

Program Transcripts

March 2026



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY®

PROGRAMS

March 2026

Topics subject to change without notice

MARCH 1 – THINGS JESUS WILL NOT DO

While many people focus on all the wonderful good our Lord Jesus did, we should also take a look at the things Jesus will not do. The nature of our Lord Jesus will not allow Him to act outside the will of the Father.

MARCH 8 – GOD’S MORALS DO NOT CHANGE

Our God is a holy, righteous God. He does not take delight in sin and will not compromise His righteous morals. People and culture cannot change God’s moral laws, because God rules over all the earth.

MARCH 15 - CONVERSION

Would you like to change your life and start over again? Many speak about the concept of being born again, but they may not know how people are converted to Christ and have newness of life.

MARCH 22 – THE CHURCH MATTERS

Many people think you can be a good Christian without being a member of any church. For many, organized religion is a thing of the past, but we must always ask what God thinks. How does God see the church?

MARCH 29 – THINGS JESUS DID NOT SAY

Our culture and media often make ideas and concepts popular, but just because some idea is said frequently doesn’t make it true or biblical. This lessons explores some popular ideas that Jesus never said.

Things Jesus Will Not Do

The Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect example to follow. He was a person of conviction, great strength, great love, and integrity. While we often concentrate on the things Jesus did and ask "What would Jesus do?" we should also ask "What would Jesus not do?" The Lord Jesus was devoted to His Father's will and would not give into the devil's temptations or the pressures of the Pharisees. He stood for truth and righteousness. He didn't allow the hypocrisy of the Pharisees or the corruption of the chief priests to keep Him from doing His Father's will. Nor did He give in to the false prophets of His day.

Many people have been searching for the true Christianity and have been disappointed by the showy megachurches, the churches that demand nothing, and the churches filled with human traditions. Now if you are looking for true Christianity, you can find it in the Scriptures. This is the truth at its purest. Don't be fooled by religious groups that have collected centuries of human doctrines and practices. Don't be fooled by religious people who twist Scripture to proclaim false prophecies. Don't be fooled by 16th century doctrines that say you're so depraved that you can't obey the Lord. Oh go back to the Word of God.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 21 to 24. And they discuss how Jesus dealt with very difficult circumstances.

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that Jesus was willing to bear our sins in His body. And Father we're thankful that He would not be mean to those who were mean to Him. Father help us to do kind things to others. To love others, to be forgiving. In Jesus name, Amen.

Studying the life of Jesus Christ in the four gospel accounts will help you not only to have a true picture of Jesus but also understand the Father in heaven. We need to hear His teaching and follow His example. He is Lord and Savior, and He alone has the words of eternal life. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John reveal to us the things Jesus did and taught. Though He only lived to be 33 years old, His life was full of wisdom, love, compassion, and truth. He is the Way, the Life, and the Truth. John 20 verses 30 to 31 says, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." The Scriptures are sufficient to tell us the truth.

What are things that Jesus would never do? First, Jesus loved His Father and came to this earth to do His Father's will. He never refused to do the Father's will. Jesus said to His disciples in John 4:34, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work." Jesus gave Himself entirely to what His Father wanted. He said in John 5 and verse 30, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." On the night that He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, He told His disciples in John 14:33, "but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here."

Now at Gethsemane Jesus' soul was deeply grieved. The Lord said to Peter, James, and John in Matthew 26:38 to 39, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." He would rather suffer and die to fulfill the Father's will so that His blood be shed for our sins than to escape any suffering. He'd rather die than for us to not have any sacrifice.

When the crowd came to arrest the Lord Jesus and take Him to trial, you remember Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, the slave of the high priest. Jesus healed the slave and said to Peter in Matthew 26:52 to 54, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? "How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" Whatever the cost, Jesus did what was right!

Paul urged in Philippians 2:5 to 8, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, (a slave) and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Second, because Jesus loved and taught the truth, He could never condone false teaching. The Sermon on the Mount was given to correct the false teaching of the religious leaders in His day. And He contrasted what they had heard from their leaders and what was actually the will of God. He made it clear: wise men listen and do His words, while foolish men may hear but (they) will not do what He says (Matthew 7:24 to 27). Now false teaching is a salvation issue. When people don't obey the Lord, they build their houses on sand, which leads to their destruction.

Jesus faced the false teaching of the Pharisees at every turn. He said to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:7 to 9, "You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" When people follow men rather than God, their worship is vain and their hearts are not right with God.

On another occasion the Lord said in Matthew 23:23 to 24, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" Many people today face the same fault of accepting whatever they are told by some religious leader while neglecting to study the bible for themselves.

Third, Jesus never abandoned His purpose of saving people. The Lord Jesus said to the Father in John 17:4, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." The Father sent Jesus into the world to save His people from their sins, and Jesus did just that. 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." Jesus wanted to bring us to the Father and forgive our sins. He wanted to transform our lives so that we might be pleasing in God's sight.

Now Jesus is still working on our behalf. You might ask well, "What is Jesus doing for us today?" Well, Hebrews 7:24 to 25 tells us, "but Jesus, because He continues forever, (that is as a high priest) holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God

through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” You see, Jesus is making intercession to the Father for your salvation right now.

Sadly, we are as Christians sinful at times. We wish we didn't sin but we do. And the Lord Jesus knew that we would do that and He's still acting on our behalf. 1 John 2:1 to 2 says, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” The One who sacrificed Himself to atone for our sins is now our intercessor and advocate with the Father, pleading for us. He is pleading for our salvation. You see, He never gave up on us, and we should never, never give up on Him.

Fourth, the Lord Jesus never failed to practice what He taught. The Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 5:44 to 45, “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” After Jesus had been scourged, He had to carry His cross to Golgotha. And Luke 23:33 to 34 says: When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, (that is said it more than once) “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” He prayed for the very people who put nails through His hands and feet. His amazing desire was to save even those who crucified Him.

Sadly, many people are not like Jesus. They don't live up to their claims. Paul said in Titus 1:15 to 16, “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.” We are all weak people and sometimes violate our own convictions, but Jesus could never compromise or ignore what He taught. No one could point to Him as a hypocrite.

Now a hypocrite is someone who pretends to be what he never intends to be. And we mustn't confuse the person who is weak to temptation and hates his weakness from the person who has no intention of living a righteous life. Many people struggle with sin and repent, but the hypocrite celebrates his wickedness in secret and has no intention to repent. For them, having a pure heart of righteousness never enters their minds. They simply don't care. One day they will wish they had cared about the Lord and living a righteous life.

Fifth, though He was the great teacher, Jesus could never convince everyone to follow Him. It must have broken His heart, when people turned away. John 1:11 to 13 says that, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him (that is welcome Him or accept Him). But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Some will follow the Lord, but others will refuse.

Matthew 13:14 to 15 explains: Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says that: “You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ They were so caught up in their human traditions they would not listen to the hope and salvation Jesus brings.

And sometimes people don't like what the Lord teaches today. Oh this is not new! Some abandoned Him for what He taught years ago. Jesus worked many miracles, healing people and casting out demons,

even feeding the crowds and He did it in the area surrounding Capernaum and Bethsaida; but when Jesus said something that people didn't like, they quit on Jesus. John 6:66 to 69 tells us, "After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you want to go away as well?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.'"

Sadly some today have abandoned the only hope of eternal life, because they disagreed with what Jesus teaches. When you decide that you're wiser than the Lord, let me ask, "Who else can give you eternal life? Who else will die for your sins? Who will bring you to God? Who will advocate for you with the Father?" Some say, "I don't like organized religion." Do you realize that Jesus built the church and purchased the church with His own blood? Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church. And if you reject the church, you're rejecting the Savior and your salvation.

Well why does it matter? It matters because of the great sacrifice the Lord Jesus made on the cruel cross and He did it for your sins. So He could save you. It matters because your response to the Lord will determine your eternal destiny, either in heaven or not. Whether you follow the Lord is the most important decision you will ever make. So my friend choose wisely. Choose to follow the Lord and be close to Him.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we're so grateful that You love us and watch over us every day of our lives. We're thankful Father for all the good that You have done. Help us Heavenly Father to follow Your example and not do evil or to forsake You will. Father help us to love others and help us be kind. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Who are you following? The Lord Jesus won't save you against your will. The Lord Jesus won't save you if you ignore or rebel against Him. The Lord Jesus won't save you on the Day of Judgment if you never come to Him in love and obedience in this life. Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." You have the opportunity now to love and serve the Lord, but there is no second chance after this life is over.

If we do love and obey Him to the very end, we can have assurance that our sins are forgiven and we're heirs of eternal life. Once Jesus has made a promise, He will never fail to keep His word. Paul assured us in Corinthians, that is 1 Corinthians 15:1 to 2, "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain." You must, my friend, hold fast to your faith and take your stand on the gospel.

The gospel refers to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And we obey that gospel by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, repenting of our sins, confessing Jesus Christ as the risen Son of God, and by being baptized. Now in baptism we die with Christ, we're buried with Christ, and we're raised up with Him to walk in newness of life (Romans 6 verses 3 to 4). Baptism is our new birth; but baptism is only the beginning! We must hold fast to the very end. Now you may have been baptized years ago but you've quit the Lord. And maybe you've quit worshiping at church. My friend you need to repent and change your ways. And today is the best day to get right with God.



Date: _____

What is the title and main subject of this lesson?

What scriptures are referenced within the lesson?

If this lesson includes any main Bible characters, who are they and what are some of their traits?

Why is this message important?

Are there specific things discussed in this lesson that you would like to work on in your personal life?

How would you share this message with others and with whom would you like to share it?

God's Morals Do Not Change

A recent poll indicates only one-third of adults believe that moral truth is absolute and unaffected by circumstances. Even more shocking is that most American teenagers believe moral truth is relative. Many today think that moral truth is manufactured by our culture and our experiences. And it's not surprising today to hear well, "You can't say that something is true for everybody! How do you know? Just because something is true for you doesn't mean it's true for everybody else." That's people's thoughts. Now such statements reveal not only what the speaker thinks about truth but also about God. So, we ask, "Can God speak authoritatively to all people for all time a message that cannot be changed?" People who ignore the God who created us and presume they can pursue their own morals are actually rebelling against God. They've allowed popular opinions to rule in their lives in the place of God. They've become their own gods.

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 9 to 11. And here Paul makes some very straight statements.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

These are some very straight statement about what was and what could be. We hope that you can also be sanctified by God. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given us an opportunity to change our lives and to come close to You and to be cleaned by the blood of Jesus. Help us always to serve You and to love You and to turn from the things that are evil. In Jesus name, Amen.

When someone says that we can believe whatever we wish about the morality of some behavior, he's actually saying that one moral belief is as good as another. Well, that's popular thinking today; but that belief can't be true. What people think about a behavior never determines whether it's moral or not. Just because someone thinks a behavior is moral doesn't make it morally right in the sight of God. Thieves may for some reason think stealing is a good thing, but you don't want anyone breaking into your home and stealing your valuables, do you. Rapists may regard defiling a woman as pleasurable, but no woman wants to be raped. People who commit sin always downplay the harm sin does, but the victim sees full well how wicked sin really is.

People today have come to believe that love somehow transforms immoral behaviors into moral ones. They believe that love makes wrong into right. God calls fornication, that is sex between two unmarried people sinful; but in the minds of many today "love" makes fornication okay. It doesn't matter that a child could be conceived out of wedlock or that a serious social diseases could be transmitted; love in their minds makes fornication morally okay. It never occurs to them that their sexual desire may lead them to lie to themselves about the morality of sexual sin.

God said in Galatians 6 verses 7 to 8, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." The Lord tells us not to be deceived, because a man tends to lie to himself when he wants something. People get involved with a sin, and all of a sudden that sin isn't so bad. People have a family member that gets involved with some sin, and then all of sudden that sin is now morally okay. Do we honestly believe God has changed His mind? Has God changed His mind or have we lied to ourselves about God? When people think they can

overrule God's morality, aren't they mocking Him? Aren't they showing the greatest kind of disrespect? Don't they misunderstand God?

Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand." God doesn't change, and He especially doesn't change His morals in order to suit mankind or the culture of the day. Moses wrote in Numbers 23:19 that, "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" God said in Malachi 3 and verse 6, "For I the LORD do not change." Psalm 33:11 says, "The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation."

At this point, we need to know why the Lord's counsel stands forever and why we should pay close attention to it. First, the gospel is universal. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." When Paul spoke to the pagan philosophers in Athens in Acts 17:30, he said, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent." Now Jesus commissioned the apostles to appeal to every culture in every land until the end of time. His message was for everyone and applied to everyone. The gospel gives hope to all men of salvation and forgiveness of sin.

Now the gospel was not merely a message for ancient Palestine; it's also a message for postmodern America. And if the blessings of the gospel are available to all men—and they are—then all men are accountable to God. Salvation is necessary because people are lost in sin. If God met the need to save us from sin through Christ, isn't God also the authority that determines what sin is? Why would God send His Son to die on the cross, when people can personally decide that sin really isn't sinful? In actuality, we've deceived ourselves into believing that we can determine right and wrong for ourselves. Believing that we can overrule God with our personal beliefs must be terribly offensive to God.

Second, the words of Jesus reveals His eternal and final authority. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Though men through the centuries have taken great pains to destroy and to suppress the teaching of Jesus, the Bible is still available throughout the world. The moral and religious teaching of Jesus won't disappear, simply because our culture has changed its mind about certain moral issues.

On the night before His death, the Lord promised the apostles in John 16:12 to 13, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." Jesus promised the apostles that they would be guided into all the truth. They wouldn't lack anything. God wouldn't withhold any spiritual or moral truth they needed to bring men to life and godliness. The principles found in the New Testament reveal the complete and sufficient will of God. It's the whole truth, and it doesn't need help. In fact, the Lord takes offense to anyone who would add to His Word or take away from it.

Jude, the brother of the Lord, recognized that the faith, that is, that body of revealed truths that were given to the apostles, was to be given once for all time. He wrote in Jude 3, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Now this faith was delivered only once for all time. The idea that the gospel would need reinventing for the whims of each passing culture is never, never, never contemplated in Scripture. Every culture was to conform to the gospel. The gospel was given to change the sinful things in every culture so that it might conform to the once-for-all delivered will of God. Now the delivered faith is once for all just like the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was once for all to bear our sins (Hebrews 9 and verse 28).

Third, the gospel is unchangeable. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 30:5 to 6, "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar." Revelation 22:18 to 19 warns everyone about the book of Revelation, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." Now if this warning is true about the book of Revelation, wouldn't it also be true about every other book of the New Testament? We have no right to edit, what God says, to suit ourselves.

The book of Galatians describes some Jewish Christians who wanted to bind Jewish laws and traditions on the Gentile converts to Christianity. They were taking things from the old covenant made with Israel at Sinai and expecting the Gentiles to obey both the teaching of Christ and those Jewish laws and traditions. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6 to 8, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." Now God will curse anyone who would dares to change or edit the gospel. And anything that is unchangeable must necessarily be absolute.

Now these three characteristics, derived from an absolute God, make the gospel absolute truth. And those who espouse Christianity have very little to say or offer if the gospel they believe and preach is not settled in heaven. It's a great offense to God to suggest that in dealing with our sins somehow the death of Jesus wasn't enough or its message isn't universal, final and unchangeable.

It's the ultimate confusion to suggest that sin is an ever-changing concept subject to the passing whims of culture. This suggests that Jesus didn't know what sin is or was or what it would be in the future. It means the all-knowing God in heaven really doesn't know as much as we do. It suggests that we can take a vote on what we think and then treat God as if He's subject to what we decide. God is God, and we aren't. He makes the moral rules that will judge us on the last day, and we are accountable to Him. He can't deceive Himself about right and wrong, but we can deceive ourselves. He knows everything, and we'll never be as smart or as wise as He is. So shouldn't we listen to Him, rather than imagine that we can reinvent morality to suit ourselves?

The universal, final, and unchangeable nature of the gospel, revealed by an absolute God, makes it absolute not relative. And if we didn't believe our message is settled in heaven, we'd have nothing to offer. Paul argued that if the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was not true, then our faith is in vain and our preaching is in vain (1 Corinthians 15 verse 14). In verse 17 he said, "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

The death and resurrection of Jesus provide an eternal and universal message. It's a consistent message of forgiveness and life. To say, "People can think differently, but for me personally Jesus died for my sins and rose again on the third day," Well, that's confusing. What people think doesn't change the truth or change the facts. Jesus either died for our sins or He did not. Jesus either arose from the dead bodily or He did not. Saying both options are true at the same time is illogical and contradictory. If both doctrines are true, we can't be certain we are forgiven or we have a home in heaven. Truth matters in our practical lives. If the bodily resurrection of Jesus is both true and false at the same time, we have no hope at the grave of a loved one. If truth is relative to our whims, we must take back everything we believe. We're only fooling ourselves if we think we can sin against God and everything will be okay.

Why does this matter? It matters because God matters, and His teaching will judge you someday, and you matter. When people draw their moral values from their personal desires rather than from God,

they drift away from what's right and moral into what's wrong and immoral. Once people start setting God's moral law aside, they forsake God and rush into immorality. Rhett Butler used a foul word in the movie, *Gone With the Wind*, in 1939; and foul language soon became fashionable and it's everywhere. Today movies and television and internet allow the most foul language imaginable. If the devil if we give him an inch, he'll feel free to take a mile. And if you ignore God's moral law, you could ruin your life and risk your soul. Don't do that. Stay with God.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father help us to give ourselves to You completely. To believe what You taught. To live according to Your will and to love You with all our hearts. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

1 Corinthians 6:9 to 11 still says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." Let's not deceive ourselves. The laws of the land and culture cannot change God's laws. What God says is wrong and will remain wrong as long as this world stands.

Thankfully we have hope in Christ. The sinful pagans at Corinth didn't remain in sin; they repented and changed their lives. While they were in sin, God would not let them inherit the kingdom. But they came to Christ; and the Lord washed them, and made them holy, and regarded them as righteous. There's always hope for people who forsake their sins and turn to the Lord. Rather than saying sin isn't sinful, folks it's better to repent. And rather than thinking that you can change God's mind or His laws, why not be obedient to His will.

Proverbs 3:5 to 6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight." When people forsake the Lord's laws, they do so to their own peril. And instead let's put our trust in Jesus, repent of our sins, confess the Lord Jesus as the Christ, and be baptized into Christ. Let's determine to deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow Him. Let's study the unchangeable Word of God and realize that it stand as written until the end of time.



Date: _____

What is the title and main subject of this lesson?

What scriptures are referenced within the lesson?

If this lesson includes any main Bible characters, who are they and what are some of their traits?

Why is this message important?

Are there specific things discussed in this lesson that you would like to work on in your personal life?

How would you share this message with others and with whom would you like to share it?

Conversion

The Lord Jesus was interested in giving people an opportunity to change and become what God desires them to be. The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 and verse 3, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Born again? To be in Christ means one becomes a new creature! 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Now we can rise above the sin in our past and be reborn. God's grace grants to us repentance, an opportunity to change our hearts and our lives. God's grace forgives us through the blood of Jesus Christ. Romans 6:3 to 4 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

Our reading today is from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 22 to 25 and talks about our obedience to the truth.

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

Oh yes it is the word of God that is that seed that causes us to be born again. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given to us Your good news about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Help us to love You for what You have done and to love that truth and be obedient out of that love. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

God's Word says in Titus 2:11 to 14, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." Now conversion means that we leave the past behind and start living a new life filled with righteousness and good deeds. Our hearts are set on serving God and looking for the return of our Lord Jesus. God's grace matters to us.

Well, how did this come to be? Why do we change and convert? Because the cross of Christ has drawn us to Him, to love and serve Him. We can't look at the cross and remain where we were. We see how He loves us and what He did for us on the cross, and it moves us to stop thinking of worldly ways and to start living for Christ. Paul explained in 2 Corinthians 5:14 to 15, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." Because of Jesus we cannot travel the same way we used to. We belong to the Lord, we hear what He says, and we turn from what we think to what He says.

Conversion is a turning from what is wrong to what is right, from what is bad to what is good, and from what is false to what is true. It's not merely becoming a member of an organization; it's a whole new way of thinking and of life. First, conversion means leaving darkness and coming to the light. According to Acts 26:18, God sent Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." Who you serve matters? You'll

either serve the Lord or serve Satan, who only wants to ruin your life, that is Satan. The Gentiles in Paul's day lived as pagans in darkness, not knowing the truth about God or eternal life. Now knowing God and learning truth, my friend, makes all the difference! It opens our eyes to what's good and what's right and the truth.

Second, conversion means that we leave a state of uncertainty or unbelief about Christ and begin placing our trust in Him. I've spent much of my adult life studying evidences for Christianity. I believe in the prophecies and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament provides many reasons to believe Jesus is the Messiah. The empty tomb, the stone rolled away, the linen wrappings, and the faith of the disciples speak clearly about the truth of the resurrection. The more one reads the gospel story, the more one believes. John 20:30 to 31 observes, "Therefore many other signs (that is miracles) Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Now studying God's Word brings faith, and faith brings life.

Placing our trust in Jesus Christ, based on the evidence from the prophecies and the resurrection, gives us hope and confidence that Jesus will keep His promises. We can have confidence that our sins are truly forgiven, and God hears our prayers, and a home awaits us in heaven. Placing our trust in Jesus reminds us that God means what He says in His promises. God is utterly truthful and trustworthy! Now if we take His promises seriously, we must also take His teaching and His commandments seriously. Truly converted Christians regard Jesus as Lord. Just as they know His grace and forgiveness is real, they also realize that the Day of Judgment is real.

Third, conversion means that we leave the path of sin and begin walking in righteousness. Now this is repentance. It's not merely a turning away from sin; it's the determination to live a whole new life in Christ. Repentance has sorrows over a past life of sin, but repentance also hungers for righteousness. It takes the sacrifice of Jesus seriously enough to change lives. 1 Peter 2:24 reminds us that, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Jesus took our punishment so we might find healing from our sins and the damage they do and a life that's free from all the heartaches that sin brings. Repentance brings healing and correction for those who are broken and hurting. Repentance heals the soul by putting things back into place, and restoring them to the way that they're supposed to be. Repentance is a blessing.

Fourth, conversion means setting our hearts on Christ and the eternal. The Christian thinks beyond this life. He realizes that he's God's child, and the Lord has prepared a home for him in heaven. The Bible in 1 John 3:1 to 3, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

Christians love the Lord and want to please Him. They seek moral and spiritual purity out of love for God, and the world doesn't understand it. Hope in Christ means looking for His return and being prepared, knowing that when He returns we'll live with Him forever. Because of this, they don't think like the world thinks. Romans 12 and verse 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 will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." The wonderful thing about loving God and living according to His will is that it brings about a better life. Each day they transform their lives by renewing their minds on God's word. When they live out the will of God, they prove to the world that that will is good, that it's acceptable and it's perfect. The Lord's way blesses everyone.

Colossians 3:1 to 4 encourages us, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." Now a person who looks at life with heaven on his mind will certainly live differently than the man who is obsessed with this world and its ways. He sees life differently. Sinful desires aren't so appealing, because he realizes the harm they do in this life and in the world to come. So he keeps his life holy, because he wants to lead people to the blessing of God. He wants everyone to come to know the Lord and live righteously.

Now as a practical example of what conversion means, let's look at Ephesians 4:25 to 32. Verse 25 says, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Conversion means I must stop deceiving or pretending. When we came to Christ, we became part of God's family. And so Christians tell the truth because they love each other and belong to each other. Conversion means putting off the old ways and living by a new set of standards.

Verses 26 to 7 say, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." Everyone lives with difficulties and irritants that tempt us to get angry. Conversion means controlling our tempers and our actions; we cannot allow the devil to cause us to take revenge on others. Angry words and actions only bring heartaches and conflicts. The Lord's way brings peace. God says in James 1:19 to 20, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." Are you angry or are you at peace?

Verse 28 says that, "He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need." The words, "no longer," ring loud and clear in this verse. Christians don't spend their lives taking what belongs to others; they live by a work ethic. They earn in order to share with others who have need. They believe the words of the Lord Jesus found in Acts 20 and verse 35 that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Christians are not takers but givers. They live to serve rather than to be served. Do you?

Verse 29 says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." An unwholesome word is bad, evil, or rotten; and it blesses no one. And so Christians must no longer gossip, complain, or speak evil against others. They must cease using filthy language and begin building others up. Their words instead bless others. Colossians 4 and verse 6 says, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how (each of) you should respond to each person." "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances." What kind of words do you speak? The mouth speaks what is in the heart. What's in your heart?

Verses 31 and 32 say, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Bitterness and anger can ruin your attitude, it can ruin your health, and your relationships. The world seems to thrive on revenge, but the Lord has a better way. Because the Lord forgave us, Christians can overcome their anger and can learn how to forgive and to be kind. The ability to forgive is a treasure; Christians love and even pray for their enemies. We don't treat others unkindly, but we treat them with kindness, we treat them with love, we want to be right with them and to be good to them. We treat them kindly, because we are God's children who have come to know His grace and kindness. Are you tenderhearted?

Now this all matters, because the way of the Lord is holy and righteous. It's not merely a good way; the Lord's way is the best way! Jesus said that His followers are the salt of the earth and the light of the

world. Changing hearts and lives to be like Christ impacts the whole world. The Lord's way makes this whole world better! God's ways are kinder and more loving.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your love and thankful that You have done so much good to us and for us. Help us to love people, to care about them and to give ourselves fully and freely to Your will and to bless the lives of others. In Jesus name, Amen.

Conversion means that we enter the kingdom of God. Colossians 1:13 to 14 says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." When the Lord forgives your sins, He adds you to His church according to Acts 2 and verse 47. According to Acts 2:38 the Lord forgives us when we repent and are baptized. In baptism God saves us and adds us to His church.

God's holy word says in Romans 6:17 to 18, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Now no matter how enslaved to sin you were in times past, you don't have to stay there. You can change! When a person obeys from the heart, he can leave his enslavement to sin and become a servant of righteousness. His obedience is to a form or pattern of teaching. Well, what is this pattern?

Well, we find this pattern in this very chapter! Romans 6:3 to 4 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Now in baptism, we die with Christ, we're buried with Christ, and we're raised with Christ. Baptism is the time when God washes away our sins and gives us newness of life. We're born again in baptism! And you can become a Christian and have a new life today! Obey from your heart that form of doctrine.



Date: _____

What is the title and main subject of this lesson?

What scriptures are referenced within the lesson?

If this lesson includes any main Bible characters, who are they and what are some of their traits?

Why is this message important?

Are there specific things discussed in this lesson that you would like to work on in your personal life?

How would you share this message with others and with whom would you like to share it?

The Church Matters

When you mention the word “church,” people respond in a multitude of ways. Some think of the church as optional. Some think of the church as an institution. Some think the church is made up of prejudiced hypocrites. Some think the church needs reinventing in a style more like the culture of our times. Everyone seems to think they know what the church should be like. Even folks who have never read the Bible or have not entered a church door in many years have an opinion about what the church should be.

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

Our reading today is from Acts chapter 20 verses 28 to 32. The apostle Paul is called the elders of the churches, of the church rather of Ephesus to himself and he's talking to them. Not know whether he would see them again or not. He said:

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You through Your son Jesus built a church. And Father that His blood was able to purchase it. And Father we pray that we will always honor the church and our relationship with You and to do what is right and follow Your word. In Jesus name, Amen.

Yes, the Lord Jesus considered the church as necessary. And He wants everyone to be an active member of His church and to worship with the church regularly. The idea that you can be a good Christian and not be a member of the church that He built is not from the heart of God. A close look at the New Testament reveals that the church is quite necessary to our relationship with the Lord.

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

The church belongs to the Lord, because He purchased it. The apostle Paul by inspirations told the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:28, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Now if Jesus loved the church enough to die for it, how can we think so little of it. The church must be precious to the Lord.

The Bible reveals how closely related Christ is to His church in Ephesians 1:22 to 23 it says: “And He put all things in subjection under His (that is the Lord's) feet, and gave Him (Jesus) as head over all

things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Now just as your head is inseparably connected to your body, so Christ is inseparably connected to the church. And just as your body does your will as it's conceived in the brain, so the church does the will of its head, Jesus Christ. The church is the fullness of Christ. And we must never separate Christ from His church or the church from Christ.

The church is extremely precious to the Lord; He considers the church as His bride. The Bible says in Ephesians 5:25 to 27, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” Now Jesus has gone to great lengths to bless and to sanctify the church. He wants her to be radiant with glory. Jesus values the church.

When people slander the church or make it trivial, they really mock and insult Jesus Christ. They're saying Jesus is foolish to sanctify and glorify the church. Now if you wish to make a man angry, just slander his wife. Do you think that the Lord Jesus will look kindly on anyone who slanders His bride?

Now, I want to distinguish the church the Lord Jesus calls His bride from what people today think when they hear the word “church.” What I am speaking about is the Lord's church described in the New Testament. Many religious groups who call themselves “churches” are nothing like the New Testament church. They differ in name, in organization, in doctrine, in mission, and in worship. They're often more a reflection of our culture than of what God intended for the church to be. Some groups have so little spiritual value and content, it's no wonder people see it as unnecessary.

This difference confuses and causes people to stray from the will of God. More than ever, people need to know the truth revealed in God's Word about the church. They need to think clearly about what God desires rather than to be pulled into a false hope by something that calls itself church but differs greatly from the church Jesus built as found, again, in the New Testament. The Scriptures clearly make the church Jesus built a necessity for us to embrace if we wish to please God.

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

And when a person is saved, the Lord adds him to His church. To be in the church means the Lord has saved you. The Scriptures never contemplate a person who is saved as one who hasn't been baptized or a person who is not in the Lord's church. The apostle Paul told the church at Colossae in Colossians 1:13 to 14, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Now just as the Lord grants forgiveness when one repents and is baptized, so the Lord adds the baptized to His church or His kingdom. Now the church is the kingdom of Christ!

When John wrote to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 1, he revealed to them what Christ had done for them. The Bible says in Revelation 1:4 to 6: John to the seven churches that are in Asia: “Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—and He has

made us (the ones released from their sins by His blood) to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Now the book of Revelation addresses people who had come into a kingdom and were priests to God. John taught that "we" Christians "are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (the devil)" (1 John 5:19). There are but two kingdoms: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of His beloved Son. To enter the church is to enter the kingdom of the beloved Son.

The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of the church as a kingdom. The Lord said in Matthew 16:18 to 19, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” Why would the Lord build one thing and give Peter keys to something else? He doesn't do that. You see, the church is the kingdom of God today.

How do I know that? Well, think about this. In Acts 20:28, you'll recall that the Lord Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. Now we have no record anywhere in the New Testament that the blood of Jesus ever purchased anything but the church and the people in it. The twenty-four elders, however, sang this new song to the Lord Jesus in Revelation 5:9 to 10, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” The same blood didn't purchase two different things—the church is that blood-bought kingdom.

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

Ephesians chapter 2 contrasts the difference between people who are in the world and outside of Christ from those who come into Christ and His church. Now the apostle Paul reminds those who came out of paganism at Ephesus of what they had before they became members of the church or the body of Christ. Ephesians 2:12 to 13 says, “remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Later on in verse 19 to 22, Paul describes them after they became Christians. And he said, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” Before they were strangers without hope and without God. Now they're God's family and fellow citizens in God's kingdom the church.

Third, the church is necessary because being in the church means that you are a member of God's family. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:15, “but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household (or the family) of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” In this passage Paul identified the church as God's

household or family. The children of God are in the church. If you claim to be in God's family but say church membership is unnecessary, you're confused and may be deceiving yourself.

The very act that puts one into the family of God is what puts one into the church. Compare these two verses. First, Galatians 3:26 to 7, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Now baptism as an act of faith is what makes us children of God. Second, let's consider 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by (or in) one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." Now this verse says that we're baptized into the body. Well what is the body? It's the church. Ephesians 1:22 to 23 taught us the body of Christ is the church. So baptism is what makes one a child of God and baptism is what puts us into the body of Christ, the church.

When we realize the church is God's family, the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, the saved, and the blood bought institution, body of Christ, then we see why the church is so very important in God's eyes. Now being a member of the Lord's church is not optional. My friend are you a member of the church that Jesus built? Do you belong to Him? Are you one of His? If not I hope you will become one. A member an active member of the body of Christ, the church.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so thankful to be Your children to be in Your kingdom the church, to be Your people that You love and that You care for. And Father we're thankful for the eternal life that You give to us. Help us always Father to value You and to value Your body, Your kingdom, the church. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Many people claim to be members of the church, but they aren't active. They've stopped worshiping at church or supporting it. But their actions, by them, they've actually abandoned the church and in that sense they have abandoned the Lord. The Bible says in Hebrews 10:24 to 25, "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking (that is abandoning completely) 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." The Lord wants us to encourage each other to love and good works and not forsake assembling with other Christians. You can't encourage other Christians to stay faithful if you quit going to church altogether.

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

To become a member of the church and to be saved, believe with all your heart Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; repent of your sins; confess Jesus as the Christ; and be baptized. And when you're baptized the blood of Jesus will wash away your sins and cause you to be added to church. You'll become a child of God, born again into His family. And if you're a member of the church of Christ and have stopped attending, why not come back to the Lord and to the church. Get right with God.



Date: _____

What is the title and main subject of this lesson?

What scriptures are referenced within the lesson?

If this lesson includes any main Bible characters, who are they and what are some of their traits?

Why is this message important?

Are there specific things discussed in this lesson that you would like to work on in your personal life?

How would you share this message with others and with whom would you like to share it?

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Things Jesus Did Not Say

Many who call themselves Christians often draw their beliefs not from Christ or the apostles but from popular beliefs, human traditions, our culture, or just from their own hearts. Many hold to what they think Jesus should have said rather than what He actually did say. Others simply put words into the mouth of the Lord Jesus. And rather than listen to Him, they want to speak for Him. They presume what they think must be the truth. The Lord Jesus said in John 18:37, "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

The Father spoke clearly in Matthew 17 verse 5 about Jesus. He said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" Now Peter lived when Moses was the great lawgiver and Elijah was the great prophet. They were having a discussion with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter wanted to honor Moses and Elijah, but the Father stopped him. Jesus is His beloved Son, and the Father is pleased with Him. So, we need to listen to Him! We must listen to the Lord Jesus. There is no one else like Him.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John chapter 18 verses 33 to 37 and there Jesus discusses the truth.

Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

That's an important discussion in God's holy word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that we can know the truth and that we can love the truth. Help us always Heavenly Father to listen to the voice of Jesus so that we might not be fooled by the thinking of men. Help us Heavenly Father in every way to stay faithful and loving for You. In Jesus name, Amen.

There are many common sayings people assume are true, but they contradict the teaching that comes from our Lord Jesus. Let's take time to examine some of these. First, people often tell us "Follow your heart. Trust your feelings"; but what we think or feel and what is true may be two different things. Jeremiah 17:9 to 10 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? (then he says) 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." God is the final judge of what is true and what is merely imagined or felt.

Genesis 6:5 to 6 says, "Then 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 evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." People thought the best way of life was to do evil. Evil may bring pleasure temporarily, but it destroys us in the end. And people who want to feel good about their evil will think or say almost anything to justify their words and behavior.

I hear people say about a sinful behavior, "well God wants me to be happy! As long as I am happy, then I am pleasing God." Well those who preach a health and wealth gospel and ignore the rest of the Scripture are leading people astray. They imagine salvation is measured by health and wealth. They need to read Luke 16:19 to 31, where a disobedient rich man was lost, while a poor and sick man was saved. People will often say things to justify doing whatever makes them happy, even sinful things. The joy of

Jesus is a righteous joy in knowing that your sins are forgiven and that you have the hope of eternal life. Those who think sinful lifestyles that make them happy are God's desire have deceived themselves.

Galatians 5:19 to 21 says, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which (Paul says) I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Now the heart can lead us into sin. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." Psalm 53 and verse 1 informs us, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God,'" Proverbs 28:26 says, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered." The Lord Jesus doesn't want us to have a heart that leads us to rebel against Him. He wants us to have a pure heart that desires righteousness. Matthew 5 and verse 6 says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Then verse 8 continues, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Let's remember Ecclesiastes 11:9 to 10: "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 judgment for all these things. So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting."

Second, many are told these days "Believe in yourself!" Well, self-confidence in some areas of life is valuable; but one can believe so strongly in oneself that they ignore everyone else, even the Lord. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8 and verse 1 that, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." Rather than trust in ourselves, we are better served to trust the Lord. Proverbs 3:5 to 8 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones."

We should always believe what the Scriptures say. The Scriptures are from God. John 20:30 to 31 says, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Now faith in Christ and His word is what leads us to salvation and eternal life.

Many today have a blended belief system. They have beliefs drawn from many sources. They believe what they think is true, based on culture and on their experiences. They often set aside the Bible and manufacture their own beliefs about God and about morals. So, when people say "Do what you believe is true," think seriously. Do you believe that God means what He says?

Fourth, I hear, "oh God is too loving to condemn anyone." The love of God doesn't rule out His righteousness, His holiness, or His justice. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:24, "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he (that is the Messiah the Son of God) you will die in your sins." Exodus 34: 6 to 7 says, that the Lord keeps "steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty." Romans 6:23 stills says that "the wages of sin is death." Those who will not believe, repent, or obey have no promise from God of eternal salvation.

The Lord's patience with us does have an end. You remember 2 Peter 3 and verse 9 says, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." The Lord promised in John 5:28 to 29, "Do not

marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." Yes judgment.

Fifth, some say God individually predestined each of us to be saved or lost, and we have no choice as to where we will spend eternity. But God allows us to choose whether we'll serve Him. Romans 6:16 to 18 says, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 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, have become slaves of righteousness."

Now the concept of individual predestination rules out the idea of free will, but the Scriptures allows us to choose whom we serve. We can choose to believe or disbelieve; we can choose to repent or not repent; and we can choose to obey or disobey God's word that's clear on that matter from scripture. God's word can answer every false idea; that is why we must read and study what the word of God says.

Sixth, people say, "Once you're saved, you're always saved. They hold that people who were saved at one point can never lose their salvation. Well, Hebrews 3:12 to 13 warns brothers and sisters in Christ who have been saved, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls 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 sin." Believers can stop believing. They can harden their hearts against God and embrace sin. They can abandon God!

Hebrews 10 and verse 26 says to Christians, "For if we (that is we Christians) go on sinning deliberately (willingly, knowingly) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries." Now this should settle the issue. If your religious group teaches once-saved always-saved, they're misleading you and giving you a false promise of salvation.

Peter makes it clear in 2 Peter 2:20 to 21: "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them."

Seventh, some say that "Jesus is just one of many religious teachers, and they all teach the same thing." Those who say such things haven't studied world religions. There is a wide difference between various world religions, and each religion thinks that we should follow only them. Well we follow Jesus because He is indeed unique. He is the only one that's sinless (Hebrews 4:15); He worked true miracles before large crowds; He was the one who rose from the dead according to the prophecies of the Old Testament (according to 1 Corinthians 15:3 to 5 and Psalm 16:10); eyewitnesses saw Him after the resurrection; and He is the prophesied Son of God (Matthew 16:18). My friend His tomb is empty. While the others are filled.

We must believe in Jesus and in His teaching. John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." He alone died for our sins, and Jesus alone can promise eternal salvation with the Father. It does matter what we believe. There are many false religions but only one true religion. John 1:14 says about Jesus, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace (yes grace) and truth." If you want to be a person of the truth, then you must listen to the voice of Jesus.

But do more than listen, follow and obey the Lord. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Just as Jesus bore a cross, so we must bare one too. Now our cross may not be wooden, we may not be crucified, but it does that mean we die to ourselves and we live for Him. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:31 "I die daily." And he explains in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Paul knew that dying to self and living for the Lord would bring great joy and blessing and eternal life. So Paul said in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Yes we have many reasons to rejoice in our loving Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You teach us the truth and that we can determine what is right and what is wrong. What is good and what is bad, what righteous and what is wicked. Help us Heavenly Father to love You and to serve You all our days. In Jesus name, Amen.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 2 verses 1 to 6, "My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever taught the lost, "Pray this prayer with me and you'll be saved." But in the first gospel sermon, Peter said in Acts 2:38, "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. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

Now Peter spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance. What he said is still just as true as the day he said it. Let's follow what is in the Bible rather than listen to preachers who may lead you to believe something Jesus never said. Acts 22:16 tells us how we call upon the name of the Lord. There it says, "Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Baptism is how we call on the name of the Lord. And 1 Peter 3:21 helps us understand that: "Baptism, (it says there) which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him." My friend obey the Lord today.



Date: _____

What is the title and main subject of this lesson?

What scriptures are referenced within the lesson?

If this lesson includes any main Bible characters, who are they and what are some of their traits?

Why is this message important?

Are there specific things discussed in this lesson that you would like to work on in your personal life?

How would you share this message with others and with whom would you like to share it?
