



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

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
January 2020**

January 5, 2020

## Starting Again Romans 6:15-19

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

As 2020 begins, I hope you're thinking about starting \_\_\_\_\_ and making a new commitment to the Lord. Someone has said that the God of the Bible is the God of second \_\_\_\_\_. The Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ God's love for all people and His willingness to accept those who penitently humble their hearts and seek for a new and better life. With God's help, you can \_\_\_\_\_ your ways and start over. God wants to \_\_\_\_\_ you become the godly person you've always wanted to be.

Eleven years ago, I moved to Edmond, Oklahoma and became \_\_\_\_\_ of In Search of the Lord's Way. Your love, support, and prayers have encouraged me, and I thank you. I've deeply appreciated working with Chris Lyon, my fellow-workers, and all the volunteers who make this program possible. The Search ministry requires many people working together to bring the gospel to the world by television, radio, and the internet. Please let us know you're watching and be sure to thank the entire team of Christian servants who truly care about you and your souls.

If you look in the mirror of your \_\_\_\_\_, you may not like what you see. We all have consciences that monitor our \_\_\_\_\_ and spiritual lives. When we fail to live as God desires, our conscience pricks our \_\_\_\_\_. We feel guilty when we know that we've sinned, and we feel \_\_\_\_\_ when we consider that we're the kind of people who could do such immoral things. All people sin, but God has provided His grace to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Our reading today comes from the Book of Romans 6:15-19.**

People say, "I don't \_\_\_\_\_ God to forgive me of my sins. There's no such thing as sin." In fact, 13 percent of Americans say there's no such thing as sin, and nearly forty percent say that the word sin is \_\_\_\_\_. Some people \_\_\_\_\_ the existence of sin because they don't believe in God. They assume they won't \_\_\_\_\_ any consequences for their sins, that God won't hold them accountable, and they can go on living as they please. Sadly, they \_\_\_\_\_ what sin does to their consciences and their memories. There's an inescapable moral law within, and that moral law within speaks to a moral lawmaker, God. Even if people say there's no such thing as sin they will have to admit there is such a thing as crime. Those who don't want to be judged, judge the behavior of others every day. All humans have a moral sense, and that moral sense is God-given.

When people commit a sin, they may not suffer any immediate punishment; but they do feel the prick of \_\_\_\_\_ in their hearts. They may think they can rid their guilt on their own by denying they've sinned, or by blaming others, or by blaming God; but these methods don't work. Just because you can \_\_\_\_\_ like sin doesn't matter doesn't mean that it doesn't matter to God. Unresolved guilt doesn't go away when we know the truth about our sins; the weight of guilt can

linger for a lifetime. God doesn't ignore or forget unresolved sin; He punishes it. God told His people, "Be sure your \_\_\_\_\_ will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Beyond that, people with a stained conscience find it hard to respect themselves because they're ashamed of what they did.

Over time, one may become callous and refuse to \_\_\_\_\_. Jeremiah spoke of the Jews in his day who would not listen to God or repent of their sins, even when God punished them. God demands that we be \_\_\_\_\_ about our sin. He said, "O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth? You have struck them down, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent" (Jeremiah 5:3). Some will do anything, anything to keep from admitting that they have sinned.

When people \_\_\_\_\_ to repent, God takes notice. With a broken heart, He punishes them for their wicked \_\_\_\_\_. Second Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slow about His \_\_\_\_\_, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to \_\_\_\_\_." God said through the prophet Ezekiel, "'But if the wicked man \_\_\_\_\_ from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely \_\_\_\_\_; he shall not die. All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. Do I have any \_\_\_\_\_ in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord GOD,' rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?" (Ezekiel 18:21-23).

God has always been interested in our being \_\_\_\_\_ and in changing our sinful ways. Zacchaeus, as a chief tax-collector in Jericho, was despised by the Jews as a \_\_\_\_\_ who had compromised with the Romans. Many thought he became rich by \_\_\_\_\_ from them. Zacchaeus had climbed a sycamore tree just to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus pass by. Jesus, however, when He saw Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree \_\_\_\_\_ for Zacchaeus to come down. Jesus was going to His house that day. Luke 19:7-10 says, "When they saw it, they all began to \_\_\_\_\_, saying, 'He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the \_\_\_\_\_, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today \_\_\_\_\_ has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was \_\_\_\_\_.'"

Jesus, in spite of the crowd, took an \_\_\_\_\_ in Zacchaeus, something Zacchaeus lacked from his fellow citizens of Jericho. His willingness to be with Zacchaeus so touched the tax-collector that he proclaimed his willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ his wealth and to right any wrongs that he'd committed. He was a changed man, changed in his \_\_\_\_\_ and willing to demonstrate it. That reveals repentance. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of \_\_\_\_\_. Repentance, like faith and love, is essential to a new life.

The prodigal son also shows the \_\_\_\_\_ of repentance. This disobedient young man decided to live the life of sin and caused himself great \_\_\_\_\_. He left everything good and found only loneliness and misery. He came to his \_\_\_\_\_ and decided to go home. Luke 15:20-23

says, “So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and \_\_\_\_\_ and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have \_\_\_\_\_ against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.’” In sin the son was \_\_\_\_\_ and lost; but coming home to repent he was \_\_\_\_\_ and found. He came home repentant, and His father took him in. Today, many estranged children of God need to come \_\_\_\_\_ to God repentant!

For those who’ve never become Christians, consider Nicodemus who came to Jesus acknowledging that He came from God. The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus about a \_\_\_\_\_ birth, “‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (John 3:3-7).

Though Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, he still \_\_\_\_\_ to be born again. No matter who you are, you too need to be born again. The Lord made it clear that unless you’re born of water and the Spirit you cannot enter the \_\_\_\_\_ of God! Being born again means you’re a new and \_\_\_\_\_ kind of person. You have a new life \_\_\_\_\_ your old ways. Your thinking, your speech, your choices, and your behavior conform not to the world but to the ways \_\_\_\_\_ by the Lord Jesus. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the \_\_\_\_\_ of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

This new birth begins with a \_\_\_\_\_ away of the old way of sin and taking on a new life. This regeneration and salvation happens when a person is \_\_\_\_\_. Titus 3:3-7 says, “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the \_\_\_\_\_ of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His \_\_\_\_\_, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the \_\_\_\_\_ of eternal life.”

God saves us by washing us \_\_\_\_\_ from sin and regenerating us, giving us new life. We cease living like the world and we begin living like Christ when we’re washed or baptized into Christ. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things \_\_\_\_\_ away; behold, new things have come.”

**Read how Paul explains this in more detail in Romans 6:3-7.**

Baptism \_\_\_\_\_ us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. In baptism, we're crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, and raised with Christ. Just as Christ had newness of life when God raised Him up, so God gives us newness of life when we are raised up with Him. This takes place, of course, in baptism! The old body of \_\_\_\_\_ is crucified with Christ, so that our body of sin might be done away with. In baptism, we are \_\_\_\_\_ from sin and can now live new lives in Christ!

You can \_\_\_\_\_ to live as a slave of sin or a slave of righteousness. I hope you will choose to be a slave of the Lord Jesus. The prodigal son chose to be a slave of sin and \_\_\_\_\_ for it. You will, too. Romans 6:16-18 says, "Do you not know that when you \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you \_\_\_\_\_, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the \_\_\_\_\_ to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been \_\_\_\_\_ from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Sadly, some who've been right with God at one time \_\_\_\_\_ God and sin grievously. When David sinned with Bathsheba and was guilty of causing the death of Uriah, her husband, he \_\_\_\_\_ great guilt and shame. He knew how he had sinned against God and what he'd \_\_\_\_\_. David said, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will \_\_\_\_\_ my transgressions to the LORD'; And You \_\_\_\_\_ the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:3-5).

David cried out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). God gives us a clean heart when we repent. Once forgiven, David could say, and what we ought to say, "I'm not all I ought to be, I'm not all I want to be, I'm not all I hope to be or going to be, but thank God by His mercy and grace I'm not what I used to be." There's no greater blessing than knowing your sins are forgiven and that you're right with the living God!

Paul said, "For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:9). Perhaps you've felt, "I am not fit to be a Christian because I've sinned." You may feel there's no hope. Paul called himself the chief of sinners. He also said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain." Has God's grace saved you? (1 Corinthians 15:10).

### **Read Paul's explanation in 1 Timothy 1:12-16.**

You too can come to the grace of God by faith. Believe in the Lord Jesus, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. Ananias told Paul, who was Saul of Tarsus, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). Paul knew that one is baptized into the death of Christ, where the blood washes away his sins.

January 12, 2020

## What Matters? Matthew 17:1-5

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

We hear many talk about “my truth” and “your truth,” but does \_\_\_\_\_ have a truth? Today, we’re exploring God’s truth, and it matters! Occasionally in my conversations, I hear people say, “That’s just \_\_\_\_\_ interpretation!” They mean that one belief is as \_\_\_\_\_ as any other. They don’t believe that God has \_\_\_\_\_ clearly enough to make His will understandable. However, God has spoken, and He \_\_\_\_\_ what He says, and He speaks with \_\_\_\_\_. That’s why we study what He says.

I sometimes hear people say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.” For them, loving Jesus is all that matters. Some quote John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” They correctly see love for others as an identifying \_\_\_\_\_ of Christianity. The problem is that they think love is the \_\_\_\_\_ identifying mark of a disciple. Are there any other things that identify a true disciple of the Lord?

God desires all people to be saved, but He also desires that they come to “the knowledge of the \_\_\_\_\_” (1 Timothy 2:4). Why? Because God holds the truth to be \_\_\_\_\_ to our salvation. The Lord Jesus said, “If you \_\_\_\_\_ in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32). A true disciple \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord Jesus and doesn’t try to edit or rewrite His Words. He doesn’t try to remake Christianity in the image of 21<sup>st</sup> century \_\_\_\_\_. “The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ forever” (1 Peter 1:24-25).

### **Our reading today comes from The Gospel According to Matthew 17:1-5.**

Jesus distinguished his disciples not only by their love (John 13:34-35) but also by their willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ in His Word. The Lord said, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine” (John 8:31-32). Continuing in His Words matters to the Lord. It has always mattered what we \_\_\_\_\_. We can’t claim to be true disciples of Jesus if we’re not \_\_\_\_\_ to abide in His Words. That’s how the Lord distinguishes His true followers from people who claim to be His followers. Authentic disciples actually hear what He said and \_\_\_\_\_ by His Words. Jesus once asked, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I \_\_\_\_\_?” (Luke 6:46).

For Jesus to be our Lord means that He must \_\_\_\_\_ our lives. Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments” (John 14:15). Loving the Lord means obeying His Word; we need to \_\_\_\_\_ what He says the \_\_\_\_\_ that He says to do it. The Bible warns us not to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. **Read what Paul said in Galatians 1:6-9.** This is strong and frightening language.

Not only must we be careful what we teach, we must also be careful what teachers we \_\_\_\_\_.

The apostle John said, “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of \_\_\_\_\_.”  
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Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. Now, if anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not \_\_\_\_\_ him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds” (2 John 9). While some say this passage speaks only about the deity of Jesus, and certainly that’s under thought, we recognize that there is a \_\_\_\_\_ that cannot be ignored. The principle is to change God’s teaching is offensive to God and considered by God evil.

All of God’s Word is \_\_\_\_\_. To change any part of it or to go beyond its teaching is to ignore what is Divine, and if we just \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves we can offend God. When we change things, we aren’t listening to the Lord. Man-made teachings step into a realm that belongs \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord. We have no right to say to God, “We think our way is \_\_\_\_\_ than Your way, so we’re going to change the teaching to suit ourselves.” Those who teach false doctrines \_\_\_\_\_ what is human over what is Divine. They actually defy God. Whether we teach a false doctrine or support a false teacher, we’re \_\_\_\_\_ of committing an evil deed. It matters to God whether or not we support \_\_\_\_\_. Love means staying with God and His Word.

What God says matters to our \_\_\_\_\_.! Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who \_\_\_\_\_ him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). We can’t \_\_\_\_\_ what we like in God’s teaching and \_\_\_\_\_ what we do not like. The standard, which will judge us on the last day is God’s Word. God is God, and He doesn’t take opinion \_\_\_\_\_ to determine the Truth. We live in an age that stresses political correctness, but God is not \_\_\_\_\_ to our culture. While we see changing \_\_\_\_\_ in our culture, God has spoken to all people in all places for all time (Jude 3). His will doesn’t change. We cannot assume that God’s \_\_\_\_\_ will include every idea that people embrace.

Rather than thinking that we can say and do religiously what we please, we should seek God’s face and \_\_\_\_\_ His will. The real issue is: Are we willing to \_\_\_\_\_ our will to God’s will and make Him Lord of our lives? Are we willing to listen to Him and \_\_\_\_\_ God? Many people think they can live and believe as they \_\_\_\_\_ and God won’t know or care! But God does know and God does care. We can’t believe man-made doctrines and practice man-made traditions and expect God to be pleased about it. He wants us to follow His will and to give \_\_\_\_\_ to His name. You can’t serve God and also serve yourself!

Jesus said, “Enter through the \_\_\_\_\_ gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are \_\_\_\_\_ who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are \_\_\_\_\_ who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). These verses surprise most people. They think that nearly everyone is on the right road, but that’s not the way things really are. The broad way is \_\_\_\_\_ and filled with people. It’s going to be popular, but tragic. Not many people are willing to \_\_\_\_\_ for themselves and find the truth by looking to the Words of Jesus.

Acting on our own wisdom, our own judgment, rather than obeying God reveals a lack of \_\_\_\_\_ in the wisdom of God. Proverbs 3:5-7 says, “Trust in the LORD with all your \_\_\_\_\_ And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be \_\_\_\_\_ in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.” We

must believe in God's \_\_\_\_\_ and not our own. God sees and knows things that we can't see or know. His understanding is unlimited, and we need to \_\_\_\_\_ that what He teaches is right. Even when we don't understand why He says what He says, we need to trust His wisdom.

Let's take a look at ourselves. Let's consider what we believe and practice as Christians. "Are my beliefs the will of man or the will of God? Are my religious practices the will of man or the will of God?" Can we read this teaching or find this practice in the \_\_\_\_\_? Or did this belief or practice come in later centuries by the \_\_\_\_\_ of men? If we can read that the Lord or the apostles taught this belief or practiced it, we can have confidence that God \_\_\_\_\_ of it. But if it's something that began much later, and is a departure from the Truth, it should have no \_\_\_\_\_ in the life of a faithful Christian. We should leave the humanly designed theology and return to the Lord's will!

People should investigate their beliefs and practices, asking the question, "Is this Biblical or is this something from men?" This would mean that we have to do some \_\_\_\_\_ study into the Bible to see what we would find. If we find it's Biblically approved, let's stay with it; but if it departs from the New Testament, we should abandon it. Forty-five years ago I was preaching in a country church in Oklahoma. I met a sweet, wonderful lady named "Oleta." She had been sprinkled as an \_\_\_\_\_ in her church. When she became an adult, she got acquainted with some members of the church of Christ, and they began studying the Bible.

When some members of the church told her that we baptize by immersion and only baptize people old enough to believe and repent, she was \_\_\_\_\_ and began asking questions. The members replied, "That's the \_\_\_\_\_ they did it in the Bible." This upset Oleta. She was just \_\_\_\_\_ that what she had been taught as a child was in the Bible! So, she got out her Bible, and she studied for days, looking for verses to show baptism includes the sprinkling of infants. The more she read, however, the more she realized that the Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ the immersion of penitent believers. Oleta was honest and said, "I was studying to \_\_\_\_\_ them wrong, and what I found was that Oleta was wrong." This honest lady saw that even cherished beliefs can be \_\_\_\_\_. It wasn't easy for Oleta to reach that conclusion, but she was \_\_\_\_\_ with God and with herself. The baptism into Christ is a burial. The very word "baptize" means immerse. The Bible says, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

The Bible also teaches that the early church baptized \_\_\_\_\_ penitent believers. Acts 2:41 says, "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." Acts 5:14 says, "And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women." Acts 8:1, says, "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." These were penitent people \_\_\_\_\_ to believe and receive the Word. They weren't infants.

I've also known some who believed that they were saved by faith \_\_\_\_\_ and didn't need to be baptized. However, Mark 16:15-16 says, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will



be condemned.” According to these verses, preaching and believing take place before baptism, and one is baptized before he is \_\_\_\_\_. Once people heard and believed the gospel they were baptized, and this resulted in their salvation. Acts 2:38 says, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Ananias told Saul, after three days of prayer, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16). If you’re being taught that baptism isn’t necessary to salvation, I ask you to study the Scriptures. While faith is necessary to salvation, the Bible also teaches the \_\_\_\_\_ for baptism. God washes away our sins at the time of baptism.

Some think that every doctrine of every church is okay, and every doctrine is as good as every other doctrine. But is that so? Doesn’t the \_\_\_\_\_ matter to God? It may sound neighborly to get along with everyone, but to believe everything is to believe \_\_\_\_\_. It doesn’t make sense to believe contradictory teachings are still \_\_\_\_\_ true. Those who hold this idea aren’t listening to God; they’re listening to \_\_\_\_\_ culture.

Galatians 1:6-9 says there is but \_\_\_\_\_ gospel. If there is only one, there cannot be \_\_\_\_\_. Would you want to accept a “distorted” gospel? What if you were given false \_\_\_\_\_? Wouldn’t that be tragic to believe a doctrine that departs from God’s Word? Believing everything is all right isn’t listening to the Lord Jesus; it’s listening to \_\_\_\_\_. Wouldn’t it be better to stay on safe ground? In the Bible, we can \_\_\_\_\_ the things that God approves and teaches. We can know what He wills for our lives, and for our churches, and for our beliefs. We need to conform to His Words in the New Testament. So why not \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures and find out for yourself? You might find that you’re like Oleta. Examine what you believe! See if it’s \_\_\_\_\_ to what the Bible teaches.

God’s declaration in Matthew 17:5, “Listen to Him,” is still relevant today. A thousand \_\_\_\_\_ seek our attention, but God points only to His Son, Jesus. Moses was a great \_\_\_\_\_, but God points to His Son. Elijah was a great \_\_\_\_\_, but God points to His Son. Only Jesus has the \_\_\_\_\_ of life (John 6:68). “Listen to Him!” Love Him, follow Him, obey Him, and serve Him. Study the Scriptures and \_\_\_\_\_ your life. Are you walking in the Lord’s way?

If you can’t read in Scripture what you believe and practice, abandon those things and come to the Lord. Let Him \_\_\_\_\_ you to eternal life. Remember Proverbs 3:5-7 quoted earlier.

Love moves us to trust Jesus. Love moves us to confess faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. We gladly acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and we belong to Him. Love also moves us to think of sin differently. We realize that sin will ruin our lives and so we repent of sin and turn to the Lord’s way. Love moves us to clothe ourselves with Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27). We’re baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3), where Christ shed His blood. In baptism God washes away our sins and gives us newness of life (Acts 22:16; and Romans 6:4-7). Why not take the necessary step of being baptized into Christ? That’s when you’ll receive the forgiveness of your sins. Today is the best day for you to do that.



January 19, 2020

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

## Were You There?

An old hymn asks, “Were you there when they \_\_\_\_\_ my Lord?” In our rush to judgment over who was responsible for the death of Christ, we often overlook our own \_\_\_\_\_. Christ died for \_\_\_\_\_ of us. Were you there? I’ve always loved the old spiritual song, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” Nothing in life reaches into my soul as does the story of Jesus Christ dying upon the \_\_\_\_\_. I can’t think of it without several emotions coming up inside of me. The cross is at the \_\_\_\_\_ of what we believe.

When I think of the cruelty of the scourging and the crucifixion, I become \_\_\_\_\_ and ask, “how could they treat an innocent, good person like that?” When I think of Judas, I wonder how he could \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus. When I think of Pilate, I wonder why he gave in to the Jewish leaders and \_\_\_\_\_ his hands of my Lord. Where was his \_\_\_\_\_? Then I look at myself and my own \_\_\_\_\_. I wonder how my Lord Jesus could love me enough to bear such \_\_\_\_\_ for me. I’m very grateful He \_\_\_\_\_ me so much that He was willing to redeem me with His blood. Yet, I am ashamed for all my sins. I’m so \_\_\_\_\_ for all the evil things I’ve said and done, all the pain I’ve caused, and all the times I’ve failed to do the right thing. Remembering the cross \_\_\_\_\_ us and yet blesses us at the same time.

**Our reading today comes from the Book of Acts 2:22-24.** Peter is preaching on the Day of Pentecost and giving the gospel for the first time.

Yes Jesus did \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead. The four gospel accounts Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are inspired by the Holy Spirit and \_\_\_\_\_ the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. I’ve merged these four accounts from their words to give a \_\_\_\_\_ picture of what happened.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus. They compelled this man to \_\_\_\_\_ his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he \_\_\_\_\_ it, he wouldn’t drink it.

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to \_\_\_\_\_ with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. And Jesus said, “Father, \_\_\_\_\_ them, for they know not what they do.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and \_\_\_\_\_ them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, “Let us not \_\_\_\_\_ it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast \_\_\_\_\_.” Then they sat down and kept \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ him \_\_\_\_\_ there.

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Pilate wrote an inscription and put it on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews \_\_\_\_\_ this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man \_\_\_\_\_, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene, were there. And when Jesus saw his mother and the \_\_\_\_\_ whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own \_\_\_\_\_.

Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on His right and one on the left. Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the \_\_\_\_\_ and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you're the Son of God, come down from the cross."

So the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, \_\_\_\_\_ him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will \_\_\_\_\_ in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The robbers who were crucified with him \_\_\_\_\_ reviled him in the same way. Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

One of the criminals who was hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not \_\_\_\_\_ God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed \_\_\_\_\_, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done \_\_\_\_\_ wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your \_\_\_\_\_." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, \_\_\_\_\_ you will be with me in Paradise."

Now from the sixth hour there was \_\_\_\_\_ over all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you \_\_\_\_\_ me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling (for) Elijah." One of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my \_\_\_\_\_!" After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is \_\_\_\_\_," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was \_\_\_\_\_!" All the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. Behold, the curtain of the \_\_\_\_\_ was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. Many bodies of the saints who had fallen \_\_\_\_\_ were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the

centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with \_\_\_\_\_ and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not \_\_\_\_\_ on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their \_\_\_\_\_ might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already \_\_\_\_\_, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a \_\_\_\_\_, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne \_\_\_\_\_—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may \_\_\_\_\_. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his \_\_\_\_\_ will be broken.” Again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have \_\_\_\_\_.”

The death of Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ any execution ever known. He was innocent but bore the \_\_\_\_\_ of the guilty. While being nailed down, He \_\_\_\_\_ for His Father to \_\_\_\_\_ his executioners, because they didn’t know what they were doing. The Lord Jesus, because He was Divine, could see what we cannot see and know what we cannot know. The Father planned to \_\_\_\_\_ His body as a sacrifice for their sins, but they didn’t realize it. First Corinthians 2:8 says, “None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had (known), they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

When a person was executed, the Romans posted the \_\_\_\_\_ against the man on the cross to warn others not to commit the same crime. His accusers charged Him falsely with blasphemy in saying that He was the Messiah, the King of the Jews, yet they resented the \_\_\_\_\_ that proclaimed Him the King of the Jews. Pilate sought to \_\_\_\_\_ the Jews with the statement, but he spoke more of the truth than he knew.

Peter speaks of the remarkable courage and \_\_\_\_\_ strength of the Lord Jesus in His suffering. “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an \_\_\_\_\_, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his \_\_\_\_\_. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges \_\_\_\_\_. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might \_\_\_\_\_ to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like \_\_\_\_\_, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:21-25).

There’s no wonder the centurion who saw to the crucifixion proclaimed “Truly this man was \_\_\_\_\_.” Guilty men don’t act the way that Jesus acted. They don’t refuse a drink that would help them with the \_\_\_\_\_. They don’t ask God to forgive their executioners. They don’t keep \_\_\_\_\_ when being mocked. They don’t have the sun darkened and the earth shaking when they’re being crucified. Jesus was indeed, righteous and innocent.

Pilate said more than once that he found no \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus. Pilate offered Barabbas, hoping to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus; but the high priests and scribes \_\_\_\_\_ the people to insist on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Pilate \_\_\_\_\_ his hands in front of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to that yourselves.” And all the people said, “His blood shall be on us and on our children!”

Pilate then took Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. The soldiers twisted together a crown of \_\_\_\_\_ and put it on His head, and put a purple \_\_\_\_\_ on Him; and they began to come up to Him

and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him \_\_\_\_\_ in the face. Pilate came out again and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no \_\_\_\_\_ in Him." Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." Jesus was no ordinary person. The Jews delivered Jesus up to Pilate, not because He was guilty but because they were \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.

At the sixth hour the \_\_\_\_\_ became dark. The sun was not darkened for a \_\_\_\_\_ minutes, as it would be in an eclipse. This was different; the sun was darkened for three \_\_\_\_\_ hours. The earth \_\_\_\_\_ so violently that it split the rocks. God did this.

The veil of the temple was \_\_\_\_\_ from top to bottom. The veils were 60 feet long, 30 feet wide, and four inches thick. They were so heavy they needed 300 priests to \_\_\_\_\_ each one. The Veil being torn from top to bottom means that God's own \_\_\_\_\_ had torn it in two. That veil \_\_\_\_\_ the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Once the veil was torn, that place \_\_\_\_\_ to be separated or holy.

By dying, the Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ a new and living way for us to enter the holy of holies. Hebrews 9:12 says, "He entered \_\_\_\_\_ for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his \_\_\_\_\_ blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."

Jesus died an agonizing death for you and for me because of His great \_\_\_\_\_. God was in Christ at the \_\_\_\_\_ offering us redemption, offering us forgiveness, offering us reconciliation. God showed this amazing wonderful love in the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus upon the cross in order to \_\_\_\_\_ into our hearts and souls, and to bring us back into a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with Himself. No one, will ever \_\_\_\_\_ you like Jesus Christ. No one will ever \_\_\_\_\_ for you like that.

My friend, you were there when they crucified the Lord. Oh, no, you weren't there physically; but yes, you were there \_\_\_\_\_. Remember: Jesus died for you to \_\_\_\_\_ you from sin and to begin a relationship with you. He died so that you and I could be reconciled to God in a \_\_\_\_\_ covenant, so that you could have a loving relationship with God that would last \_\_\_\_\_. Yes, you were in His heart then; and you're in His heart now.

God took the initiative to show His love for us all, on the cross, hoping that we would \_\_\_\_\_ with a total commitment of our love. We should love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds, and all our strength (Mark 12:30). Committed love is \_\_\_\_\_ to go to any length to comply with what the Lord desires. We're saved by God's \_\_\_\_\_, and His offer of salvation extends to \_\_\_\_\_ person. We can't \_\_\_\_\_ our salvation, but we can \_\_\_\_\_ God's conditions for salvation. God wishes everyone would respond to His \_\_\_\_\_.

You respond to that remarkable love of God with a love of your \_\_\_\_\_. That love leads you to \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, to \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins, to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus, before others, and to be \_\_\_\_\_. Baptism into Christ is the immersion of a penitent believer in \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). You must do this if you wish to \_\_\_\_\_ your love for God and become a Christian. If the cross means anything to you and if you realize your sins were involved in sending Jesus to the cross, you won't wait even one day until you come to the Lord in love and obedience. Won't you do that today?

January 26, 2020

**God With Us**

Does it \_\_\_\_\_ whether God is with us? Today, we're exploring the \_\_\_\_\_ of having God with us. The Bible is like a \_\_\_\_\_ that allows a person to see himself as God sees him. If you wish to look into your \_\_\_\_\_, read and meditate on the Scriptures. They will sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ you, and they will sometimes show your \_\_\_\_\_ and weaknesses. They will surely tell you what God sees, thinks, feels, and says. We're wise to pay close \_\_\_\_\_ to what God says, if we wish to have His blessing.

An angel of the Lord told Joseph, when he considered Mary's condition, "'She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will \_\_\_\_\_ His people from their sins.' Now all this took place to \_\_\_\_\_ what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his \_\_\_\_\_ IMMANUEL,' which translated means, 'with us'" (Matthew 1:21-23). We can certainly see God with us in the life of Jesus who \_\_\_\_\_ what God is like.

Jesus promised, "I am with you \_\_\_\_\_, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Paul often closed his epistles with a phrase similar to "the Lord be with you." He told the Romans, "Now the God of \_\_\_\_\_ be with you all" (Romans 15:33). Later he said, "The \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus be with you" (Romans 16:20). He told the Corinthians, "the God of \_\_\_\_\_ and peace be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11). Such greetings speak of God's favor and blessing for those who love and obey Him. Do you love and obey Him? Is God's favor with you?

**Our reading today is probably the best known Psalm of David. It shows his close relationship with God. Psalm 23.** A beautiful and wonderful psalm.

Jesus came into this \_\_\_\_\_ as Immanuel, "God with us." It matters whether God is with us. Having a relationship with God is the \_\_\_\_\_ important relationship of all. When God is with us, we have His \_\_\_\_\_ and blessing. If God is absent in our lives, we're spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ and without hope. For this reason, I want God in my heart and in my life. I want to cling to Him and like Jesus I always want to do the things that are \_\_\_\_\_ to Him (John 8:29). So, what happens when God is with us? What difference does it make? We might consider the \_\_\_\_\_ of Noah. In the days of Noah, the Lord "saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only \_\_\_\_\_ continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His \_\_\_\_\_." God determined to blot out man, "but Noah found favor in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord" (Genesis 6:6,8). Noah and his family, eight persons, were \_\_\_\_\_; but the rest of the people on earth perished in the flood.

Even though Joseph's older brothers \_\_\_\_\_ him and sold him into slavery, God took care of him. Genesis 39:2-3 says, "The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to \_\_\_\_\_ in his hand." Stephen

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said about Joseph, “God was with him, and \_\_\_\_\_ him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt” (Acts 7:9-10).

In later years, God was with the \_\_\_\_\_ after Israel had taken the land of Canaan. Judges 2:18 says, “When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to \_\_\_\_\_ by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them.”

David was a man after God’s own \_\_\_\_\_. Though he suffered through many \_\_\_\_\_, “David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him” (1 Samuel 18:14). Second Samuel 5:10 says, “David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.” When God is with us, He blesses us and \_\_\_\_\_ us through our struggles and challenges.

King Hezekiah “did right in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.” Hezekiah “clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments.” As a result, “And the LORD was with him; wherever he went he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city” (2 Kings 18:7-8). God blessed Hezekiah because he clung to the Lord and kept His commandments.

The Lord God said to Israel, “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). When we cling to God, He clings to us. James 4:7-8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

When God is with us that doesn’t mean that we’ll never suffer or be tempted. We all face trials, heartaches, and difficulties. Anyone who has read the stories of Joseph, David, or Hezekiah knows that their lives were not always easy. What God being “with us” does mean is that we are never alone in our temptations, our struggles, and our suffering. We look to God for our strength, our comfort, and our hope.

What happens when people \_\_\_\_\_ God and no longer have His blessing? I can think of a few illustrations. Do you remember Samson and Delilah? Samson’s \_\_\_\_\_ came from God. As long as he \_\_\_\_\_ God’s ways, God was with him. Delilah wanted to know the \_\_\_\_\_ of Samson’s strength. **Read the story in Judges 16:16-20.** When his hair came off, Samson’s \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord ceased. He could no longer \_\_\_\_\_ the Philistines. Thankfully, Samson’s hair grew back, and when Samson \_\_\_\_\_, God restored his strength.

Scripture gives us more than one picture of God’s view of Solomon. When Solomon became king, 2 Chronicles 1:1 says, “Now Solomon the son of David established himself securely over his \_\_\_\_\_, and the LORD his God was with him and exalted him greatly.”

But, Solomon’s many wives led him \_\_\_\_\_. First Kings 11:6-9 says, “Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD \_\_\_\_\_, as David his father had done. Then Solomon \_\_\_\_\_ a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the

detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign \_\_\_\_\_, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now the LORD was \_\_\_\_\_ with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.” He no longer \_\_\_\_\_ God, because he loved his foreign wives.

The people of Judah, who were God’s people, in later years \_\_\_\_\_ from God and followed Baal and other Canaanite gods. They believed they could practice idolatry and immorality and still be \_\_\_\_\_ with God. Jeremiah 2:12-13 says, “‘Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,’ declares the LORD. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.” They left the God who \_\_\_\_\_ them for worthless gods who were only man-made pieces of stone and wood. “‘Shall I not punish these people?’ declares the LORD, ‘On a nation such as this Shall I not avenge Myself? An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?’” (Jeremiah 5:29-31).

We too must ask the question, if we have forsaken the Lord what will we do at the end of it when God \_\_\_\_\_ us responsible. They chose sin over righteousness and they hardened their \_\_\_\_\_ against God. We must be careful to keep our hearts \_\_\_\_\_ to God. Jeremiah 6:15 says of Jerusalem, “‘Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I \_\_\_\_\_ them, They shall be cast down,’ says the LORD.” I see, even in our own \_\_\_\_\_, some who are never ashamed of immorality and don’t know how to blush over their sins. This, my friend, is great weakness of heart and mind.

Hebrews 3:12-13 warns, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that \_\_\_\_\_ away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of \_\_\_\_\_.” The idea that Christians who turn from God cannot lose their souls is a \_\_\_\_\_. God urges us to stay \_\_\_\_\_ to Him and to continue worshiping with the church. Hebrews 10:25 says, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

Some have decided to forsake assembling with the \_\_\_\_\_ altogether, to forsake the Lord. Hebrews 10:26-31 says, “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a \_\_\_\_\_ for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without \_\_\_\_\_ on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will \_\_\_\_\_ who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the \_\_\_\_\_ of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will \_\_\_\_\_.’ And again, ‘The LORD will \_\_\_\_\_ his people. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’”



God has a track record of \_\_\_\_\_ those who forsake him and lose all respect for what is good and right. We must not, as Jerusalem did in the days of Jeremiah, listen to the wrong people and take the \_\_\_\_\_ of God for granted. The Jews hardened their hearts and refused to \_\_\_\_\_, so, God punished them. God will punish us too if we \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts and refuse to repent. God is the God of grace, but He is also a \_\_\_\_\_ and just God who punishes sin.

My friend, will you \_\_\_\_\_ the blessing of God so that you can live a worldly life without God? Would you gain the world but lose your \_\_\_\_\_? Will you stray from the \_\_\_\_\_? James 5:19-20 says, “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will \_\_\_\_\_ his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” Won’t you return to God if you’re away from Him?

Most people know John 3:16, but do you know John 3:18? It says, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been \_\_\_\_\_ already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” You can’t expect God to be with you and bless you, if you do not believe and \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. According to Ephesians 2:12, people outside of Christ are “separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no \_\_\_\_\_ and without \_\_\_\_\_ in the world.” It matters whether you are with God and whether God is with you.

The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will \_\_\_\_\_ My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you \_\_\_\_\_ is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me” (John 14:23-24). Those whom God loves and with whom He makes His home, His abode, are those who love Him and keep His commandments. Do you?

If you have the Lord with you in this life, you can \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord in the life to come. Paul said, “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by \_\_\_\_\_, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). If you wish to be at home with the Lord in \_\_\_\_\_, then let the Lord make his home with you in this life.

To begin a relationship with the Lord, you must first place your faith and trust in Him. Believing in Jesus Christ is more than acknowledging His existence; it means you believe Him and in Him. You believe His words and His promises. You want to serve Him. You turn away from sinful things and you begin living for the Lord—that’s repentance! With your love, your faith, and penitent heart, then you can confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, just like the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:3-7.