



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

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
July 2020**

## Only One Life Ephesians 5:15-21

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

You have only one life; what are you \_\_\_\_\_ with it? Does your life matter, or are you chasing after the \_\_\_\_\_? The Bible teaches us \_\_\_\_\_ to live an abundant life. It helps us to distinguish what's wise from what's foolish; what's important from what doesn't matter; what's good from what's evil. You can search the world over and never find a book that will \_\_\_\_\_ you like the Bible.

Living without God's teaching in your life is like sewing with a needle that has no \_\_\_\_\_ or like writing your biography with a pen empty of \_\_\_\_\_. Some years ago psychologist William Marston asked 3000 people, "What do you have to live for?" He found that 94% were simply enduring the present while waiting for the \_\_\_\_\_. They were waiting for something to happen someday. They wanted to finish school, or watch their children grow up, or take a long vacation, or retire. They were \_\_\_\_\_, not realizing that all anyone ever has is today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow is only a hope.

Solomon said, "Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was \_\_\_\_\_ and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:11). You might look at your life and wonder what \_\_\_\_\_ you've made in this world. Is your life merely a striving after wind?

C. T. Studd, nearly a hundred years ago, wrote two lines that make one pause and consider what \_\_\_\_\_ in life. He wrote "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." Because there's \_\_\_\_\_ to life than the here and now, we must consider our eternal destiny and what matters when this life is over.

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:15-21.**

God gives us life one day at a time, and it's \_\_\_\_\_. Jacob, when he was 130 years old, told Pharaoh, "few and unpleasant have been the years of my life" (Genesis 47:9). One hundred and thirty years still seems long to me, but Jacob called them "\_\_\_\_\_." David said, "LORD, make me to know my \_\_\_\_\_ And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere \_\_\_\_\_" (Psalm 39:4-5).

How we live matters, and whether we remember God through our lives is crucial to how we spend \_\_\_\_\_. The Preacher, Solomon, wrote, "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to \_\_\_\_\_ for all these things" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

We must take notice of God's Word where he says, "Therefore be \_\_\_\_\_ how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). I'd like to suggest some things that we must take time to do:

First, take time to \_\_\_\_\_. God said through the prophet Isaiah, "Incline your \_\_\_\_\_, and come to Me: hear and your soul shall live" (Isaiah 55:3). Above anyone else, we must listen to \_\_\_\_\_ and hear His voice in all matters. The psalmist said, "Thy testimonies also are my \_\_\_\_\_; They are my counselors" (Psalm 119:24). God's Word always gives the best counsel, because God has no limits to His \_\_\_\_\_. God's Word is also a blessing in \_\_\_\_\_ times. Psalm 119:50 says, "This is my comfort in my affliction, That Thy word has revived me." Again, in verse 52, "I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O LORD, And comfort myself."

### **Read Psalm 1.**

The Scriptures also encourage us to listen to \_\_\_\_\_, to wise people. Everyone needs a listening ear at times. Listening is the first \_\_\_\_\_ to loving. Listening encourages and solves \_\_\_\_\_; it brings comfort and it brings healing. Your life will be richer by far the more you \_\_\_\_\_ to listen. Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is \_\_\_\_\_." Proverbs 15:22 says, "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they \_\_\_\_\_." Getting godly and wise advice can make the difference between success and failure. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

Second, take time to \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know everything that I want to know, for sure; but I suspect you feel that way too at times. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a \_\_\_\_\_ to my feet, And a \_\_\_\_\_ to my path." I want to know what God says. Psalm 119:98-99 says, "Thy commandments make me \_\_\_\_\_ than my enemies, For they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation." God gives us \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom that guides us now and leads us to eternal life.

Psalm 119:133 says, "Establish my footsteps in Thy \_\_\_\_\_, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me." We need to know what will \_\_\_\_\_ us and what will \_\_\_\_\_ us.

The Lord Jesus promises, "If any man is willing to do His \_\_\_\_\_, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself" (John 7:17). The more you put God's Word into \_\_\_\_\_, the more you realize the Bible truly is from God Himself.

The Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ us how to think, how to deal with others, and how to behave. Paul said, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Could you say that? Could you encourage \_\_\_\_\_ to live like you live, to think like you think, or to treat others the way you treat them? When we follow Christ, we know we're doing the \_\_\_\_\_ thing. You can study many things, but only knowledge of God can give you \_\_\_\_\_ life. How sad to think that many people are brilliant when it comes to \_\_\_\_\_ things but know nearly

nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Third, take time to laugh and \_\_\_\_\_. Proverbs 17:22 says, “A joyful heart is \_\_\_\_\_ medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Many people have forgotten how to laugh or \_\_\_\_\_ life. Their lives are sad, dreary, and drab. We should learn to laugh at ourselves, to enjoy others without embarrassing them, and especially to rejoice in the \_\_\_\_\_. Paul, while in \_\_\_\_\_, wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). He found a way to \_\_\_\_\_ joy in life even in the harshest of circumstances.

Rejoicing is not merely being \_\_\_\_\_. Rejoicing comes from something \_\_\_\_\_ and precious. Ezra 8:10 says, “the joy of the LORD is your \_\_\_\_\_.” Because we know the Lord, we can rejoice in all His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. This joy gives us strength, hope, and promise. After love, joy is the second quality of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit. The more we count our blessings, the more that we’ll find joy in life. God is the giver of all \_\_\_\_\_ gifts. James 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from \_\_\_\_\_, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” God gives us every good thing that we \_\_\_\_\_. Let’s learn to rejoice \_\_\_\_\_ day. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Fourth, take time to \_\_\_\_\_ others. There are many \_\_\_\_\_ things happening all around us, calling for us to lend a \_\_\_\_\_. Mark 9 tells of the boy who was afflicted with a \_\_\_\_\_ that made him deaf and mute. This demon often \_\_\_\_\_ him to have convulsions and be thrown into the fire and the water. When Jesus commanded the demon to come out of him, the boy convulsed on the ground and lay motionless like he was \_\_\_\_\_. Verse 27 says, “But Jesus took him by the hand, and \_\_\_\_\_ him up.” Jesus gave him the \_\_\_\_\_ that he needed. Jesus forgave \_\_\_\_\_, gave sight to the blind, healed the \_\_\_\_\_, raised the dead, and gave \_\_\_\_\_ to the poor (Luke 4:17-21). He blessed \_\_\_\_\_. He came in contact with.

Galatians 6:2 urges us, “Bear one another’s \_\_\_\_\_, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” There are still many surrounding us who need a helping hand of \_\_\_\_\_. Many people are too \_\_\_\_\_ with personal pursuits and pleasures to lift the less fortunate; but the more we bless others, the more we find blessing. Send a note, make a phone call, give a compliment, smile, encourage, and show that you \_\_\_\_\_. First Thessalonians 5:11 says, “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” You have “only one life; ‘twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Fifth, take time to \_\_\_\_\_. First John 4:16 says, “God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” The man who doesn’t love is not \_\_\_\_\_—he’s just merely existing. Everybody needs love and to be loved. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.** Because Jesus loved us, we can know \_\_\_\_\_ to love others. **Read 1 John 3:16-18.**

I have a dear friend who \_\_\_\_\_ his wife a few years ago. Each time we meet, Jasper

reminds me to \_\_\_\_\_ and spend time with my wife and my loved ones while I can. I know he's right. It's time to love our families and our neighbors as \_\_\_\_\_. Today is all you have; all any of us have. When you take time to love, you're \_\_\_\_\_ God. More than anything, we \_\_\_\_\_ to love God and love other people! **Read Colossians 3:12-14.** Beyond \_\_\_\_\_, put on love. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

If your life isn't what you want it to be, today is the best day to \_\_\_\_\_. You can begin today to listen, learn, laugh, lift, and love! You can become the salt and the light of the world by becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father \_\_\_\_\_ through" Him (John 14:6). The Lord Jesus came that you "may have \_\_\_\_\_ and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Don't waste your life chasing after \_\_\_\_\_ in the here and now and then miss heaven. If you place all your \_\_\_\_\_ on your passions and your pleasures in this life, they will soon \_\_\_\_\_; but if you place your hope in the Lord, you can find \_\_\_\_\_ blessings in this life and the life to come.

**Read Isaiah 1:18-20.** In Christ, we have hope that we can be \_\_\_\_\_, that we can transform our lives into the kind of people that God can use to \_\_\_\_\_ the whole world. You only have one life, and it will not \_\_\_\_\_ on this earth forever. Serve the Lord and make the \_\_\_\_\_ of your days! The most important things in life are always expensive; but there is a far greater \_\_\_\_\_ to doing nothing and being unprepared. Life is brief; and as we age, each year passes more quickly than the last one. This means what matters becomes more and more \_\_\_\_\_. Cougan Collins recently asked, "If you knew the day you would die, would that \_\_\_\_\_ the way that you live?"

There are many uncertainties in life, and we can't foresee what the \_\_\_\_\_ holds; but you must prepare for at least one divine appointment. One day you'll stand before the throne of God to give an \_\_\_\_\_ for your life. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is \_\_\_\_\_ for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10). What do you see when you look at yourself? Are you the person that God could \_\_\_\_\_? Are you living for the Lord or are you chasing after the wind? Don't waste your life with the things that don't matter. Build your house upon the rock by \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord Jesus and doing what He says! Make your life count for eternity!

The best thing you can do is to place your \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus who created you. Since you're made in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, let God work in and through you to make a difference in this world. Trust in the Lord and in His words and promises. Turn from sin and follow the Lord in repentance. Confess to everyone that you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and let \_\_\_\_\_ know that you belong to Him. Upon confession, be \_\_\_\_\_ into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Act 2:38). Your commitment to follow Jesus will be the most important decision that you'll ever make. So do it today!

**Prepare Your Heart**  
**Psalm 78:5-8**

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

What is in your \_\_\_\_\_? Do you have a heart prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ what God has to say? Do you have a heart prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ God? Paul said, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a \_\_\_\_\_ heart and a \_\_\_\_\_ conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5). That's our goal, too! We want to have that pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith. We fervently want that for each of you as well. We want everyone to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. That's why we go to the Lord Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ "the words of eternal life" in Scripture. He is our hope and our delight! He is our Savior, and we need Him.

The Scriptures speak about the heart and how it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of our very being. The heart is where we think, where we feel, where we choose, where we plan, and where we determine what we will or we won't do. The Lord Jesus said, "for where your \_\_\_\_\_ is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Our hearts, more than anything else, \_\_\_\_\_ our character and our disposition. The heart determines whether we \_\_\_\_\_ and to what extent we'll make a commitment. Proverbs 4:23 warns, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of \_\_\_\_\_."

If we're not careful, our hearts can \_\_\_\_\_ us. We can imagine something is true because we \_\_\_\_\_ it to be true. God said, "The heart is more deceitful than all else, And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Don't imagine that God doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ about our ways and our deeds. We can come to the Lord "just as we are," but we cannot \_\_\_\_\_ that way. God expects our hearts to change, to leave the things that oppose His will, and to grow to be people who delight in pleasing Him. What is in your heart?

**Our reading today comes from Psalm 78:5-8.**

If we are to \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts to have a relationship with God, we must do four things. First, we must put our \_\_\_\_\_ in God. Proverbs 3:5-7 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not \_\_\_\_\_ on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your \_\_\_\_\_ straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from \_\_\_\_\_." It's easy to think that we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and know more than our ancient God. Of course, God is not like us. He's much \_\_\_\_\_ about life; He's seen men and women fall into the immoral traps that can \_\_\_\_\_ them. He can see the \_\_\_\_\_ that lies hidden to us. That's why we trust Him and hold to His hand.

Second, we must not forget the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. James 1:17 says, "Every good thing given

and every perfect \_\_\_\_\_ is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” Every \_\_\_\_\_ that we enjoy comes from our Father in heaven. The Lord Jesus said, “your Father knows what you \_\_\_\_\_ before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). Our food, clothing, housing, and all of our spiritual blessings – \_\_\_\_\_ of them come from Him. So, we remember the Lord Jesus dying on the cross, suffering for the forgiveness of our \_\_\_\_\_. We remember His \_\_\_\_\_ to care for us, to comfort us, to strengthen us, and to never forsake us. We’re blessed to have a Father who \_\_\_\_\_ our every prayer. We cannot forget what He has done for us.

Third, we must \_\_\_\_\_ His commandments. Love and gratitude lead us to \_\_\_\_\_ and to observe what He’s taught us, His commandments. Some people think of obedience as slavery, or legalism, or a thoughtless ritual. Actually, obedience from the heart is none of these things. Jesus willingly and lovingly endured the \_\_\_\_\_, taking the form of a servant. Obedience humbles us! But it humbles us for the \_\_\_\_\_. If we wish to be great in God’s eyes, we must learn to \_\_\_\_\_ as a servant. The Lord Jesus said, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to \_\_\_\_\_, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Though He despised the shame of the cross, He endured it for the \_\_\_\_\_ that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

Fourth, we must not allow ourselves to \_\_\_\_\_ stubborn and rebellious. Our deceitful hearts can lead us to \_\_\_\_\_ that we can challenge God, as if we knew more or we knew better than He does. Selfishness and pride can lead to a \_\_\_\_\_ heart and a loss of faith. It’s folly to think we can do \_\_\_\_\_ without God than with God. Proverbs 1:7 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom and instruction.” Again Proverbs 14:15 says, “The naive believes everything, But the \_\_\_\_\_ man considers his steps.” Once more Proverbs 22:3 says, “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive they just go on, and they’re \_\_\_\_\_ for it.” Don’t imagine that you can \_\_\_\_\_ sin, that you can \_\_\_\_\_ against God, and then go unpunished. God sees and God knows!

Instead, \_\_\_\_\_ your heart to be faithful, loving, and obedient. Build up your \_\_\_\_\_ in God and stop doubting! You’re not an accident; God \_\_\_\_\_ you! To believe that you just happened to exist is absurd. The theory of evolution is an unproven \_\_\_\_\_. Every cell in your body \_\_\_\_\_ the wisdom and the intelligence of God. Talk to any microbiologist about the complexity and the incredible resourcefulness of the human \_\_\_\_\_ and know that David was right! He said, “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give \_\_\_\_\_ to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well” (Psalm 139:13-14).

Prepare your heart, and do it by repentance. Repentance is a change of \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to a change in \_\_\_\_\_. We have to \_\_\_\_\_ whether we will live godly lives or ungodly lives. A godly person is one who takes God and His Word seriously. He turns away from sin and turns to righteousness because he \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God

and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and \_\_\_\_\_ your hearts, you double-minded.” A godly person \_\_\_\_\_ his old sinful ways and he \_\_\_\_\_ in doing what is right. God said, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good” (Isaiah 1:16-17).

You prepare your heart by having the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Nothing will cause you to love God more than gratitude. You can't remember the suffering that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ on the cross, shedding His blood, and not be \_\_\_\_\_ that He was willing to sacrifice Himself. “We love, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). This love for Jesus prepares us for the cross that we must bear and the \_\_\_\_\_ we must make. We do so joyfully, knowing that our love and sacrifices \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

We don't want a hard heart; we don't want a rocky heart, or a heart choked with worries and pleasures. We want a good and honest heart. We want the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word to be planted in our hearts, and we want it to bear \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what Jesus explains in Luke 8:11-15.**

In this parable, the seed is the \_\_\_\_\_, and the different kinds of soil describe how people \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. Some have hardened hearts that never let the seed in to germinate. The devil comes along and \_\_\_\_\_ the seed, so the person never believes or is saved. Some hearts are like the rocky soil that doesn't allow the \_\_\_\_\_ to go deep enough to keep the plant alive. These hearts \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord when times get rough. The third kind of heart is like a plant in the middle of a bunch of weeds that \_\_\_\_\_ out the water and nutrients. They cannot produce \_\_\_\_\_ because they have their hearts set on worries, and riches, and pleasures. They have no \_\_\_\_\_ for God in their hearts.

But an honest and good heart is \_\_\_\_\_ from the others. It takes in God's Word \_\_\_\_\_ and holds it fast. It doesn't let the rocks or the weeds keep it from growing and producing the fruit intended. That heart glorifies Jesus and honors the Father. It lovingly \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and blesses others. A good heart knows how to love, how to be kind, how to forgive, how to help, and how to encourage. A good heart has hope, joy, patience, and inner peace.

A person who has a good heart given to the Lord is indeed \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount describes three important characteristics of the blessed person that is associated with the heart. First, He said, “Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_ in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). The idea of being “poor in spirit” means that I am destitute spiritually on my \_\_\_\_\_. I know that I need the Lord; I cannot \_\_\_\_\_ myself by my own strength. The blessed man knows that apart from Christ he can do \_\_\_\_\_ (John 15:5).

Second, the Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). The prepared heart knows that it must get right and stay right with God. We must have the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus to cleanse us from sin; we don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord without hope. We desperately hunger and thirst for righteousness; and we must have it to \_\_\_\_\_.

Third, the Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_ in heart, for they shall see God”



(Matthew 5:8). The pure in heart are not double-minded; they are \_\_\_\_\_ from guilt and sin. They've made the decision to "flee from youthful \_\_\_\_\_ and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). They hunger for purity and they \_\_\_\_\_ it. They will do their best to be pure in heart and mind and body. Do you have a heart that is poor in spirit, that hungers for righteousness and is pure?

A person with a prepared heart is not \_\_\_\_\_ to sacrifice. When it came time to build the \_\_\_\_\_, the Lord God told Moses, "Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise a contribution" (Exodus 25:2). They brought their \_\_\_\_\_ offerings. In fact, they brought much \_\_\_\_\_ than was needed to build the tabernacle and were told to stop bringing any more.

The selfless Macedonians gave to the needy saints in Jerusalem, and while in a great ordeal of affliction and in deep poverty, they did it; and they did it with \_\_\_\_\_! Paul said they gave beyond their ability and begged for the \_\_\_\_\_ of participating in support of the saints. He explained, "they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God" (2 Corinthians 8:5). My friend, have you given yourself to the Lord?

A prepared heart gives of \_\_\_\_\_ generously and cheerfully. Paul taught, "Now this I say, that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). This is true of our \_\_\_\_\_; it's true of our \_\_\_\_\_; and our \_\_\_\_\_. Give of yourself to God. First John 4:19 says, "We love, because He \_\_\_\_\_ loved us."

Why does this matter? How we \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves to God affects how God will \_\_\_\_\_ us in the judgment. We should all \_\_\_\_\_ God's favor and love. **Read David's advice in 1 Chronicles 28:9.** Are you seeking the Lord?

**Read what God said in Ezekiel 18:30-32.** Repentance turns the heart away from the ways of sin to the ways of God. Repentance gives us a new heart, new values, and new priorities.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ one day to be \_\_\_\_\_ for what we have done, good or bad. God doesn't want to condemn us; He wants to \_\_\_\_\_ us. "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 repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Love, faith, and repentance \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts for obedience. When we obey from the heart, we leave an old way of life and begin a new one. "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, you become the slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

We \_\_\_\_\_ when we're baptized into Christ. In baptism, God \_\_\_\_\_ us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ according to Romans 6:3-7 and Colossians 2:12-13. It's the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ that washes away our sins when we're baptized into His death. So, prepare your heart to obey the Lord. Don't wait another day to obey Him.

## Christ Is Our Hope Romans 5:1-5

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

When you belong to Christ, you have the \_\_\_\_\_ hope in the world. With Christ in your life, no one can \_\_\_\_\_ your hope. Through His Word, the Father in heaven opens our eyes to the \_\_\_\_\_. The Scriptures provide us a perspective to see \_\_\_\_\_ than the struggles and troubles in life. They give us hope and promise of God's \_\_\_\_\_. They teach us God's love and His desire to \_\_\_\_\_ us. They give us hope in \_\_\_\_\_ aspect of life.

Several years ago, I took my first commercial airplane flight. I boarded an old plane of a small company on a snowy, cloudy day. They had to de-ice the plane twice before we took off. I was cold; I was alone, and more than a little nervous. I listened closely to the safety speech about seat belts. I admit it was tense! The plane slowly got off the ground. Up we climbed into the clouds. I was not prepared for what happened next. I should have realized the obvious. We passed above the clouds into the brightness of the day. The sun still shines above the clouds.

Clouds move in and out with their rain and shadows. They can temporarily \_\_\_\_\_ the sun, but they cannot \_\_\_\_\_ it from shining. So it is with the Lord! When you're tempted to think all is lost, it's helpful to remember: the Father is still on the \_\_\_\_\_. Remember the blood of Jesus still cleanses from \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible stands as Jesus said, "It is written." The Lord Jesus is still \_\_\_\_\_ again for His people. The gospel still has \_\_\_\_\_ to save, and prayer still reaches the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Heavenly Father.

### **Our reading today is from Romans 5:1-5.**

I love Edward Mote's hymn, because I know it's true. He wrote, "My hope is \_\_\_\_\_ on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not \_\_\_\_\_ the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I \_\_\_\_\_, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand." Someone has said, "Hope is as necessary to the \_\_\_\_\_ as oxygen is to the body." As Christians, we have hope even in the \_\_\_\_\_ times. Hope in Jesus Christ is our confident expectation that God will meet all our \_\_\_\_\_ in this life and bless us with life in heaven. In Christ, we have a wonderful \_\_\_\_\_ hope!

The inspired apostle Paul promised the church in Philippi, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). When we become Christians through our faith, repentance, and baptism, all out of love, we can \_\_\_\_\_ on our Father in heaven washing away our sins with the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. By His grace we can count on being added to His \_\_\_\_\_, His family, becoming His children, and enjoying His favor. Christ is our hope and our \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). The whole world may change

under our noses, but nothing changes the \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus is Lord and the way to heaven.

The early church went through some \_\_\_\_\_ times at the hands of the Roman Emperors. Early Christians \_\_\_\_\_ gladiators, wild beasts, prison, and crucifixion from the hands of people who did not understand them, but all their troubles did not \_\_\_\_\_ the love of God. **Read what the Bible says in Romans 8:31-39.**

The Holy Spirit wrote, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our \_\_\_\_\_, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4). The Scriptures do indeed give us hope; they help us see the problems of life are not \_\_\_\_\_. Others have suffered through the same \_\_\_\_\_ that you and I face and have succeeded with God’s \_\_\_\_\_. If God could help them, He can help us. If God could forgive them, He can forgive us. If God has kept His promises to them, we \_\_\_\_\_ He will keep His promises to us.

The Scriptures teach us of God’s mighty \_\_\_\_\_ bringing Israel out of Egypt, of the crossing of the Red Sea; it teaches us of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the wilderness, and of the falling of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jericho. In his last days, Joshua could proclaim to all Israel, “And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one \_\_\_\_\_ has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; and not one of them has \_\_\_\_\_” (Joshua 23:14). The Scriptures teach us how God liberated Israel through the judges, and how David won over Goliath through the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. When the people \_\_\_\_\_ God, God was with them and blessed them. Hope is our confident expectation, an expectation that God will provide what He \_\_\_\_\_.

Because God has all power, because God loves us with a great love, and because God keeps His promises, we can have \_\_\_\_\_ hope. Jesus is our hope (1 Timothy 1:1)! He is our \_\_\_\_\_ in every aspect of our lives. When people draw \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord, they find peace and meaning in life. They have the ability to \_\_\_\_\_, even in the harshest times.

When life tumbles in, Christians find solace and \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord. God’s prophet Jeremiah watched his world tremble and stumble when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. He wrote, “This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD’S loving-kindnesses indeed never \_\_\_\_\_, For His compassions never \_\_\_\_\_. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I have hope in Him’” (Lamentations 3:21-24).

Oh, every day God gives us life and the things that we \_\_\_\_\_ to sustain life. We breathe God’s air, eat God’s food, and drink God’s water. God is so \_\_\_\_\_ to us. Even when ugly and hurtful things happen to us, God knows how to use those hurtful things for \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible says, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who \_\_\_\_\_ God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). God can use our defeats and disappointments to shape and mold us, so that we become \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Even when God says no to our \_\_\_\_\_, He does so for our best interest. The Bible

records when God said no to an apostle. Paul speaks, “So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a \_\_\_\_\_ was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I pleaded to the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He (God) said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in \_\_\_\_\_.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am \_\_\_\_\_, then I am \_\_\_\_\_” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

God sees our needs even \_\_\_\_\_ we do. He knows what is \_\_\_\_\_ for our character and what will help us spiritually. He gives us great hope by forgiving our \_\_\_\_\_. You might think there is no way God would ever forgive you of all your sins; but if you think that, you’d be mistaken. Before Paul was an apostle of Christ, he was the persecutor, Saul of Tarsus. By inspiration he wrote, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of \_\_\_\_\_ acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16). If the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ could wash away the sins of the worst sinner of all, it’ll also wash away your sins.

You can go to heaven, no matter how many sins you’ve committed, because of the \_\_\_\_\_ of our God and how it is greater than our sins; and the Lord gives us the opportunity and the ability to change. This change is repentance, and repentance is an opportunity \_\_\_\_\_ of hope. You don’t have to be stuck in your \_\_\_\_\_ life. The Lord can help you \_\_\_\_\_ your life around. This ability to change comes from our \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord and His teaching through the Word, the Bible. The more we read and understand about the Lord, the more we’ll \_\_\_\_\_ Him. This love for God in our hearts gives us \_\_\_\_\_ to make lasting changes.

God can break us \_\_\_\_\_ from enslavement to sin. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34). Enslavement to sin \_\_\_\_\_ hope and has filled our prisons and our cemeteries, but the Scripture says more. The Lord also says, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” God can set us free from the enslaving \_\_\_\_\_ that sin has on our lives. Hope means I do not have to be entrapped by my past sin. God can turn my life around and strengthen me to become the person that He desires.

Hope also means that this life is not all there is; that there is life beyond the \_\_\_\_\_ far better than our lives here. The Lord Jesus promised, “Let not your hearts be \_\_\_\_\_. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many \_\_\_\_\_. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am there you may be also” (John 14:1-3). We not only can live eternally, we can live in \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus. In heaven, we can have His blessing and comfort \_\_\_\_\_.

The Scripture says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to

his great mercy, he has caused us to be \_\_\_\_\_ again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's \_\_\_\_\_ are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5). Wouldn't you like to be in a place that is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away? Wouldn't you like to be in a place without disease, death, weeping, or sin? Wouldn't you like to live \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of God and Christ who love you?

Some people think it's impossible to be a Christian and live a \_\_\_\_\_ life, but the Lord Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you \_\_\_\_\_. Take my yoke upon you, and \_\_\_\_\_ from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). You can go to \_\_\_\_\_; you can bear the easy yoke of Christ and bear His light burden. Christianity is a livable faith. But you must take up that yoke and \_\_\_\_\_ Christ with faith and love.

Why does all this matter? It matters, because our hope is not \_\_\_\_\_. It's alive and well! We have hope in Christ because of the \_\_\_\_\_, and we have hope in Christ because of the resurrection. We don't have to \_\_\_\_\_ in sin; we can \_\_\_\_\_ eternally. Christ paid the \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins. We don't serve a dead Lord but a risen one who lives forever! Because He lives, we have the \_\_\_\_\_ of living with Him in heaven forever and ever. There is a big difference between those who belong to Christ and those who do not. Don't you want to belong to Jesus?

Can you imagine how \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ life is without hope? Some scoff at God, and others \_\_\_\_\_ He exists. Those who belong to Christ greatly \_\_\_\_\_ from those who don't. Paul reminded the Ephesian pagans of their past before they became Christians. Paul said, "remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having \_\_\_\_\_ hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). God is no \_\_\_\_\_, as some think. God is your only \_\_\_\_\_ hope. He is your Creator; He sustains your life; and His Son is your only Savior. Without Him, you have no hope! But with Christ, "you are fellow \_\_\_\_\_ with the saints and members of God's household (or family)" (Ephesians 2:19).

As I have said, those who belong to Christ greatly differ from those who don't. That's why it matters whether you are right with the Lord and whether your sins are \_\_\_\_\_. Is your life right with God? Have you been washed in the blood of Christ? You're washed in the blood, when you put your faith in Christ, lovingly repent of your sins, confess the name of the Lord, and are baptized into Christ. In the act of baptism, God washes away your sins and adds you to His family, the church. When you have the hope of God in your life, because He's washed away your sins and added your name to the book of life, you can have confidence to face every trouble and trial life hands you. In Christ, the Father will hear your prayers. With God's book, the Bible, you have the Divine truth. Wouldn't you like to have your sins forgiven today? Why not place your hope in Christ today by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins?

June 4, 2017

## A Friend to Jesus John 21:15-17

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

Everyone needs a friend, and the \_\_\_\_\_ friend you'll ever have is Jesus Christ. Today, we're exploring the friendship we have with Jesus. We go to God's Word, because we \_\_\_\_\_ God is our friend. He loves us fully and freely. His love is \_\_\_\_\_ than we can imagine. Romans 8:32 says, "He who did not spare his own \_\_\_\_\_ but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" Few treasures in life exceed the \_\_\_\_\_ of friendship. Heaven is beautiful, not only because God made it so, but more because of \_\_\_\_\_ will be there. The Lord yearns to be our friend, now and forever. I know you're thankful for His love. Someone said, "A friend is one who knows all about you and \_\_\_\_\_ likes you." The Lord Jesus went to the \_\_\_\_\_ for sinners. He gave His love freely to people who didn't deserve His love. Yes, He knows all our sins and our weaknesses. He knows our thoughts, good and evil. He knows all our secrets. In spite of it all, He created us and gave Jesus to save us from sin. He loved us as sinners, but wanted to provide something better for us than the pleasures of sin.

The more we get to know God, the more we \_\_\_\_\_ Him. The more we love Him, the more we want to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. The more we serve Him, the more abundant our \_\_\_\_\_ become. Friendship with Jesus is the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ of life. Let's explore friendship with the Lord.

**Our reading today comes from John 21:15-17 – Jesus has a conversation with Peter.** Love is not just about \_\_\_\_\_ we love someone, but also \_\_\_\_\_ it out in our lives.

Throughout His days, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ people who wanted to take His life and end His ministry. Matthew chapter two tells how Herod tried to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus as an infant after the wise men inquired about the birth of the king of the Jews. Sadly, Herod did kill \_\_\_\_\_ infants in Bethlehem, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy that Rachel would \_\_\_\_\_ for her children. Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, is buried in Bethlehem; you can visit her tomb even to this day.

The New Testament tells of Jesus coming to His hometown of Nazareth to \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord taught things they didn't wish to \_\_\_\_\_. They had a hard time believing a hometown boy could be the Messiah. Luke 4:28-29 says, "When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with \_\_\_\_\_. And they rose up and they drove Him out of the town and brought Him to the brow of a hill on which their town was built, so that they could \_\_\_\_\_ Him down the cliff." Jesus was able to \_\_\_\_\_, but you can imagine His heartbreak and disappointment over the loss of His lifetime friends at Nazareth.

John chapter eight tells of the experience Jesus had in the \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem as He defended Himself before the Jews. Jesus spoke of Abraham's rejoicing to see His day. John 8: 57-59 says, "So the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet \_\_\_\_\_ years old, and have you seen

Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham was, I \_\_\_\_\_.’ So they picked up \_\_\_\_\_ to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

Again, in chapter ten of John, Jesus revealed to the Jews that He and the Father are \_\_\_\_\_. But this didn’t set well with the Jews. They thought He was blaspheming by \_\_\_\_\_ to be the Son of God. So John 10:31 says, “The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.”

John chapter eleven tells how Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Lazarus from the dead. When the report of this miracle reached the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Pharisees and chief priests, they convened a council. They said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many \_\_\_\_\_. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation” (John 11:47-49). Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said it would be \_\_\_\_\_ for one man to die than for the whole nation. From that day on they made \_\_\_\_\_ to put Jesus to death. Matthew 26:4 says they \_\_\_\_\_ together to arrest Jesus by stealth and to kill Him.

The disciple, Judas Iscariot, whom Jesus named an apostle and entrusted the moneybox, became greedy and was a \_\_\_\_\_. **Read Matthew 26:14-16.** The Bible says, “And he came up to Jesus at once and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ And he \_\_\_\_\_ Him” (Matthew 26:49). Ah, this kiss must have broken the Lord’s \_\_\_\_\_. It was cruel and selfish. There was no \_\_\_\_\_ to be found in that kiss. They bound the hands of Jesus and they led Him away.

During His trials and crucifixion, they humiliated Him; they mocked Him falsely; they accused Him, slapped Him, scourged Him; and they \_\_\_\_\_ Him to carry His own cross. Pontius Pilate found no \_\_\_\_\_ in Him worthy of death, so he tried to find a way to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus by offering to release a prisoner the Jews wanted. The people refused to free Jesus and cried for Barabbas.

When Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus who is called the Christ, the people showed no \_\_\_\_\_ on Jesus. Matthew 27:22-23 reveals that they all said, “‘Let Him be \_\_\_\_\_!’” And Pilate said, ‘Why, what evil has He \_\_\_\_\_?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let Him be crucified!’” Though Pilate \_\_\_\_\_ his hands of this matter in front of the crowd, the people said, “His blood be on us and on our children!” These bloodthirsty people callously called for the \_\_\_\_\_ of an innocent man because they were envious and they were afraid of what Rome might do.

So, they \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus away to Golgotha, and there they crucified Him. While suffering on the cross, His \_\_\_\_\_ showed no mercy. They were not \_\_\_\_\_ just to do away with Him; they had to humiliate and slander Him as well. **Read Matthew 27:39-44.**

Jesus endured terrifying physical \_\_\_\_\_ on the cross; but when the crowds watching added insult to injury, it must have pierced his heart. Jesus could see a \_\_\_\_\_ picture. He went to the cross to \_\_\_\_\_ the very sinners who put Him there. The Lord endured \_\_\_\_\_ against Himself without becoming \_\_\_\_\_ to others.

The Bible says, “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 \_\_\_\_\_ found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He didn't revile in return; when He suffered, He didn't threaten, but He continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He himself bore our \_\_\_\_\_ in His body on the tree, that we might \_\_\_\_\_ to sin and \_\_\_\_\_ to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Jesus blesses us and blesses all, even when people do their \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. He bore our sins, so that we might \_\_\_\_\_ an old life of sin to live to righteousness. The Lord so befriended us that He \_\_\_\_\_ the way for us to have a new and better life, filled with faith, hope, and love. The Lord Jesus does not \_\_\_\_\_ people where He found them. He heals what is \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives. He lifts up those who are down. He \_\_\_\_\_ our sins. He gives us \_\_\_\_\_ that we can leave old habits of which we're ashamed and can have new lives filled with love and righteousness.

No one will ever be a \_\_\_\_\_ friend to you than Jesus Christ. Proverbs 17:17 says that a friend loves at \_\_\_\_\_ times. The Lord loves you for who you are and who you will \_\_\_\_\_. Remember, God \_\_\_\_\_ what we can become with His grace and help. By His grace, He forgives our past, helps us day to day, and guides us to an \_\_\_\_\_ home in the future. His love \_\_\_\_\_ us every step of the way.

Christianity is friendship, friendship with God and with everyone who loves God. The New Testament describes Jesus as the "friend of \_\_\_\_\_" in Matthew 11:19. Jesus called His disciples "friends" (Luke 12:4 and John 15:14). He wants everyone to \_\_\_\_\_ with Him, not \_\_\_\_\_ Him. He wants their friendship to be \_\_\_\_\_, to be strong, and to last forever. He wants \_\_\_\_\_ than to just be an acquaintance or fair-weather friend. He wants people who will \_\_\_\_\_ their faith and loyalty to Him.

The Lord Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone \_\_\_\_\_ his life for his friends" (John 15:13-14). Then He said, "You are my friends if you do what I \_\_\_\_\_ you." Jesus was willing to die for you to save and \_\_\_\_\_ you. Do you really think He would do anything to \_\_\_\_\_ you or to lead you astray? He asks that you befriend him by being \_\_\_\_\_ to His commands. The Lord wants you to obey Him because you love Him. But the Lord is not being overbearing or cruel to us when He asks us to obey Him.

The Lord is not trying to \_\_\_\_\_ us with His commands. This is crucial. Some hear the word command and they get the \_\_\_\_\_ idea. The Lord never gives us a command to \_\_\_\_\_ us, to manipulate us, or to subdue us. God's commandments don't enslave; they set us \_\_\_\_\_. Some people don't like following the \_\_\_\_\_ or being told what to do. Our Father in Heaven is indeed a \_\_\_\_\_ Father to us. He gives us His commands because He knows that His instructions will bless our lives and keep us from \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves.

Every commandment, in the Word, leads to \_\_\_\_\_. Every commandment helps us to \_\_\_\_\_ the pitfalls of life. Every commandment keeps us on the straight and narrow road that \_\_\_\_\_ to an abundant life. Love leads us to do what is \_\_\_\_\_, what is best, and what brings a blessing to all. The commandments of Jesus are designed to \_\_\_\_\_ us how to do just



that! The more we walk in the Lord's way, the more we see how God was loving us \_\_\_\_\_ His commandments. God's commandments are God's \_\_\_\_\_ to us.

In the Old Testament, Moses reminded Israel as they were about to enter the Promised Land, "For what great nation is there that has a god so \_\_\_\_\_ to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we \_\_\_\_\_ upon Him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this \_\_\_\_\_ that I set before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:7-8). If that were true of the Law of Moses, how much more true is it of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament? We have a great God who has blessed us with the \_\_\_\_\_ of righteousness. Oh, what a wonderful \_\_\_\_\_!

The Lord has also blessed us with a spiritual family, the \_\_\_\_\_, who are friends. The little epistle of Third John ends with the words, "The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." The Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ all over this country and into other countries to meet my brothers and sisters in Christ. Because of Christ, they are my brethren and also my friends.

The Bible calls us to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). Friendship means that we \_\_\_\_\_ about others personally, sharing their joys and their pains. We take care of each other. Being a friend to Jesus means being a friend to His \_\_\_\_\_ and all the people who are in it. They are indeed \_\_\_\_\_.

Being a friend to Jesus means that we'll take our \_\_\_\_\_ with Him. We believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We pledge our lives to \_\_\_\_\_ Him and Him alone. We lovingly, respectfully but firmly stand up for His teaching and for His teaching alone and for His morals. To be a friend to the Lord Jesus means we \_\_\_\_\_ Him fully and freely. What He calls sin, we recognize as \_\_\_\_\_. What He calls false, we recognize as \_\_\_\_\_. Friendship with Jesus calls us to serve Him, to preach the gospel, and to sacrifice ourselves. Oh, we do this with love, and joy and thankfulness for the opportunity. Are you a friend of Jesus?

As the Gospel of John closes, the Lord Jesus has his first personal conversation with Peter after the resurrection. Only days before, Peter had denied the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ times. **Read today's text again – John 21:15-17.**

I've wondered if the Lord Jesus might \_\_\_\_\_ that question to you or to me today, "Do you love me?" or "Do you love me more than these?" Friend, how would you answer? Can you say that you have been \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord, that you're attending church faithfully, you're reading your Bible, you're praying daily, and you stand up for what is true and right? Are you a friend to Jesus? To become a friend to Jesus, the Lord said we should \_\_\_\_\_ His commandments. You must \_\_\_\_\_; without faith it is impossible to \_\_\_\_\_ God (Hebrews 11:6). Then you must turn from everything sinful and offensive to Jesus and turn to what is right and pleases the Lord. That's \_\_\_\_\_. Confessing Jesus as the Son of God is also necessary and being \_\_\_\_\_ into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins is also necessary just as the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38.