_\_\_\_ moment of His life, the Lord Jesus said, “Thy Will Be Done.” We want to be able to say “Thy Will Be Done” in our \_\_\_\_\_ lives. God’s Word always gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ that we need to know the truth and to draw close to God.

A necessary \_\_\_\_\_ of life is that God is God, and we’re not; we’re human. God \_\_\_\_\_ our lives, and we should live according to His \_\_\_\_\_. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, He understood He was here to \_\_\_\_\_ the will of His Father in heaven. We too must do His will. Every facet of our lives \_\_\_\_\_ to God our Father, and the problems of this life arise when men ignore His will. We must \_\_\_\_\_ to pray, to speak, and to live a life that proclaims, “Thy will be done.”

When Jesus taught His disciples to \_\_\_\_\_ in the Sermon on the Mount, He said, “Pray, then, in this way: “Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your \_\_\_\_\_ be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9-10). What if the will of God were done on \_\_\_\_\_ like it is in heaven? What if people were willing to set their \_\_\_\_\_ aside and to give their lives to the will of God? What if all the \_\_\_\_\_ in this world vanished and people set their hearts on righteousness?

So many problems in life come at the expense of people doing their \_\_\_\_\_ will and ignoring the will of the Father. The selfishness, the greed, the lust, and the pride of our time have \_\_\_\_\_ our lives, our homes, and our society untold pain and ruin. We desperately \_\_\_\_\_ God’s will in our lives. “Thy will be done” is not only a prayer; it’s a \_\_\_\_\_ of life.

### **Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to Mark 14:32-36.**

“Thy will be done.” Jesus must have \_\_\_\_\_ it both difficult and yet fulfilling to pray that the Father’s will be done. While Jesus hated the thought of a scourging and an agonizing death, He knew it was necessary to fulfill His \_\_\_\_\_ in life. While He hated the thought of bearing the punishment for the sins of the world, He loved the world and wanted it to be saved from \_\_\_\_\_.

The Bible presents a number of paradoxes about the Lord on the \_\_\_\_\_. A paradox is a situation that seems to be absurd or contradictory, and yet is in fact \_\_\_\_\_. For instance, the Bible says, “For our sake he made him to be sin who \_\_\_\_\_ no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Or 1 Peter 2:24 says, “He himself \_\_\_\_\_ our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by his \_\_\_\_\_ you have been healed.” The Holy Lord Jesus bore our sins at the cross so that we could \_\_\_\_\_ holy.

Hebrews 12:2 says that the Lord Jesus, “for the \_\_\_\_\_ that was set before him endured the cross, despising the \_\_\_\_\_, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” He despised the pain and the shame but He loved the \_\_\_\_\_ of what He did on the cross. He looked to the joy that was set before Him, the joy of men \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness in His sacrifice. He didn’t want

to die, but His desire for our eternal salvation was \_\_\_\_\_ than His desire to live in the flesh. He rejoiced in the eternal, not the temporary, and He was glad to do the Father's will.

Doing the Father's will was not a \_\_\_\_\_ concept or behavior to Jesus. From the time that He was \_\_\_\_\_, He realized that He had come into this world to do the Father's will. At age 12, Jesus was in the \_\_\_\_\_ doing His Father's business. When the devil tempted Him at age 30, Jesus said, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you \_\_\_\_\_'" (Matthew 4:10).

In John 4, Jesus passed through Samaria. Stopping at a \_\_\_\_\_ near the town of Sychar, Jesus sent his disciples into town for some food while He rested. At the well Jesus had a remarkable \_\_\_\_\_ with a woman who had been married five times and was living with a man. When she learned that Jesus was the Messiah, she ran into town and \_\_\_\_\_ all the men of the town. The disciples began to \_\_\_\_\_ with the food that He had sent them for.

John 4:31-34 says: "Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, 'Rabbi, \_\_\_\_\_.' But He said to them, 'I have food to eat that you don't know about.' So the disciples were saying to one another, 'No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the \_\_\_\_\_ of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His \_\_\_\_\_.'" The Lord Jesus lived to do the will of His Father in heaven.

Jesus explained, "I can do nothing on My \_\_\_\_\_ initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not \_\_\_\_\_ My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). Jesus regarded the will of the Father as the perfect \_\_\_\_\_ of right and wrong. He didn't want to \_\_\_\_\_ from His Father's will in any way, and so He listened to His Father. He made judgments of right and wrong only as the will of the Father instructed. He did not \_\_\_\_\_ on His own initiative.

In Jesus' heart and in His mind, keeping the will of the Father was how He remained in a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with His Father. The Lord said to His disciples on the night before He died, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have \_\_\_\_\_ My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:9-10). Abiding in the Father's will was an \_\_\_\_\_ of love and devotion. Keeping the Lord's commandments is how we demonstrate our love to the Lord and remain in His love. First John 2:3-5 says, "By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we \_\_\_\_\_ His commandments. The one who says, 'I've come to know Him,' and doesn't keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected." Our love for God moves us to be obedient to His will and to keep His commandments.

When Jesus was told that His family was outside the house and had come to speak to Him, Jesus asked, "'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever \_\_\_\_\_ the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother'" (Matthew 12:48-50). Jesus claimed a close kinship to anyone who does the \_\_\_\_\_ of His Father in heaven. He wants to be close to us, too.

On the other hand, Jesus, when He finished the Sermon on the Mount said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the \_\_\_\_\_ of My

Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Lord knew people would \_\_\_\_\_ to have a close relationship with Him, while they lived lawlessly. They wanted the blessing of Christianity, but didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ to the will of the Father in heaven. The Lord Jesus never knew them. He never had a relationship with them. They never belonged to Him because they lived life on their own lawless terms and would not \_\_\_\_\_ the will of the Father. You can’t live by your own will and expect to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord.

You can’t draw close to God while you turn your back on what the Father \_\_\_\_\_. You obey God by obeying what He teaches, not by \_\_\_\_\_ that you love Him while living the way you desire. A person who lives in lawlessness says to the Lord, “Not Your will be done, but \_\_\_\_\_.” He lives by his own \_\_\_\_\_ and he ignores God’s \_\_\_\_\_. He hasn’t set his \_\_\_\_\_ on the Father’s will but on pleasing himself.

A person who plays by his own will thinks he’s an \_\_\_\_\_. He thinks his sins aren’t as \_\_\_\_\_ as other people’s sins. He does as he pleases and he \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord will still consider that as obedience. He counts on his own \_\_\_\_\_, not on God’s will, to assure him of a place in heaven. The Lord’s rejection is going to \_\_\_\_\_ him.

We should \_\_\_\_\_ to follow the will of the Lord. It’s not only going to bless \_\_\_\_\_ when we do that, but it will also bless \_\_\_\_\_ around us. The Bible says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may \_\_\_\_\_ what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). Doing God’s will shows everybody the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord’s way! It’s a good way and an acceptable way and the perfect way.

Jesus taught us to \_\_\_\_\_, “Thy will be done.” Have you thought about how radically different and better our world would be if people \_\_\_\_\_ did the will of God? God’s will for our lives is no \_\_\_\_\_ matter. If people did God’s will, crime would disappear, the moral climate of this country would drastically change, and people would be more loving and less selfish. We’d keep the golden \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus taught, “In everything, therefore, treat people the \_\_\_\_\_ way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

If we did God’s will on earth, as it is in heaven, God’s Word would have a \_\_\_\_\_ of priority in our lives and decisions. We’d be asking the \_\_\_\_\_, “What does God’s Word have to say about this matter or that matter?” We’d realize that the God who \_\_\_\_\_ us knows us better than we know ourselves and He \_\_\_\_\_ us in His Word, the Bible, what is best. We’d make our life \_\_\_\_\_ and we’d think of right and wrong on the basis of God’s teaching, not our opinions or even our culture.

If we did God’s will on earth, we’d begin to \_\_\_\_\_ as a people again. We’d realize that nothing \_\_\_\_\_ can happen without God’s blessing and favor. We’d seek His face. What does that mean, to “seek His face”? It means that we’d look to God for \_\_\_\_\_ and for the answers of life. When Solomon became king, he asked God for \_\_\_\_\_ to know how to lead the people of Israel. He

worried about what might happen if Israel forsook the Lord and faced famine or were defeated in battle. Solomon asked God to be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ His people.

The Lord God answered Solomon's prayer with this promise, "If...My people who are called by My name \_\_\_\_\_ themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:13-14). God wants to draw \_\_\_\_\_ to His people, and when His people in humble hearts, turn from their wicked ways, and pray to Him, God will hear their prayers and He will heal them.

If God's will were truly done on earth, we'd stop \_\_\_\_\_ God's name being taken in vain and we'd stop hearing all the filthy talk. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no unwholesome \_\_\_\_\_ proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear." I tell you, words are \_\_\_\_\_; and our speech should be gracious, seasoned with salt, as we ought to speak.

If God's will were done on earth, we'd set our hearts on things that \_\_\_\_\_ rather than concentrate on things that \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8). What we think about shapes our \_\_\_\_\_. When our minds concentrate on the good, we see good all around us; and we become \_\_\_\_\_ people. If we think about the evil, it won't be long before we \_\_\_\_\_ evil people. The Bible says, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company \_\_\_\_\_ good morals'" (1 Corinthians 15:33). When what is bad fills our \_\_\_\_\_, then evil begins to fill our \_\_\_\_\_.

If God's will were done on earth, we'd think more about the Lord and about heaven. **Read what the Bible says in Colossians 3:1-4.**

What are you going to do with your life? Does your life \_\_\_\_\_ that the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect? My friend, are you doing the will of the Father?

The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus unless he was born of water and the Spirit, he could not \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Jesus was emphatic about it and He said, "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You \_\_\_\_\_ be born again.'" Some people think when it comes to salvation and life that the will of God is \_\_\_\_\_ and doesn't matter, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

**Read what the apostle John wrote in John 1:11-13.** You cannot be saved by substituting some \_\_\_\_\_ plan for God's will. We have to realize that necessary lesson of life: that God is God, and we are human. We cannot \_\_\_\_\_ or overrule the will of God. If we are saved by God's \_\_\_\_\_, it will only be by His will. To do His will we must \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the New Testament.

What is the will of God for us to do to be \_\_\_\_\_? Upon hearing the gospel of Jesus, we must \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We must \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins and turn to righteousness. We must be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ our faith in Christ and be \_\_\_\_\_. Baptism is that new \_\_\_\_\_ in water and the Spirit. The Bible teaches that we must be born again. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ so that our sins will be \_\_\_\_\_. When we're baptized, God washes away our sins (Acts 22:16). That old man of sin dies, and we're born again to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). I pray that you will do the will of God today.



January 10, 2016

## The Grace of God Titus 3:3-7

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Someone said that grace is “God’s Redemption At Christ’s Expense.” I’m excited today to tell you what the grace of God can do in your \_\_\_\_\_. I believe you’ll get excited, too. We know the Lord’s Way is the right way, and we search the Scriptures because we know the Bible is always \_\_\_\_\_.

When you say salvation is a \_\_\_\_\_, some people think it’s too good to be true. They figure they must \_\_\_\_\_ their way to heaven by doing some great thing. They can’t imagine God giving us His \_\_\_\_\_, the forgiveness of our sins, and a home in heaven. Today, we’re asking the question, “What does it \_\_\_\_\_ to be saved by the grace of God?”

Someone has taken the word grace and made the acrostic “G-R-A-C-E” “God’s Redemption At Christ’s Expense.” This is a fairly \_\_\_\_\_ description of grace. The word grace (in Greek *charis*) means “\_\_\_\_\_.” The distinguishing factors of God’s grace are twofold: first, God’s grace is a gift and is not \_\_\_\_\_; and second, God’s grace is undeserved. Usually we think of having to \_\_\_\_\_ a place of favor with others, but God gives us his favor as a gift.

God accepts, loves, and blesses the person who stands in His grace. In spite of one’s past, when a person is \_\_\_\_\_ in the blood of Jesus Christ, he stands in a right relationship and in the favor of God. Even though we \_\_\_\_\_ to be punished for our sins, God graciously \_\_\_\_\_ us and no longer holds our transgressions against us. In Christ, we became \_\_\_\_\_ creatures, transformed into children of God, and transferred into the kingdom of God. In Christ, God hears our \_\_\_\_\_ and gives us every spiritual blessing.

### **Our scripture reading today comes from Paul’s letter to Titus, chapter 3, verses 3 to 7.**

You can’t \_\_\_\_\_ God’s grace; it’s a gift. In Romans 4:4 the apostle Paul says, “Now when a man \_\_\_\_\_, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his \_\_\_\_\_ is credited as righteousness.” Grace is not a \_\_\_\_\_ for our labors, a \_\_\_\_\_ for our winning a competition, or an \_\_\_\_\_ for our meritorious efforts. Grace is a gift. When a man can earn no wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award, yet receives a wondrous gift, he has been given unmerited \_\_\_\_\_ or undeserved \_\_\_\_\_. That’s what God, in his love, has done for us through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-10 helps us to understand how God has \_\_\_\_\_ us and \_\_\_\_\_ us. **Read what the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:1-3.** Sin causes a person to be spiritually \_\_\_\_\_. It’s not merely an inappropriate act; sin \_\_\_\_\_ one spiritually.

**Read Ephesians 4-7.** I’ve found that some of the most wonderful sections of the Bible begin with the word “\_\_\_\_\_.” We were spiritually dead, but that’s not the \_\_\_\_\_ of the story. God, rich in mercy and love, \_\_\_\_\_ us by His grace.

**Read Ephesians 2:8-10.** We're saved by grace through \_\_\_\_\_. It takes both. We're not saved by grace alone or by faith alone, but by grace through faith. Grace reflects \_\_\_\_\_ that God does in our lives to bring us home to Him. Faith reflects our \_\_\_\_\_ of trust and love and obedience to the grace that He's given us.

God's grace \_\_\_\_\_ through faith. God desires that we appreciate his great gift by \_\_\_\_\_ to him in faith. **Read what Paul said in Titus 3:3-5.** God chose to \_\_\_\_\_ us and \_\_\_\_\_ us as an act of loving kindness. How does He wash us?

This washing that regenerates and renews is when we are born again in \_\_\_\_\_. By faith, when we \_\_\_\_\_ and are \_\_\_\_\_, God washes us clean from sin and causes us to be born again into His family. The faith that matters to God is a faith that is \_\_\_\_\_ to trust God enough to accept His teaching and His blessing by obediently responding. In Galatians 3:26-27, the Bible says, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through \_\_\_\_\_. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have \_\_\_\_\_ Christ."

This means the faith that saves, the faith that Paul had in mind, which responds to grace is an \_\_\_\_\_ faith. We are sons of God by faith, but this is a faith that will \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_. For it is in baptism that God causes us to be \_\_\_\_\_ and we "put on Christ." In baptism, God grants to us all the blessings and favor that goes with being a Christian. What a great God we have! Baptism is not, as Paul said, some \_\_\_\_\_ that we do to earn salvation. It's how we lovingly \_\_\_\_\_ Him in faith because He asks us to be baptized.

Obedience is not the same thing as \_\_\_\_\_. Let's say I had a treasure worth \$100,000 hidden in my backyard and I told you that I would give it to you, provided you go and \_\_\_\_\_ it up. Do you really believe that that \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of digging earned that \$100,000 for you? You met a \_\_\_\_\_ for a gift by obeying my words. You didn't earn the gift; you merely received it by doing what I \_\_\_\_\_ you to do. That's how it is in salvation. We don't earn salvation by repenting or being baptized; we merely \_\_\_\_\_ with God's conditions for receiving the gift.

In Numbers 21, the children of Israel, while wandering in the wilderness, came to the land of Edom where they grumbled and spoke against God, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to \_\_\_\_\_ in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food (that is, the manna)." The Lord became \_\_\_\_\_ and "he sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. The people repented and confessed their sin. They asked Moses to intercede for them with God, and Moses asked God to \_\_\_\_\_ the serpents."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "You make a fiery *serpent (that is, out of bronze)*, and you set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he \_\_\_\_\_ at it, he will live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and he set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he \_\_\_\_\_ (Numbers 21:8-9). All they had to do was to look by \_\_\_\_\_ on the serpent. They didn't earn their healing, but they did have to comply with God's \_\_\_\_\_. Obeying is not the \_\_\_\_\_ as earning. Obedience is an act of faith and trust that God will keep his \_\_\_\_\_.

In John 9, Jesus encountered a man who was born \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus wanted to heal this man and show the power of God, so He spat on the ground, and he got a little of the dirt, and He made clay of

the spittle, and He applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, “Go, \_\_\_\_\_ in the pool of Siloam” (which translated means Sent). So he went away and he washed, and he came *back* \_\_\_\_\_ (John 9:6-7). Who would argue that washing in a pool is the \_\_\_\_\_ as earning his eyesight? The man earned nothing, but he believed strongly enough to \_\_\_\_\_ what Jesus told him to do. Faith is not merely accepting. It is trusting enough to do what the Lord asks us to do!

Let me make it very clear that the Bible does not teach that baptism is how we \_\_\_\_\_ salvation. But the Bible does teach that baptism is \_\_\_\_\_ to salvation—just as looking on the brass serpent was necessary, just as washing in the pool of Siloam was necessary.

God \_\_\_\_\_ us to see if we really love Him and believe in Him. These tests are God’s \_\_\_\_\_, not ours. He gave them to us; we didn’t make them up ourselves. When we meet God’s conditions, we say to Him, “We trust You enough to \_\_\_\_\_ what you \_\_\_\_\_ of us. We know that You will keep Your \_\_\_\_\_.” God’s grace is so wonderful, and we must \_\_\_\_\_ cheapen it or presume upon it. People presume on God’s grace by \_\_\_\_\_ the conditions or by setting those conditions aside. They presume God’s \_\_\_\_\_ whether they respond rightly to Him or not.

Some people think the grace of God means I can \_\_\_\_\_ to Him any way I want to. They think grace has \_\_\_\_\_ conditions at all. Do you think the blind man would have argued with Jesus about doing it, and wanting to do it his \_\_\_\_\_ way if he really wanted to see? Do you think that the Israelites would have argued about looking on the serpent? Why then does anyone argue about repentance or baptism today? Wouldn’t it be better just to \_\_\_\_\_ God and \_\_\_\_\_ Him?

The New Testament contains the \_\_\_\_\_ covenant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This new covenant contains what God \_\_\_\_\_ His people and what God \_\_\_\_\_ of His people. In this covenant God is the benefactor who gives \_\_\_\_\_ to us than can ever be \_\_\_\_\_ or earned. If we \_\_\_\_\_ our blessings, they include salvation, continued forgiveness of sin, eternal life, the right to pray, and son-ship. I tell you if we lived for thousands of years, we could never \_\_\_\_\_ God for what He has done for us. God doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ repayment. God expects love, loyalty, and obedient faith from His children.

Jesus said, “If you \_\_\_\_\_ Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments” (John 14:15). Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My \_\_\_\_\_; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him” (John 14:23). Faithful obedience is not some \_\_\_\_\_ of legalism or works righteousness or anything else; obedient faith is \_\_\_\_\_. Paul said, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith \_\_\_\_\_ through love” (Galatians 5:6). When we love the Lord and we want to \_\_\_\_\_ Him, we’re willing to do everything He asks and do it the \_\_\_\_\_ that He wants it done. We won’t argue with Him about it.

So, when the Lord asks us to believe, we’re willing to \_\_\_\_\_ Him and His word completely. When the Lord asks us to \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins, love turns us away from sin that



\_\_\_\_\_ God. We couldn't imagine continuing to \_\_\_\_\_ the God who's been so good to us and blessed us. When Jesus asks us to \_\_\_\_\_ Him before others, we'll gladly say to the whole world that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is Lord and He is the Messiah, the Christ!

When Jesus says to us in Mark 16:16, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be \_\_\_\_\_," we believe Him. We're baptized because we \_\_\_\_\_, because we \_\_\_\_\_, and we do it to \_\_\_\_\_ God. The Bible says, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into \_\_\_\_\_, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might \_\_\_\_\_ in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). If the baptism of the New Testament is immersion, and it is, then I will be immersed without \_\_\_\_\_ so that I might be able to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

In Acts 2:38, the Bible commands us to "repent and be baptized." That commandment is in the \_\_\_\_\_ voice, not the active. The active voice is used when the subject \_\_\_\_\_ an action, but the passive voice is used when the subject is being acted \_\_\_\_\_ by someone else. In baptism \_\_\_\_\_ performs the action of saving us; and we are passive, \_\_\_\_\_ God's grace and forgiveness. Let God's grace work on you in baptism. Let God cleanse your soul; let God bury you and then raise you up with Christ; let God give you newness of life; let God add you to His church. God does all this \_\_\_\_\_ we're baptized into Christ and His death.

Sometimes people say, "Well, you don't have to be baptized to be saved!" But, they're missing the point. God works His grace on us \_\_\_\_\_ baptism into Christ. If you love Christ Jesus, and I know you do, let Him save you through the \_\_\_\_\_ that regenerates. That washing God gives you is in \_\_\_\_\_.

God gives laws for our \_\_\_\_\_. God doesn't give laws to \_\_\_\_\_ or to enslave us. He doesn't dream up \_\_\_\_\_ laws just to prove that He is in charge. No! God gives us His laws to \_\_\_\_\_ us from troubles in life. Even the law of God is gracious to us. As a loving parent, God's concern is for our \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 103:13 says, "Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, so the LORD has compassion on those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him." Everything God does, He does to favor and bless us. When we understand that, we'll see God with \_\_\_\_\_ eyes.

**Read Titus 2:11-14.** God wants to bless you richly by \_\_\_\_\_ you with His Word, the Bible! Let Him do it.

Where are you in your life, your spiritual life? Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with God? Are you at \_\_\_\_\_ in your soul? God hasn't left you; it may be that you've left God. You can draw close to Him again by \_\_\_\_\_ in Him, by \_\_\_\_\_ His Word. So \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord Jesus, and \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins, step out and \_\_\_\_\_ Him before others, and be \_\_\_\_\_ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). It may be that as a Christian brother or sister you've wandered away from \_\_\_\_\_, and you've wandered away from the \_\_\_\_\_, and you need to come back home. My friend, do it today! Let God's grace back into your life.

## We Need the Church

### Acts 20:28-32

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Many people think that you can be a good Christian without being a \_\_\_\_\_ of any church. Is church really necessary? Today, we're going to explore what \_\_\_\_\_ says about the church, and you can't afford to miss this study! We know the Lord's way is the best way, the right way, and the holy way of life. The best way to know the Lord's way is to \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures. They're God's \_\_\_\_\_ to us today. They were true when the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and prophets to write them, and they're true for \_\_\_\_\_ time.

When you mention the word "church," people \_\_\_\_\_ in a multitude of ways. Some think of the church as \_\_\_\_\_. Some think of the church as an \_\_\_\_\_. Some think that the church is made up of prejudiced \_\_\_\_\_. Some think the church needs reinventing in a style more like the \_\_\_\_\_ of our times. Everyone seems to think they \_\_\_\_\_ what the church should be like. Even folks who have never read the Bible or haven't entered a church door in many years have an \_\_\_\_\_ about what the church should be.

You've probably noticed that religion in America has \_\_\_\_\_. Many groups have become religious \_\_\_\_\_ venues, and others have become like shopping malls. Some think the primary \_\_\_\_\_ of the church is to cater to my wants and desires. We've become self-centered, thinking Jesus ought to be our \_\_\_\_\_ rather than thinking we ought to be His. It's no wonder some see the church as optional and others as a \_\_\_\_\_ of time. Few want to know what \_\_\_\_\_ envisioned for the church that He built or what place it has in His heart. The Lord never thought of the church as an option; in His eyes it's necessary.

**Our reading today comes from Acts 20:28-32.** Paul is here addressing the elders of the church in Ephesus.

Yes, the Lord Jesus considered the church as \_\_\_\_\_. He wants everyone to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of His church and to \_\_\_\_\_ with the church regularly. The idea that you can be a \_\_\_\_\_ Christian and not be a member of the church is not from the heart of God. When you take a close look at your Bible, the New Testament \_\_\_\_\_ that the church is quite necessary to our relationship with the Lord.

The church that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't belong to you or to me; it belongs to the Lord. He built it. After Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus said, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock (that is, the confession Peter made) I will \_\_\_\_\_ My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18). Yes, Jesus built His church, and not even His \_\_\_\_\_ could prevent it.

The church belongs to the Lord because He \_\_\_\_\_ it. The apostle Paul, by inspiration, told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased

with His own \_\_\_\_\_” (Acts 20:28). If Jesus loved the church enough to \_\_\_\_\_ for it, how can we think so little of it? The church must be \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.

The Bible reveals how \_\_\_\_\_ related Christ is to the church in Ephesians 1:22-23. The Bible says, “And He (that is, God) put all things in subjection under His feet (that is, Jesus’ feet), and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Just as your \_\_\_\_\_ is inseparably connected to your body, so Christ is inseparably connected to the church. Just as your body does your will as is conceived in the \_\_\_\_\_, so the church does the will of its head, and that’s Jesus Christ. The church is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. We must never, never \_\_\_\_\_ Christ from His church or the church from Christ.

The church is extremely precious to the Lord; He considers the church as His \_\_\_\_\_. **Read Ephesians 5:25-27.** Jesus has gone to great lengths to \_\_\_\_\_ and to sanctify the church. He wants her to be radiant with \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the church that much.

When people \_\_\_\_\_ the church or make it trivial, they mock and insult Jesus Christ. If you wish to make a man angry, just slander his \_\_\_\_\_. Do you think the Lord Jesus will look kindly on anyone who slanders His \_\_\_\_\_?

I want to \_\_\_\_\_ the church that the Lord Jesus calls His bride from what people today think when they hear the word “church.” What I’m speaking about is the Lord’s church \_\_\_\_\_ in the New Testament. Many religious groups who call themselves “churches” are \_\_\_\_\_ like the New Testament church. They \_\_\_\_\_ in their name, in their organization, in their doctrine, in their mission, and in their worship. They’re often a \_\_\_\_\_ of our culture more than what God intended for the church to be. Some groups have so little \_\_\_\_\_ value and content, it’s no wonder that people see it as unnecessary.

This difference of what we see today and what the Bible teaches \_\_\_\_\_ and causes people to stray from the will of God. More than ever, people need to know the \_\_\_\_\_ revealed in God’s Word about the church. They need to think clearly about what God desires rather than be pulled into a \_\_\_\_\_ hope by something that calls itself church but differs greatly from the church that Jesus built as found in the New Testament. The Scriptures clearly make the church that Jesus built a necessity for us to engage in if we wish to \_\_\_\_\_ God.

Why is the church so necessary? There are several reasons. First, the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ those that He saves to His church. When the Jews at Pentecost heard Peter \_\_\_\_\_, they were pierced to the heart and they wanted to know what to do. Peter replied that they must \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_ for the forgiveness of their sins. Acts 2:41 says, “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” In verse 47 the Bible says, “And the Lord was \_\_\_\_\_ to their number (that is, to the church) day by day those who were being \_\_\_\_\_.” The Lord forgives us at baptism and adds us to His church. Baptism was that time that they were \_\_\_\_\_ or saved.

When a person is saved, the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ him to His church. To be in the church means the Lord has \_\_\_\_\_ you. The Scriptures never contemplate a person who is saved as a person who hasn’t been baptized or a person who is not in the Lord’s church. The apostle Paul told the church at Colossae, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the \_\_\_\_\_ of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14). Just

as the Lord grants forgiveness when one repents and is baptized, so the Lord adds the baptized to His church. The church is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ!

When John wrote to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 1, he revealed to them what Christ had done for them. The Bible says, “Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our \_\_\_\_\_ by His blood—and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—and to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:4-6).

The book of Revelation addresses people who had come into a kingdom and were \_\_\_\_\_ to God. John taught that “we” Christians “are of God, and the whole world lies in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). There are but \_\_\_\_\_ kingdoms: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of His beloved Son. To enter the \_\_\_\_\_ is to enter the kingdom of the beloved Son.

The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of the church as a kingdom. **Read what the Lord said in Matthew 16:18-19.** Why would the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ one thing and then give Peter keys to something else if the church is not the Kingdom? He doesn’t do that. The church is the kingdom of God today.

Some may ask, Phil, how do you know that? In Acts 20:28, the Lord Jesus purchased the church with His own \_\_\_\_\_. We have no record anywhere in the New Testament that the blood of Jesus ever purchased anything but the \_\_\_\_\_. The twenty-four elders, however, sang this new song to the Lord Jesus, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And you have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10). The same blood didn’t purchase \_\_\_\_\_ different things, no—the church is that blood-bought kingdom.

Second, being in the church means you’re blood-bought, but there’s no promise of being blood-bought to those \_\_\_\_\_ the church. The church contains the \_\_\_\_\_, but the others outside are still in \_\_\_\_\_. The kingdom contains \_\_\_\_\_ to God, but outside there are no priests to God. The Bible says, “Whoever has the Son has life; but whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12) Being in the Lord’s church is \_\_\_\_\_ to our eternal salvation.

Ephesians chapter 2 contrasts the difference between people who are in the \_\_\_\_\_ and outside of Christ from those who come into Christ and His church. The apostle Paul reminds those who came out of paganism at Ephesus of what they had \_\_\_\_\_ they became members of the church, or body of Christ. **Read Ephesians 2:12-13.** In verses 19 to 22, Paul describes them after they became Christians, “So then you are no longer \_\_\_\_\_ and aliens, but you’re fellow \_\_\_\_\_ with the saints, and are of God’s household (His family), having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” Before, they were strangers without \_\_\_\_\_ and without \_\_\_\_\_. Now, they’re God’s family and fellow citizens in God’s kingdom, the church.

Third, the church is necessary because being in the church means that you are a member of God's \_\_\_\_\_. Paul told Timothy, "but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household (that is, the family) of God, which is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Paul identified the church as God's household or family. The \_\_\_\_\_ of God are in the church. If you claim to be in God's family but say church membership is unnecessary, then you're confused and may be \_\_\_\_\_ yourself.

The very \_\_\_\_\_ that puts you into the family of God is what puts one into the church. Compare these two verses. First, Galatians 3:26-27, "For you are all \_\_\_\_\_ of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Baptism as an act of \_\_\_\_\_ and is what makes us children of God. Second, consider 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one \_\_\_\_\_, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." This verse says that we are baptized into the body. Ephesians 1:22-23 taught us that the body of Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_. So, baptism is what makes one a child of God, and baptism is what puts us into the body of Christ, and that is the church.

When we realize the church is God's family, it's the bride of Christ; it's the body of Christ; it is the saved; it is those that were bought by the blood of Jesus, then we can see why the church is so \_\_\_\_\_ in God's eyes. Being a member of the Lord's church is not \_\_\_\_\_. Let me ask you, are you a member of the church that Jesus built? It matters!

Many people claim to be members of the church, but they aren't \_\_\_\_\_. They've \_\_\_\_\_ worshipping at church or supporting it. By their actions they've actually abandoned the church and in that sense they've abandoned the \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible says, "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as the habit of some, but \_\_\_\_\_ one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25). The Lord wants us to encourage each other to love and good works and not \_\_\_\_\_ assembling with other Christians. You can't encourage other Christians to stay \_\_\_\_\_ if you quit going to church altogether.

I know some of you can't attend worship because of your \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord understands your situation. But if you can attend, yet \_\_\_\_\_ to forsake meeting with the Lord's church, you're forsaking the Lord, too. The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ His people and knows His church. If you quit serving Him, He knows it. When you stop attending, you also open the door to \_\_\_\_\_ of every kind. To stay spiritually \_\_\_\_\_, stay in church.

To become a member of the church and to be saved, \_\_\_\_\_ with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins; \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ as the son of God; and be \_\_\_\_\_. When you're baptized, the blood of Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins; he'll cause you to be \_\_\_\_\_ to the church. You'll become a child of God, \_\_\_\_\_ again into His family. If you are a member of the church of Christ but you've stopped attending, my friend, why not come back to the Lord and to the church. Get right with God and do it today.





## You Can Understand the Bible

### Luke 1:1-4

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

The Bible is the \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_ book of all time and comes today in hundreds of languages. Some think the Bible is too \_\_\_\_\_ to understand. Is it really? God's way is always a \_\_\_\_\_. God loves us and He gave us His will in written form in the Bible so that every age and nation could \_\_\_\_\_ the truth and be \_\_\_\_\_. God wants every person to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ His will.

Some people think the Bible is just too \_\_\_\_\_ to understand. Perhaps you've heard people say, "The Bible is not \_\_\_\_\_ to be understood." Or, "The Bible says different things to different \_\_\_\_\_." Or, "What is important is not so much what the Bible says but what the Bible says to \_\_\_\_\_." I've heard people claim, "The New Testament addressed the \_\_\_\_\_ of the first century but really doesn't speak to us today."

Others dismiss God's Word by saying, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are \_\_\_\_\_ and love Jesus." Then there's the skeptic who says, "You can make the Bible say anything you \_\_\_\_\_ it to say." Some say, "You just take a passage of Scripture and you read it to a group of people and there'll be as many \_\_\_\_\_ of that passage as there are people in the room."

These popular charges against the Bible lose sight of God's \_\_\_\_\_ in giving us His Word. They seem to forget about God's incredible \_\_\_\_\_ to have a relationship with us that lasts for an eternity. That relationship means that we can know \_\_\_\_\_ and know His \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus promised, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you \_\_\_\_\_" (John 8:31-32).

**Our reading comes from the opening words of The Gospel According to Luke 1:1-4.** Is the Bible meant to be understood? The answer is yes, but don't take my word for it. Let's see what the Bible has to say for itself. Psalm 19:8 says, "The precepts of the LORD are \_\_\_\_\_, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_, enlightening the eyes." Psalm 119:18 says, "Open my eyes, that I may \_\_\_\_\_ wonderful things from Your law." Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a \_\_\_\_\_ to my feet and a \_\_\_\_\_ to my path." Psalm 119:125 says, "I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may \_\_\_\_\_ Your testimonies." Psalm 119:130 says, "The unfolding of Your words gives \_\_\_\_\_; it gives understanding to the simple." Proverbs 6:23 says, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the \_\_\_\_\_ of life."

When people say the Bible is not meant to be understood, I wonder how they came to that conclusion. Did they get it from the \_\_\_\_\_ or from other people? Surprisingly, some

churches don't want you to \_\_\_\_\_ your Bible. These churches worry that if you read your Bible, you'll find out what the Bible actually says and that it's \_\_\_\_\_ from what they teach and practice. The Bible has God's \_\_\_\_\_ attached to it, and it challenges those who vary from it.

The apostle Paul \_\_\_\_\_ in Scripture about this kind of problem, and even in his day there were people who were misusing and tampering with God's Word. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:2-4.**

The devil will do anything, anything to keep people from understanding the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word. He'd love nothing more than to \_\_\_\_\_ people to the gospel so they won't know the truth. Satan will \_\_\_\_\_ with the Word to convince you to believe something that's only partially true. He realizes his message must \_\_\_\_\_ true or you won't buy into it. If he tells a \_\_\_\_\_ that sounds true, he might lead some folks astray. If he can make his lie really \_\_\_\_\_, he will. But when people obey the lie rather than \_\_\_\_\_ to God, they're deceived with a counterfeit religion. The devil has supplied plenty of counterfeits in our world today.

We wouldn't know what the truth is and what error is if it weren't for this permanent \_\_\_\_\_ of truth in the Bible. The Word of God provides that standard of truth for \_\_\_\_\_ time. God's Word is settled in heaven and it doesn't \_\_\_\_\_. It's this stability, this security, this solid foundation that allows Christians to remain \_\_\_\_\_ to God. God was wise to give His message to mankind in \_\_\_\_\_ form in the Bible because by giving us the Bible, we can know the truth which makes us free. The difference between Christ's true disciples and other people is that true disciples \_\_\_\_\_ in the Word of God, while the others \_\_\_\_\_ away from the Word.

So, we must stay with God's Word. God expected ancient Israelite parents to \_\_\_\_\_ their children the Law of God. The Lord God was concerned that a generation might arise that didn't know His \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what Moses commanded them in Deuteronomy 31:10-13.** If the Bible were so \_\_\_\_\_ to understand, God wouldn't have commanded all Israel to read the law every seven years. Truly, we \_\_\_\_\_ understand the Bible. The Bible says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are \_\_\_\_\_ belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). God gave us His Word to bless us.

**Read what Deuteronomy 30:11-14 explains.** God not only wants us to understand it, He also \_\_\_\_\_ us to love and obey it.

The Word of God went out to \_\_\_\_\_ Israel. There were all kinds of people \_\_\_\_\_. There were the people who might be wise, and then there were the naïve; there were people who were conservative, and there were people who were liberal; there were people who were

educated, the young, and the old. Those who didn't know God's Law were expected to \_\_\_\_\_ the Law and \_\_\_\_\_ it. You're not an exception. God expects you to know His will.

First Timothy 2:3-4 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the truth." God doesn't communicate in riddles, nor does He hold back some \_\_\_\_\_ message for only the select few. Oh, no! God wants \_\_\_\_\_ to be able to know the truth, to be saved, and to live in heaven with Him. The Bible says in Hebrews 2:9 that Jesus tasted \_\_\_\_\_ for every person. Why then would God give us a Bible with the words of \_\_\_\_\_, but give it in a way that we couldn't understand it? That's ridiculous.

When God inspired Luke to \_\_\_\_\_ one of the four gospel accounts, He chose this Greek Gentile to write to a Roman authority about Jesus Christ, a Jew. Luke didn't grow up knowing about God, and Theophilus had only heard bits and pieces. **Read what the inspired Luke wrote in Luke 1:1-4.** Theophilus apparently wanted to know the truth, and Luke said that he could tell him with \_\_\_\_\_ the things concerning Jesus Christ. The Bible was written to impart to us \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge, \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge, and the \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of Jesus Christ.

**Read what the apostle John said in John 20:30-31.** God gave us this book, the Bible, so that we might \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ and be saved and have life in His name. I cannot imagine why, if this is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible, that God would write something that nobody can understand. The fact is we can understand what we \_\_\_\_\_ to know to be saved and go to heaven and live with God forever!

**Read Acts 17:2-4.** The Scripture is not some strange \_\_\_\_\_, but it's a book that gives life and tells the marvelous story of Jesus Christ.

From this inspired book, we learn the most wonderful story of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. To some it may be meaningless, but to us it's the \_\_\_\_\_ meaningful story in the entire world. I'm so thankful that God chose men and inspired them to \_\_\_\_\_ that story down in the first century so that we could hear it, and we could read it as it really happened, and could believe and obey it. The New Testament gives us \_\_\_\_\_ accounts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, a story of good news that saves our souls. There simply is no better, no more important, no more meaningful story in the entire world.

The gospel provides God's \_\_\_\_\_ unto salvation to everyone who believes it, according to Romans 1:16. God knew that He had to \_\_\_\_\_ Himself to mankind if they were to know and believe in Him and find salvation. We also can know some things through observing the universe, but we can't know the \_\_\_\_\_ story; we can't know it apart from the Word of God. The Bible says, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, then God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the \_\_\_\_\_ preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). If we want to know

the \_\_\_\_\_ truth about God, we must go to His Word. Our task is to hear it, believe it, love it, obey it, and share it with others. Oh, thank God for the Bible!

The apostle Paul said, “For we write nothing else to you than what you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and I hope you’ll understand until the end” (2 Corinthians 1:13). Paul wrote no other thing but what the Corinthians could understand; and we too can understand the Bible.

In fact, we must understand the Word of God and \_\_\_\_\_ it. Why? Because one day we will be \_\_\_\_\_ by the Word of God. The Lord Jesus said, “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the \_\_\_\_\_ that I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). My friend, you and I will be judged one day by the Words that are \_\_\_\_\_ in this book. We will stand before God and we’ll have to give an \_\_\_\_\_ for our lives, and the standard will be these written Words.

The Lord Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who \_\_\_\_\_ the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter” (Matthew 7:21). We must know what the will of God is. The purest \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s will is found in the New Testament. So don’t settle for anything \_\_\_\_\_ than the Scriptures. They will lead you to an \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of the Lord’s will. And they will give you the unfailing truth that \_\_\_\_\_ to eternal life. What kind of God says, “I’m going to judge you by the things \_\_\_\_\_ in the books” (Revelation 20:11-15 and John 12:48), but then gives us a book that people \_\_\_\_\_ understand? Wouldn’t such a God be a monster? But our God isn’t like that. He gives us a book so that we \_\_\_\_\_ understand. Our God loves us and wants all men to be \_\_\_\_\_ and to know the truth. Shouldn’t we strive to know His will? If knowing and doing the will of God is the difference between eternal life and death, can we afford to \_\_\_\_\_ what He says?

The apostle Paul said, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one \_\_\_\_\_, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). God wants us to \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible so that we will know the truth and not be ashamed on the Day of Judgment because we didn’t follow the teaching of the Bible. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding.”

I hope you’ll follow those \_\_\_\_\_ and that you’ll come to Christ. To hear the Words of Christ and believe them is a part of what it means to come to Him. Do that; \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins and \_\_\_\_\_ the name of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Repentance means that you \_\_\_\_\_ your heart; you leave sin and you turn to the ways of God. So with love and faith and repentance, be \_\_\_\_\_ for the forgiveness of your sins as Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 teach. The baptism of Christ is an immersion. When you do, God will \_\_\_\_\_ you with His grace and forgiveness and add you to His \_\_\_\_\_. He’ll make you His child and give you an inheritance with Him. My friend, won’t you do that? Won’t you do it today?

## The Restoration Plea Ephesians 4:1-6

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Going back to the Bible is essential to \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity. We search the Bible because we know that it is God's Holy Word and that it teaches us what God wants us to know to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. God's Word provides for us a \_\_\_\_\_, an example that teaches us His will for our lives. We do well to know and to follow that \_\_\_\_\_ that He set for us.

Have you ever broken a favorite \_\_\_\_\_ or dropped a treasured \_\_\_\_\_ into the mud? You probably groaned and wished you could bring back your prized possession to its \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ state. You wanted to restore it because it was \_\_\_\_\_. Spiritually speaking, the restoration plea calls us to bring back the pure and unbroken \_\_\_\_\_ as God meant for it to be by returning to the truth that's found in the New Testament.

Christianity has \_\_\_\_\_ dramatically through the centuries. Many changes were departures from the stated \_\_\_\_\_ of God in the New Testament. Some changes came as innovations that were never considered in Scripture; and other changes came as edits to make the church more up-to-date with \_\_\_\_\_; and then still other changes caused Christianity to be \_\_\_\_\_ with other religions. In the end, the \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity of the New Testament, as God willed it to be, was corrupted. It needed desperately to be brought back to its \_\_\_\_\_ condition, to be what God desired it to be.

If we wear the name of Jesus Christ, shouldn't we seek to truly \_\_\_\_\_ Him? Shouldn't we \_\_\_\_\_ every belief or practice that gets us away from His will as declared in the New Testament? Should we not seek God's \_\_\_\_\_ in everything we do? Let's restore the Lord's way in our lives.

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians 4:1-6.**

In the early 1800's, many church leaders grew \_\_\_\_\_ of the strife and fussing that was found in the denominations of their day. They believed the Lord wanted His people to be \_\_\_\_\_, to all be together. All of the bad-mouthing and exclusiveness of the denominations shamed the name of the Lord. Their divisive ways caused people to \_\_\_\_\_ from Christ in disbelief. They also objected to all that was of \_\_\_\_\_ origin that led them away from pure Christianity.

**Read what the Lord Jesus prayed, John 17:20-21.** The Lord Jesus wanted His \_\_\_\_\_ to remain united. The whole concept of denominationalism is really foreign to the New Testament.

These early church leaders believed that the acceptance of human opinions, human creeds, councils, human practices, and names \_\_\_\_\_ this divisive and hostile condition. They wanted something better—a pure and true Christianity that went back to the Bible and remained \_\_\_\_\_ from human traditions. They knew that if they abandoned what was human and they



concentrated on what was from God, they could find a \_\_\_\_\_ for unity. They could have unity only through following the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word that was found in the Scriptures. This meant that they had to cast off everything human and denominational, and \_\_\_\_\_ to the Christianity that was proposed in the New Testament.

These leaders \_\_\_\_\_ human traditions, human opinions, and innovations since these things cannot be found in God's Word. They believed that they could not \_\_\_\_\_ members to believe a doctrine that was not expressly taught in the New Testament. They said, "We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent." They wanted unity in essentials, freedom in matters of opinion, and \_\_\_\_\_ in all things.

They also recognized the New Testament \_\_\_\_\_ that Christians would fall away from the truth into error. God knew that the hearts of men often follow their \_\_\_\_\_ paths.

**Read what the apostle Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:29-30.** Paul knew that some would fall away from the truth.

**Read what the apostle Peter also predicted in 2 Peter 2:1-3.**

Paul was serious about staying with the truth. **Read what he told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-4.**

Early church history \_\_\_\_\_ that Christians began teaching and practicing things that were never taught or authorized by the New Testament. Within 500 years after the apostles died, a wholly new \_\_\_\_\_ developed with many innovations. For instance, the New Testament says nothing about holy water, or lent, or penance, or infant baptism, or intercession of the saints, or sprinkling for baptism, or sacrifice of the mass, or celibacy of priests, or purgatory, or confession to priests, or archbishops, or popes, or instrumental music in worship, or salvation by faith only, and "once saved, always saved."

Century by century, the church \_\_\_\_\_ farther away from the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. After a while, it no longer followed God's pattern for the church in the New Testament, but became something very \_\_\_\_\_. God's way was corrupted by the will of \_\_\_\_\_. If the church is to \_\_\_\_\_ God, it must return to what God willed in the New Testament. Restoration to the Lord's way is necessary because repentance from error is necessary.

No one can remain in \_\_\_\_\_ and still please God. **Read what the Bible says in James 5:19-20.** Straying from the truth can put our \_\_\_\_\_ in peril with a multitude of sins. By casting off these sinful, manmade doctrines and practices, we can \_\_\_\_\_ the doctrine, worship, and organization of the New Testament church.

Our intent is not to \_\_\_\_\_ a new denomination, but to restore the church according to the ideals of the New Testament. Jesus built His church \_\_\_\_\_ any denomination existed. The Lord's church is not denominational, not inter-denominational, and not even non-denominational. The church Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ was undenominational and "pre-denominational."

The New Testament never entertained the idea of so \_\_\_\_\_ groups with different names, and creeds, and organizations, and forms of worship. The Bible condemns the perpetuation of new doctrines that \_\_\_\_\_ from the teaching that's found in the New Testament. So, churches of

Christ strive to "*do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names.*" They believe they must \_\_\_\_\_ from their faith and their practice everything that is not found written in the New Testament of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and that they are to believe and to practice whatever is instructed there.

The concept of "restoration" grew out of a \_\_\_\_\_ that the Bible is a complete and final authority. Just as a seed will produce only after its own \_\_\_\_\_, so the seed of God's Word will produce the same Christianity today that it did in the first century. Luke 8:11 says, "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God." As long as you keep a pure \_\_\_\_\_ you will have a pure Christianity. But if you corrupt the seed, the teaching of the Word of God, then you'll also have a corrupt Christianity.

The Bible is complete and gives us \_\_\_\_\_ of God's revealed will for our lives and our godliness. **Read what Jesus promised His apostles in John 16:12-13.** The Bible is all-sufficient and contains every \_\_\_\_\_ truth that we need to have eternal life and to live the Christian life. We aren't \_\_\_\_\_ anything that God wanted us to know.

But many people aren't \_\_\_\_\_ with the pure teaching of the Word, so they say we must change. We ask, "Change to what?" If they call for change that leads us \_\_\_\_\_ to the doctrine of Christ in the New Testament, we can rejoice in that. But if they call for a change that leads us \_\_\_\_\_ from God's revealed will, let's not be fooled.

When people go beyond the Scriptures to teach other doctrines, they \_\_\_\_\_ something other than the church that Jesus built. They're making a church in their own image rather than \_\_\_\_\_ God's will. To add to the Scriptures or to take away from the Scriptures, to edit the Scriptures to fit today's culture is to corrupt the pure message or seed and to substitute for it something that will not accomplish God's intended \_\_\_\_\_. Rather than fall for a substitute, let's demand pure Christianity.

The Lord Jesus desires unity among His followers; but before He prayed for unity in John 17:20-23, he first prayed for his followers to be sanctified or "set apart" in the truth. Jesus wanted all His followers to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ the truth. Christ didn't pray for a unity that sacrifices or compromises the truth. No, it's our \_\_\_\_\_ in the truth that unites us. Christian unity is not ecumenism, where groups unite but maintain conflicting and contradictory beliefs and practices. Christian unity means being \_\_\_\_\_ to the truth, and refusing error.

The Lord Jesus said, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32). Jesus distinguished true disciples from others by their willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ in His Word. What we believe may not matter to today's culture, but what we believe and practice matters to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The New Testament provides for us examples and patterns showing how God wishes for us to \_\_\_\_\_ to His grace, how we should come to Him in faith and obedience, how we worship, how we should live, how we should organize ourselves, and how we should treat one another. Some \_\_\_\_\_ to the concept of patterns in the New Testament, but the Scriptures are clear

about the \_\_\_\_\_ to follow the apostles' doctrine and example. God expects us to believe and obey His instructions found in the New Testament.

For instance, Romans 6:17-18 says, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became \_\_\_\_\_ from the heart to that form (or pattern) of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness." Again, 2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, "So then, brethren, stand \_\_\_\_\_ and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us." Again, 2 Timothy 1:13 says, "Follow the \_\_\_\_\_ of sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

If the sun, the planets, and the moon in our universe follow a pattern; if every cell in our body has a DNA pattern that is alike; and if every leaf on every tree follows a pattern, why would we suppose that the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ has no pattern? If there is no pattern to the church, then it's the \_\_\_\_\_ thing that God ever produced that didn't have a pattern.

The New Testament speaks of the love and grace of God, but these 27 books in the New Testament \_\_\_\_\_ have commands, instructions, and examples for us to follow. The Lord Jesus said, "If you love Me, you'll \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments" (John 14:15). He demonstrates how this will affect our relationship with God. **Read John 15:8-10.** Obedience to the Lord is not some kind of legalism; obedience from the heart is how we \_\_\_\_\_ God. If we wish to abide in the love of God, we must be obedient to His \_\_\_\_\_. God requires people to \_\_\_\_\_ of their sins when they learn the truth. Repentance means that we \_\_\_\_\_ error and we embrace the Lord's will. Repentance is how we are \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord. My friend, do you need to repent? Do you attend a church that goes \_\_\_\_\_ the teaching of the New Testament? Are you a true disciple that \_\_\_\_\_ in the Words of Christ? If you aren't, you need to repent and restore your faith.

Restoration leads the \_\_\_\_\_ out of sinful error and into eternal life. If this is true for individuals, it's \_\_\_\_\_ true for groups and churches. Even \_\_\_\_\_ can fall from God's grace when they abandon the truth. Jesus anticipated disciplining whole churches in the book of Revelation chapters 2 and 3; if they didn't repent, he was going to come and \_\_\_\_\_ their candlestick. We must \_\_\_\_\_ faithful to God and His Word. We must hold to the truth at all costs. If we unite with error, we will \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves. We'd rather speak the truth with the Lord than to \_\_\_\_\_ for the devil's lies. We'd rather lovingly teach the truth that gives—maybe a little offense at first, but heals—than to spread \_\_\_\_\_ hope that destroys. Love demands that we \_\_\_\_\_ the whole truth of God because it's the truth that saves.

The truth is there's only one gospel, one body, one church, one baptism. In order to enter the Lord's church, \_\_\_\_\_ with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Out of faith and love, \_\_\_\_\_ of sin, \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus Christ, and be \_\_\_\_\_. The one baptism of Jesus Christ is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of \_\_\_\_\_. When you're baptized, the Lord will add you to His church. Why not be baptized today?