

THE GOSPEL



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SEARCH PROGRAMS

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Topics subject to change without notice

OCTOBER 1 – WE NEED A SAVIOR

In our sinful world filled with selfishness, violence, lust, and greed, we need a Savior from our sins. The world will never change until it understands our great need for a rescue for our own selfish desires.

OCTOBER 8 – JESUS AND HIS DEATH

On a cruel cross, Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself for our sins, so that we might die to sin and live to righteous. Though He was sinless and perfect, God laid upon Him the iniquities of us all so that we might live eternally.

OCTOBER 15 – THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Just as He predicted, the Lord Jesus rose bodily from the grave on the third day. God raised Him up, revealing His power to overcome death. Such power gives us hope that one day our bodies will be raised to meet Him in glory.

OCTOBER 22 – OBEYING THE GOSPEL

The gospel is not merely the telling of an historical event; it is the good news that offers us the opportunity to have forgiveness of sins in this life and eternal life in heaven. This good news, however, challenges us to believe and obey.

OCTOBER 29 – JESUS IS LORD

God raised Jesus from the grave to be Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). He has all authority and reigns over all the earth. One day He is coming again to judge everyone. He will bless His own but will judge those who rejected Him.

We Need a Savior

In this confused and sinful world in which we live, it shouldn't surprise us that we desperately need a Savior. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're looking to Jesus to save us from sin.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The New Testament always speaks to our greatest needs, and we have no need greater than to be saved from sin. The world may tell us what we want to hear, but the Bible will tell us what we most need to hear. God's word isn't trivial; it speaks to the most important matters of life. We need to hear what God has to say. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

"Jesus" is the personal name of our Lord. It's the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Jeshua" or "Joshua." And this name is divinely appointed, "for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:20 to 23 tells how this came about. "But as he (that is Joseph) considered these things (that is Mary being with child), behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

You remember that John the Baptist, pointing to Jesus, said in John 1 verse 29, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus is that lamb sacrificed to atone for our sins. Isaiah 53 and verse 6 says, "the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." Jesus Christ is our hope for salvation!

Our reading today comes the book of Isaiah chapter 53 verses 4 to 6. And they foretell the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.
All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all

Luke 19 verses 1 to 10 tells the story of an outcast man who was lost but found the grace of God. He (that is Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

Well when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, well "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to

the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Now a tax-collector in Israel during the days of Jesus would have been very hated. He did, 't collect taxes for the common good of Israel but for Rome, a pagan nation. Rome gave each city a lump tax quota, and the chief collector had the power of the Roman army to collect the taxes. Well now once the collector met his quota, he could keep everything else he collected. Well many collectors unfairly taxed the Jews and were considered frauds and thieves. The Jews considered tax-collectors as the worst of sinners because they supported Rome. They were often the most hated people in town.

Now Jesus, despite this, showed grace to Zacchaeus. Jesus looked into that tree and saw a person with a soul that needed saving. He showed love to a person that everyone else considered a sinner. He determined to go to that sinner's house, that sinner who was a son of Abraham and could be saved and to help him. Now you may feel that nobody cares about you. Nobody wants you to be saved. Make no mistake. Jesus loves you and wants you to be saved, no matter what your past has been. You can have hope in Christ, even when everyone around you thinks there's no hope for you. The Lord sees not only what we were and what we are, He also sees what we can become. He can forgive our past, change our present, and give us a future of life eternal.

Zacchaeus showed love and care about others because Jesus Christ loved him. “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” You see he cared because Jesus cared for him, and Jesus cares for you. Many people today don't care about God, but you know what, God still cares about them. Zacchaeus not only saw Jesus passing by, but he also saw the incredible grace and love that Jesus shows, even to people that everyone else despises. If you truly knew how much the Lord Jesus cares about you, you would care about Him! Please don't dismiss and miss what the Lord can do for you and what He will do for you, if you open your heart to Him and if you follow Him.

We mustn't forget what a great price was paid for our salvation, a price greater than any of us could pay. The Lord Jesus tells this parable about the kingdom of God in Matthew 18:23 to 25. He says, “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. “When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. “But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.”

Now in today's world, if a laborer earns 20 dollars per hour and he works 2,000 hours per year, he will earn 40,000 dollars per year. Now just one talent equals 800,000 dollars. So, “ten thousand talents” would amount to a massive debt, about 8 billion dollars.

Verses 26 and 7 say, “So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’ “And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.” Now let's consider what this forgiveness of a massive debt means. First, we've sinned greatly against the holy and righteous God. Now I tell you if you sinned only once per day, that's 365 sins each year, 3,650 per decade, and 7,300 times in twenty years. Most folks sin more than once a day, and many people sin multiple times every day. But it only takes one unforgiven sin to cause you to be lost eternally. If Christ Jesus had not endured the punishment for all your sins, you'd have to bear them yourself. Make no mistake, sin and eternal punishment are real. Your need for salvation is no small thing. We have by God's graciousness received a gift that cannot be earned and cannot be repaid. If we could live a hundred lives, we could never repay the debt that we owe the Lord for dying on the cross for us.

Now unless you are forgiven by God, you'll pay the loss for your soul and with your soul. Romans 6:23 simply says, “the wages of sin is death.” And it hadn't changed. Paul wasn't speaking here of

physical death but of spiritual death that is separation from God eternally. Isaiah 59:1 to 2 says, “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” You see sin breaks your fellowship with God, and your friendship with God, so that He hides His face from you and will not hear your prayers.

Second, we can easily see the complete inability ever to repay such a debt. Sin is not a debt that can be paid with money. Silver, gold, and precious jewels don’t cost the Lord anything. He doesn’t need them; He created the world. Our debt can only be paid by Jesus. And what He paid was Himself, His body, and His blood. 1 Peter 1:17 to 19 says that, “If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

Third, God has great mercy and patience with us. The unmerciful servant asked for the king to be patient with him, and the king was more than patient. He was compassionate and willing to forgive all the massive debt. In incredible mercy and love, He withheld His immediate righteous judgment. And when we sin against God, we deserve judgment for our sins. God is a righteous judge. And He’s right to judge the guilty, and we are guilty and stand condemned. But out of love and mercy, God forgives. When God forgives, He forgives all our sins, washes us clean, makes us holy and justified us in His sight.

Titus 3:3 to 7 reminds us, “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” He saved us even though we had committed so many sins against Him, because He was kind and merciful.

We all need to remember what God has done for us, even when we didn’t deserve it. God’s gracious provision of Christ’s death and resurrection paid the debt for our sins and broke the power of sin in our lives. Romans 5:6 to 8 says, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

We were helpless and couldn’t save ourselves. We were ungodly and never thought about God or how our sins had offended Him. The Romans didn’t know God, and many people today don’t know God or even think of Him. Yet, God always has us in His mind and sees every sin we commit. He always knows the good and the bad. God loved us enough to send His Son Jesus to die for our sin while we were still sinning against Him. You see He loved the pagan Romans and still loves people who don’t know Him and sin against Him. Our God, who made us, has an incredible and indescribable love for us. He knew that we needed saving. Oh, I wish every person would realize how much we need the salvation of God.

Fourth, God realizes what a terrible predicament that sin brings to us. Galatians 1:4 says that Jesus “gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.” It’s an important day in our lives when we realize that we need saving. God saves us because He wants something better for us. A life of sin doesn’t bless anybody. And we can have a life that free from sin that will bless us all. 1 Peter 2 and verse 24 says Jesus “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.” Sin destroys people, but God’s grace and forgiveness heals our souls. Because of God’s grace we can be righteous. God wants you to be righteous, to be free from that old sinful life that destroys you.

God forgives us, because He wants to restore a relationship with us that was ruined by sin. God wants more than to restore us in our forgiveness; He wants us to be friends. He wants us to be His children and to live with Him eternally. 2 Corinthians 5:17 to 19 says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

God reconciles us through the blood of Jesus. He reconciles the world to Himself by “not counting their trespasses against them.” I tell you when God saves us, He no longer holds our sins against us. Forgiveness means that God doesn’t count our trespasses against us. The purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation. Relationships with His people are more important to God than trespasses. And to be reconciled to God is the single most important blessing that you will ever possess. Nothing else can open the door to heaven. Nothing else can save you. You must be forgiven to enjoy a new life in Christ. Come to the One who loves you and can save you.

On the internet, you can find the price of gold, the price of silver, where the Dow Jones Industrials stand, and the price of oil per barrel; but the price of your soul is beyond measure. The Lord Jesus asked in Matthew 16:26 and 7, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father (and) with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.” If the blood of Jesus doesn’t cover your sins, God will hold you accountable for them. You need the Savior! You cannot save yourself by yourself!

God’s grace will save us, if we’re willing to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him. “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, (Jesus says) he is the one who will save it” (Luke 9:23 and 4). Now you must trust and love the Lord Jesus. You must turn from sin in repentance and start living a new life that pleases the Lord and does His will. You must confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Romans 10:9 and 10 and Romans 6:3 to 7), teach these things. And if you wish to be saved, you must follow the Lord’s way of salvation found in Scripture. And the book of Acts tells how people heard the word, believed, repented, and were baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Jesus and His Death

Who do you know that needs the saving blood of Jesus Christ to forgive their sins? Do you need the mercy and grace of Jesus?

1 Corinthians 15:1 to 4 says, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Our salvation is of "first importance" to God, and it should be to us. Have you responded to the gospel, and are you saved by the blood of Jesus?

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was no small matter. Revelations 13:8 in many versions calls Jesus the "Lamb that was slain from the foundation (or creation) of the world." The Lord Jesus himself predicted His suffering and death. Matthew 16:21– to 23 says, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Peter loved Jesus and didn't want Him to die, but Peter didn't understand God's purpose in sending Jesus to the cross.

Our reading today comes from Hebrews chapter 10 verses 4 to 7. And it reveals that from the very beginning it was the intention of Jesus Christ to sacrifice His body for our sins.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He (that is Jesus) comes into the world, He says,

"SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED,
BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;
IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO
PLEASURE.

"THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME
(IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME)
TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"

That's the heart of Jesus Christ to do the will of God for us. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so thankful that our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to sacrifice His body for our sins on the cross. Help us Heavenly Father to be devoted to You in every way and to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and spirit. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

I criticized Peter for trying to stand against God's will. You see God had a bigger plan than Peter could see. You know what I find out for myself that God has bigger plans than I can see as well. I criticized Pilate for compromising with the Jews over Jesus, till I remembered that there are times when I have compromised. I became angry at the Sanhedrin for their jealousy and hatred, till I remember my own jealousies and my own ill-will. I grieved at those who hit Him and scourged Him, till I remembered how hurtful my sins must be. I spoke against the ones who mocked Him and wagged their heads, till I remembered my own careless words. I despised the self-righteous priests and Pharisees who thought they had overcome Jesus by sending Him to the cross, until I remembered my own pride. Isaac Watts wrote in 1707, "When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, My richest gains I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride."

Our society has been willing to dismiss God and His teaching about sin. They easily excuse and justify even the worst of sins. While many people play fast and loose with sin, thinking they can set aside God's values in the Bible for worldly values, God grieves. We shouldn't expect, however, that His love means that He will tolerate our sins forever, even if we tolerate it. The prophet Habakkuk said about God in Habakkuk 1:13 that, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor."

Many have forgotten the cross and have forgotten sin. Two postmodern preachers were discussing their evangelistic efforts on television. And one was being congratulated that he did not preach about sin. Well the assumption was that everyone knows that they are in sin and do not need to be told. Then came this reasoning: "When a man is drowning, you don't describe the water to him. You throw him a rope!" and the audience cheered. Well the problem is their response differs from Scripture, and the rope that they throw is a false hope. You see sin destroys our relationship with God, and we need to respond immediately the way God teaches. Of course, the response of the postmodern preacher was for people to stand during the invitation and say a brief, salvation prayer with the preacher. No one ever did that in the New Testament; the people seeking salvation in Acts were told to believe the gospel, repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ, and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of their sins.

The process of salvation is often cast into the drowning man analogy, but analogies are often short-sighted and inadequate. First, sin in the minds of most people isn't what it used to be. Many people are no longer willing to accept God's moral laws. While moral values change in our society, God's morals do not change. Sin takes place when people break God's laws. 1 John 3 and verse 4 says that, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." Or transgression of the law. When people have no respect for God or His teaching and do as they please, they sin against God. They offend Him, and He takes notice. You can't dismiss what says; because one day you'll face Him in judgment.

Many people ignore their need for salvation from sin because they don't know that they're lost or the serious consequences of being lost. Others who don't know Jesus don't want to think about sin, heaven, or hell. Among those who have no religious preference, a Lifeway poll says that 32 percent say sin doesn't exist. The Bible, however, clearly says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3 and verse 23). 1 John 1 and verse 8 says that, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." Verse 10 says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him (that is Jesus) a liar and His word is not in us." Sin is real; and without the forgiveness found in the blood of Jesus, sinners will bear the consequences of their sin.

Now everyone of accountable age has sinned, but many don't take sin seriously. They believe a few sins won't cause them to be lost eternally; but Romans 6 and verse 23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now sin is a big deal to God, even if it's not to us. Why? Sin's a big deal, because sin is an offense to God. The offended see things differently than the offender. The one hurt sees things differently than the one who caused the hurt. The one who breaks the law sees things differently than the One who made the law. All sin is sin against God.

The desire to sin leaves us doing many things that harm ourselves and harm others. We all face these problems, but there is a solution in the grace of God! Titus 3:3 to 7 says, "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness (no), but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

You see Jesus understood our sinful desires and He understood our lost condition. He wanted to save us from sin because He loved us. He wanted something better for us than a sinful life and destiny of wrath. Of being lost. 1 Peter 2:21 to 24 says, "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."

Jesus personally gave His physical body to suffering and death. He gave His head to a crown of thorns, His face to blows and spit, His back to the whip, His hands and feet to nails, and His side to a spear. Jesus wasn't afraid to make a commitment that would lead to His death. He was willing to be nailed down and hung upon a cross until He died. We can hardly imagine the cruel suffering He endured, bearing our sins. God laid upon Him the penalty for your sins, my sins, and all sins because He loved us. Jesus took our place and made atonement for our sins, so that we could live to righteousness and die to sin.

Because of Jesus on the cross, paying the price for our sins, a door of salvation has been opened to cleanse us from sin and to give us a new birth in Christ. This new birth takes place when we put our faith in Christ, turn from sin, and are baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptism takes us to the cross, so that we can be saved. God's word says in Romans 6:3 to 7, "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. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."

In baptism we unite with Christ in His death and resurrection. We are baptized into His death and come into contact with His blood; we are crucified with Him in baptism. We are buried with Him and raised with Him in baptism. And just as Christ had new life when God raised Him from the dead, so God gives us newness of life when He raises us up with Christ. Baptism is no empty ritual; it's how God chose to unite us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Now God works through the cross and through baptism to put the old man of sin to death, so that we may be free to live in righteousness. God saves us and gives us newness of life by the washing of regeneration. The washing that regenerates is baptism!

God actively works on us by uniting us with Christ in His death and resurrection. Colossians 2:12 to 13 explains, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." Baptism is not some meritorious work on our part; it's how we put our faith in the working of God. Because God raised up Jesus after His death on the cross, we know that God can bury and raise us up with Christ in baptism. God buries us with Christ and makes us alive together with Him, having forgiven all our sins. Though we were dead in our transgressions and sins, He made us alive. He saved us and raised us up to walk a new life, just as He did Jesus Christ.

Now one day we'll stand before the great white throne to be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 20:11 to 12 says, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose

presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." Everyone will be there from every nation and from every century before the judgement throne. We can't escape; there is no place we can go.

Now the Lord Jesus said, speaking of His death, in John 12:32, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." Won't you take Jesus' death on the cross seriously? Please don't ignore what He has done for you. Come to Him for salvation and enjoy all the blessings of being a child of God freed from sin. The righteous will enter the joy of God, while the unbelievers and the disobedient will be separated from God and His blessing. Salvation means living with God's blessing forever; being lost means an eternity of anguish without God. Being with God is so much better than being without Him. Living with freedom from guilt and sin provides a beautiful life here and a blessing throughout all eternity. I wouldn't want anyone to miss the opportunity to have their sins forgiven. Come to Jesus Christ. Come to the cross; find forgiveness and find eternal life.

Won't you do that? Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for what Jesus has done for us on the cross. To pay the price for our sins. To atone our sins so that we could be in a right relationship with You Father and with Your son Jesus. Help us to devote ourselves to Your will always. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Some young people came to a wise older man and asked, "When should we repent?" well, the older man answered, "Repent the day before you die." Well the young people asked, "But we don't know when we shall die!" The older man responded, "Then repent today!" If you take God and your sin seriously, then repent. You can ignore sin and act like it doesn't matter, but one day you'll face God and give an account for your sins. Romans 14 and verse 12 says, "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God." 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9 simply says that, "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived."

Hebrews 4 verses 12 to 13 reminds us, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." I tell ya, God will judge us all one day. Christ is the only one able to save you. Why would you ignore the most important decision that you'll ever make?

Today is the best day change your life and follow Christ to a new life of righteousness, freed from the devastating effects of sin. The blood of Christ can cleanse your soul and cleanse your conscience. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ, and the time when the blood of Jesus cleanses you from sin. So respond to Jesus today!

The Resurrection of Christ

The Christian faith rests on the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Did Jesus rise from the dead? Let's look at the evidence!

Let us examine the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Whether Jesus arose matters. If Jesus arose, there is life after death. If Jesus arose, then He fulfilled His prophecies and has proven Himself to be the Son of God. If Jesus arose, then His promises and teaching are true. If Jesus arose and is the Son of God, then He is Lord of all and has authority over your life and mine. If the Lord Jesus arose, then He will one day come again and judge you and me according to His Word.

And since what we are studying today has eternal consequences for our souls, we need to pay close attention. If Jesus arose from the dead, we cannot ignore Him or live as if that was a meaningless act. We cannot hide our heads in the sand any longer. The Bible says in Hebrews 4 verses 12 to 13, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 28 verses 2 to 7. And show and talk about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.'"

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead and that so many people saw Him, touched Him, and believe in Him. Help us to have faith too. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

The Lord Jesus predicted His death and resurrection. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 20:18 to 19, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up." Jesus not only predicted He would be scourged and crucified at the hands of the chief priests and the Gentiles but also that He would rise from the dead the third day. Now only the Son of God could make such specific prediction about His death and resurrection and see its fulfillments just as He predicted.

Now before we speak of a resurrection, we must first examine the evidence that Jesus actually died upon the cross. That Jesus was beaten by the soldiers and then scourged is beyond dispute. All four gospel accounts speak of His scourging. A Roman scourging was not merely a beating. Many men died from scourging. The whip they used lacerated the skin with sharp objects and caused the loss of much blood. The Romans did not limit their stripes to 39 as the Jews did.

Now the purpose of the cross was to kill a person slowly and painfully. While the nails through hands and feet were not of themselves fatal, the physical position a crucified person who was hanging upon a cross, that position created tremendous pressure on the heart and lungs. A person had to pull himself up

to breathe in and out. And the cross gradually wore a person down to where he couldn't breathe. In the case of Jesus, fluid surrounded his heart until it failed.

The reason soldiers would break the legs of a crucified person was to hasten their death. A person with broken legs could not push himself up to breathe and would die quickly. Well they broke the legs of the two thieves; but these experienced soldiers found Jesus was already dead, so they didn't break His bones in fulfillment of Psalm 34:20 that "not a bone of Him shall be broken." Instead, a soldier pierced His side with a spear, "and immediately there came out blood and water" (John 19 and verse 34). Now this flowing of blood and water surely reveals that Jesus was indeed dead. If Jesus had not died from the crucifixion, He could not have survived this spear.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, but Pilate would not release the body until it was determined proof positive that he was dead. Well, the two prepared his body for a burial in a new tomb a short distance from where he was crucified. John reveals that they bound the body in linen wrappings with myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight that is at 12 ounces to the pound. Now this burial process would have sealed Jesus in a mummy-like wrapping with the spices sealing the cloth together. Bound up like this, Jesus—even if He by some remote chance had survived—He couldn't have breathed and lived. Jesus was dead in the tomb.

The Pharisees and priests went to Pilate and requested a guard for the tomb. Matthew 27:62- to 66 records what they said. They said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

Well, Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." And they went and they made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. You see, they were determined to not let anything happen to that tomb. They didn't merely post a couple of guards at the tomb. They made it as secure as they could. Some scholars suggest that there were as many as 28 guards there, and they would have been particularly watchful on the third day, when the threat was greatest. The governor's seal meant that it would be criminal to mess with the tomb.

The Scriptures tell us that the women came very early on the first day of the week to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. Now this was their first opportunity since the Sabbath had passed. They wondered, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" You see, they realized the stone was "extremely large" according to Mark 16:4. Scholars suggest this stone weighed between one and a half and two tons. Well, they knew moving this stone was far beyond their ability and that it would take a number of strong men to move it.

When they arrived they saw an angel had rolled the stone away. The stone sat in an inclined track. And to open the tomb, they had to roll this stone up the incline. John 20 and verse 1 tells us that they took away the stone. That is the angels. Apparently it was picked up and moved out of its track away from the sepulcher. Well, how could a group of disciples tiptoe among some sleeping soldiers, pick up an extremely large stone, and move it away from the tomb? How could they break this official seal, move the stone, and remove the body of Jesus undetected by the soldiers?

Well, when the women reported to the apostles that the tomb was empty, many of the apostles laughed and they doubted the women; but two apostles, Peter and John, wanted to find out for themselves if the tomb was empty. Peter and John ran to the tomb. And John 20:5 to 7 says that they looked into the tomb. They saw the linen wrappings lying there. And they saw "the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself." Well, this is curious. Why

would the disciples, if they stole the body, take the time to loosen the linen wrappings and leave them in the tomb, knowing the guards were just outside?

Whatever you think of this event, you must explain who moved the stone, how the tomb became empty, and who took the linen wrappings from the body of Jesus. The people who examined these events argue without hesitance Jesus arose from the dead. According to Matthew 28:11 to 15, the soldiers reported all these events to the chief priests, who paid the soldiers a large sum of money to lie and promised to keep them out of trouble with the governor. But down deep these soldiers and the chief priests knew the truth.

So, we now ask whether the testimony we have about the empty tomb is true. Is there some way we can test the credibility of the report that we have of the resurrection? First, let's remember that Jesus believed and taught His people to be honest. The Lord hated hypocrisy and deceit. Jesus praised Nathanael for being a person in whom was no deceit (John 1 verse 47). Jesus spoke of the devil as a liar and condemned him in John 8:44. Well, how could His disciples abandon everything that they had been taught and spread a lie throughout Jerusalem? By the way, all the Jews had to do to prove Jesus had not resurrected was to produce the body of Jesus. If the Jews produced the body of Jesus, they could end Christianity. Well, they never tried, because they knew they couldn't. All they could do was bribe the soldiers to lie and punish the disciples.

Now, let's consider the change in the disciples. Before the disciples knew Jesus had been raised on the third day, they hid in an upper room with the door locked for fear of the Jews. They doubted and laughed at the women's testimony. And their hard hearts kept them from believing until Jesus revealed Himself to them. One apostle, Thomas persisted in his disbelief even when the others insisted they had seen the Lord. And Thomas said in John 20:25, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Well, John 20:26 to 29 says that: After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

Jesus appeared to the disciples and proved Himself to them in a variety of ways. Luke 24:36 to 39 says that: He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

Acts 1 and verse 3 tells how Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God." So strong did He convince them that we see, in the apostles, a very different group of men at Pentecost than we see on the day that Jesus arose. At first they disbelieved, hiding themselves as cowards, and doubting the prophecy of Jesus; but Jesus showed Himself alive with many convincing proofs.

At Pentecost they were bold and unrelenting in their preaching of the gospel. They told everyone they were eyewitnesses of the resurrection. They called the people to repent of their sins, because they crucified Jesus whom God for certain had made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2 and verse 36). In Acts chapters 3 through 8 the early disciples endured beatings and imprisonment, but they would not stop preaching Jesus as the Christ resurrected from the dead.

When the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus, Peter and John answered in Acts 4 verses 19 to 20, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." They were convinced that they must obey God and continue preaching the gospel.

In Acts 5, the Council arrested the apostles, flogged them, commanded them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, and then they released them. But the apostles rejoiced "that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5 verses 41 and 2). They later suffered imprisonment, beatings and even death for their faith, but nothing kept them from continuing to preach Jesus as the Christ, risen from the dead. They would rather die than deny the Lord's resurrection.

You see the disciples didn't become rich from their preaching. They suffered much to speak in the name of Jesus. You remember they stoned Stephen in Acts 7, beheaded James the son of Zebedee in Acts 12. Not one of the disciples ever denied the resurrection. They died for preaching it. According to tradition, they were all martyred for their faith except John. Let me ask you would you die for preaching something that you knew was a lie? Would you die for it? The disciples gained no earthly advantage by preaching a resurrected Jesus Christ. Their bold faith assures us that we too can place our faith and confidence in Jesus as the resurrected Lord. And that He will one day come again and will judge us. Yes we can believe that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for the reassurance that is in the word of God. That Jesus has indeed risen from the dead. And we study and as we research the things that are taught there, we pray that our faith may grow stronger because of the evidence. And this is our pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Saul of Tarsus was originally devoted to Judaism and a persecutor of the church, but He saw Christ on the road to Damascus and was baptized three days later to become a Christian. His conversion is especially important in view of his earlier zeal against Christianity. He gave up everything to come to Christ. And what he wrote about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 is the earliest documentary evidence that we have. No one can satisfactorily explain the conversion and later life of the apostle Paul except as he himself explained it. He saw the risen Christ.

Some say Jesus fainted on the cross and revived in the cool of the tomb; but this doesn't explain how Jesus survived the linen wrappings, how He moved the stone, or what frightened the guards. Others say the apostles only imagined they saw Jesus after His resurrection, but this doesn't explain why there were linen wrappings in the empty tomb, how the stone was moved or before the women arrived, how the guards were frightened. Nor does it explain how they were able to touch Jesus.

Though we have barely discussed the evidence of the resurrection, we've seen enough to say confidently with Peter and the apostles that God raised Him from the dead. If He is risen, He is the Son of God and the Lord of all. And according to John 12:48 and Acts 17:31 He will one day judge you and me according to His Word.

To become a Christian believe with all your heart Jesus is the Christ, turn from your sins in repentance, confess Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins as the Bible teaches in Acts 2 and verse 38.

Obeying the Gospel

The gospel is a story of good news but it's also a story that demands a response! In this lesson we're looking at what it means to respond or to obey the gospel.

Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The gospel is a preached message; it is powerful because it comes from God and gives us faith, hope, love, truth, grace, forgiveness, peace, and joy. No other message can lead to eternal life. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

The gospel simply means good news. And it's good news that causes one to rejoice. When the early disciples "preached the gospel," they were announcing the good news of His death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection from the grave. The Old Testament prophesied these things, and they came true in the New Testament. Because God raised His body up with power, the early disciples in Acts 2 could proclaim Him as the Lord and Christ who now sits upon the throne of His kingdom and offers salvation from sin. Now this gospel was a message for all the world.

The gospel is called several things: the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of our salvation, and the gospel of the grace of God. Galatians 2:14 speaks of the truth of the gospel, and Colossians 1:5 says the word of truth is the gospel. Colossians 1:23 speaks of the hope of the gospel. Revelation 14:6 calls it an eternal gospel; you see it remains relevant and powerful to this very day and forever. Thanks be to God.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to Titus chapter 3 verses 4 through 7. Where he talks about how Jesus saves us.

"But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that Jesus was willing to pay the price to die in our stead so that we could be saved. And Father we're thankful that You have washed us, that You have caused us to be born again and that You have given us the hope of eternal life. Father help us to live for You always and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The gospel is not merely a message of love, hope, and salvation; it's a message the Lord Jesus wanted every person to take to heart, to respond to it from the heart, to let that message transform an old way of life into a new way of life. And that new life is an abundant life and eternal life. No message could be so important or so needed. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."

I hear some say that we're saved only by faith, that what we do doesn't really matter. But such ideas they fit well with Reformation theologians, they fit well with those theologians and sometime people who have various ideas. But some of those ideas contradict plain passages of Scriptures. For instance, Hebrews 5 verses 8 and 9 says about Jesus that, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." That means that Jesus saves those who obey Him. Faith alone is not enough. He doesn't make the promise of salvation to those who won't obey the will of the Lord. Obedience is

important and is worth our taking time to study. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Now Jesus is the One who makes the rules, and we can't really change the will of the Father.

John 3 and verse 36 says, in the New American Standard that, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Disobedience to God leads to wrath not salvation. Many people point to the book of Romans, saying, well it teaches that one is saved by faith alone. And they like to quote passages like Romans 10 and verse 9, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." And they add verse 13 to that, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And they believe that if one says a little prayer, that one is saved; but is this all that Romans says? Think about it. Those who quote these verses ought to pay attention to the context of verse 16, which says, "but they have not all obeyed the gospel." Talking about some being lost. You see this is the first time in the New Testament that this phrase, to obey the gospel, is used. But our obedience is spoken about all through the book of Romans.

Paul said in Romans 1 and verse 5 that "he (Paul) received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles." At the very end of the book of Romans chapter 16, verses 25 and 6, Paul said that, he was preaching Jesus Christ, "according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith." Yes, it matters whether we obey the Lord Jesus. In fact Paul emphasized the need for obedience to what was taught in Romans 6:16 to 18:

"Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Now here slaves of sin can change their lives when? When they obey the Lord. They can leave their old way of life and become servants of God. Obeying sin leads to death, but obeying the Lord results in righteousness.

When these pagan Romans decided to leave paganism, and become Christians, that paganism enslaved them to sin, what they did is they obeyed from heart a pattern, a form of teaching, that was given by the Lord. And they were committed to it. Yes, there is a pattern which matters, and we'll describe that pattern in a moment. They committed themselves to this pattern of teaching. And when they obeyed it from the heart, the Lord freed them from sin! And they became servants of righteousness.

Well what is the pattern of teaching? Well, Paul described it earlier in that same chapter Romans 6 verses 1 to 7. And at this time he was reminding them of the old life, which they had left, and the new life they embraced. He wrote, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 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.

"For if we have become united or planted with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."

Now this passage clearly provides the pattern by which God makes saints out of sinners, and children of God out of slaves to sin. Well what is that pattern? They leave sin by dying to sin. You can't be saved till you die to sin, and there is a specific way that happens. When we were baptized into Christ, we were also baptized into His death and crucified with Him on the cross. It was on the cross where He shed His blood, if you recall. And by means of baptism, God buries us with Christ into death. When we're physically baptized a person puts us under or buries us in the water, but at the same time God is burying us with Christ into death. When we're physically baptized, a person rises us up from the, he being raised from the water, that watery grave; but God raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life. The old life is gone, and we're now born again in Christ.

If we have been planted or united with Him in the likeness of His death (that is burial into death), certainly we shall also be united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. And just as God raised up Jesus, so He raises us up! Our old self was crucified with Him for a reason. He did this in order that our body of sin might be brought to nothing that is done away with! We were crucified with Him in order to be freed from sin. And we're no longer slaves of sin. We're now God's people, slaves of righteousness. Romans 6 and verse 11 says to Christians, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." That's the pattern of salvation. Faith in Christ leads to repentance and being baptized.

Colossians 2:12 to 13 adds to this picture: "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, (that is with Jesus) having forgiven us all our transgressions." Now being baptized is not some work that you do to earn salvation. Being baptized is an act of faith in the powerful working of God. In baptism we are passive, and God is active. God is at work on us in baptism. And being baptized means God is making us alive. That God forgives our sins. That God makes us His child. And that takes place in baptism (Galatians 3:26 and 7). In baptism God adds us to the (Acts 2 and verse 41). It's God who buries us with Christ and raises us up with Christ. And He does that in baptism. When I hear someone say well, "You don't have to be baptized to be saved," well I just marvel at that ignorance! And I have to respond, "Why are you interfering with the work of God?" Why?

The need to be baptized has been God's way from the beginning. On the day of Pentecost, when the Lord's church began, people learned they needed to be baptized. And the first gospel message convicted the hearts of those who heard Peter preach about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that's the gospel. And he concluded the sermon by pointing out the guilt of the people present; and they were guilty of crucifying Jesus. And so Peter said in Acts 2 and verse 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus (and then he says) whom you crucified."

Well these guilty people were "pierced to the heart" they wanted to know what to do about their guilt. Peter said to them in Acts 2:38 to 40, "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." And with many other words he solemnly testified and he kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" Repenting and being baptized is what they did, and they were saved. Acts 2:41 says, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls." Repenting and being baptized is what you too must do if you wish to be saved.

Now as you read through the book of Acts, one thing is very, very clear. Their message about Jesus, in the gospel, was urgent. This message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus cries to us and it

awaits an answer. The gospel demands a response. I don't understand how one could hear these precious, life-changing truths and just walk away in apathy as if nothing mattered. When the disciples preached Jesus, they preached with urgency, because they wanted to persuade people to follow Jesus.

And when people responded, they responded immediately. The 3000 people responded that day. The people in the city of Samaria responded immediately. Acts 8 and verse 12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." The Ethiopian Eunuch asked to be baptized, because he wanted to be saved. Saul of Tarsus didn't wait, when Ananias approached him. The Philippian jailor was baptized the same hour of the night he learned about Jesus. You see this urgency in the gospel response is clear when we realize repentance and being baptized are necessary to our forgiveness of sins and our salvation.

Now that obedience to the gospel is necessary to our eternal salvation. And that's very clear not only from this passage but other passages. Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 to 9, "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." And if you refuse to know God or if you refuse to obey the gospel, you put your soul at risk for eternity. Peter reasoned in 1 Peter 4:17 to 18, "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?" Now these passages help us to understand that obeying the gospel is not a trivial matter. We cannot live with God eternally if we refuse to obey. Jesus saves those who obey Him. Have you obeyed?

Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You teach us the things that we most need to know in order to be saved. And Father help us to do Your will. To repent of our sins. Help us to be baptized. Help us to live faithfully for the rest of our lives. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Some ask about Romans 10:13 that, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Have you considered how Paul called upon the name of the Lord. He learned about Jesus on the road to Damascus, but no Scripture says that he was saved at that point. He had to go into Damascus and be told what he must do (Acts 9 verse 6). He spent three days fasting and praying according to (Acts 9 verse 9 and verse 11). But He was not saved though he prayed for three days. You ask, "How do you know that?"

Well, Ananias came to Saul of Tarsus and told him what he must do. And Ananias said in Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." You see being baptized is the means of "calling on the name of the Lord." 1 Peter 3:21 explains how baptism calls on God. It says "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Being baptized is how we call to God for salvation, so that we might have a good conscience. Salvation leads to a good conscience. And when you're baptized into Christ, God washes away those sins, so that you see yourself in a new light. You're born again and free from sin! Why not follow Saul of Tarsus in calling on the name of the Lord by being baptized into Christ? Follow the pattern and obey the gospel according to the Scriptures. Don't settle for anything less.

Jesus Is Lord

Many people think of Jesus as a Savior but forget that He is also Lord. Now all things were created by the Lord Jesus and for Him. What does it mean to call Jesus “Lord?”

The term “Lord” is found about 700 times in the New Testament. When the word “Lord” is used in its common form, it would mean something like “sir.” It was the word that used to speak of a master in contrast to a slave. A Lord owned his slaves and had complete authority over their lives. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term, Yahweh or Jehovah, has been rendered in the English Bible LORD, printed in small capitals. This is the proper name God first revealed to Moses according to Exodus 6 and verse 3. The Septuagint or Greek Old Testament translated this word, in the Greek, with the word kurios, which in English means “Lord.”

The word “Lord” in the New Testament usually refers to Jesus Christ as the One who has all authority. The title “Lord,” when applied to the Messiah, signifies His divine nature. Jesus is our Divine Master, and we are His servants. Our confession as Christians is this: Jesus is Lord!

When Paul lived in a pagan society with many idols, he said in 1 Corinthians 8:5 to 6, “For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” There’s only one Lord of heaven and earth, and that’s Jesus Christ!

Our reading today comes from the book of Luke chapter 5 verses 4 to 8. And we’re gonna be looking when the apostles first began to see the real power of Jesus.

“When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ Simon answered and said, ‘Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, ‘Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man! (oh Lord)’”

Oh that all of us could see the power and understand how great is our Lord Jesus. Let’s pray together. Father we’re thankful for Your love and we’re thankful for these stories that help us to understand the great power and the great ability of Your son Jesus. Help us to be devoted to Him and to do His will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

On the day of Pentecost, the inspired apostle Peter recognized the place Jesus Christ had in prophecy and in the church. Peter quoted David’s prophecy about Jesus being Lord. Peter said in Acts 2:32 to 36, “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we [that is the apostles] are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says (quoting from Psalm 110 verse 1) ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus (and then he says) whom you crucified.”

Now to confirm Jesus as Lord, Peter also quoted from Moses, the inspired Lawgiver in Acts 3: 22 to 23. Moses said, quoting from Deuteronomy 18:18 to 19 that, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.”

Isaiah prophesied of Jesus Christ in Isaiah 9 verses 6 to 7, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." We can't ignore that all of history points to Jesus, both before and after as Lord.

The event that demonstrates Jesus is Lord more than any other is the fact that He arose from the dead. You'll remember the apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem on Sunday night after Jesus arose from the dead, and the Lord Jesus appeared to them. The Bible says in John 20:24 to 28: But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Well after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." Thomas needed convincing, and Jesus gave him the proof. The empty tomb, the faith of the disciples, and the existence of the church all point to the reality of the resurrection.

The resurrection argues decisively that Jesus is indeed the Lord! If Jesus is not the resurrected Lord, you have no hope of life beyond the grave and you will not be raised from the dead yourself. 1 Corinthians 15 verses 17 says, "if Christ has not been raised, (then) your faith is worthless; (and) you are still in your sins." But the evidence for the resurrection of Christ is abundant, and we can have confidence that by His grace and through our loving and obedient faith we can one day go to heaven to live with Him forever.

Now there are people today who doubt whether Jesus is Lord, but there is coming a day when no one will doubt it. The Bible makes it very clear that Jesus is Divine and has always existed in the form of God. Philippians 2:5 to 11 says, "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, 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. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

God recognized Jesus as His Son on more than one occasion. He spoke from Heaven at the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:17 saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." The Father revealed to Peter in Matthew 16:16 that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." And in Matthew 17:1 to 5 Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I

am well-pleased; listen to Him!" Now God distinguished His Son. He was greater than Moses the Lawgiver or Elijah the prophet. And all men are now to listen to Him.

My friend, Jesus is "Lord of all" (Acts 10 verse 36); He has authority over all flesh (John 17:2). The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 to 20 that, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Now He's not one among many prophets or one among many great moral teachers. He is exclusively the Lord of all. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." He is the only way to heaven. The only way to heaven.

The Bible says in Ephesians 1:21 to 23 that God placed Jesus "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Someone asks, "Well where is the headquarters for the church of Christ?" well, the head of the church of Christ is the Lord Jesus Christ, and His headquarters is at the right hand of God.

Colossians 1:16 to 17 says, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." As Christians we don't belong to ourselves; we belong to Him. We're under His authority in the church and in our very lives. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48 that, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."

His control over our lives is complete. He has control even over our bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:19 to 20 says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." From the tip of my head to the soul of my feet, I belong to Christ Jesus. Now some people think they can call all the shots; others believe they can live life according to their own terms. But we belong to Christ. And we are accountable to Him.

We are servants of the Lord. He purchased us with His own blood and saved us from sin. We're not servants because He enslaved us but because we love Him and choose to serve Him. All we are or ever will be comes from the grace of God. And we owe Him our very souls. Jesus has personal authority over your life and mine. We're accountable to Him now and will stand before Him on the day of judgment.

The Lord Jesus asked His disciples in Luke 6 and verse 46, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" To call Jesus "Lord" means obeying whatever He commands. We won't allow sin to come first, or allow other people to come first, or allow our desires to come first. We are His servants and do not belong to ourselves. We'll believe His teachings, keep His commandments, and imitate His ways. Christians don't want to sin because they love Jesus. They want to be kind and to love others because Jesus did. They want to forgive others because Jesus forgave them.

True Christians don't want to live like hypocrites. They want their faith to be genuine. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 to 23 that, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'" We must know the will of our Father and live it out in our lives.

Now you can't live in sin like the world lives and then claim Jesus is your Lord. If He is your Lord, you'll leave wickedness behind and live for Him. 2 Timothy 2:19 says, "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.'" Now if someone looked at your life, would they know that you belong to the Lord Jesus?

Romans 6 and verse 16 says, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, (that) you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" You see everyone is a servant to someone or something. And there're only two choices: you're either serving the Lord or serving something else. Only the Lord can save you and take you to heaven. No master will ever love you, bless you, or help you the way that He will. When you serve the Lord, you bring blessing upon yourself. The Lord's way to heaven is the way. And that's whenever we follow the Lord and do His will. Oh I hope you'll be the kind of person that loves Him so much that's you're willing to do whatever the Lord tells you to do, because you love Him. Because you want to serve Him and because you're grateful for what He's done to you.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have made Your son Jesus our Lord. We're thankful Father that He has loved us so much. And we pray that we may love You and do Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

If Jesus is master and Lord, then stay close to Him and please Him in every way. 2 Corinthians 5 verses 9 to 10 says, "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Now if we love the Master and want to please Him, we'll do what is right and resist what is wrong and sinful.

Christians want the Lord in their hearts and lives. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3 verse 15, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." Have you sanctified or set apart Christ as Lord in your heart? Does He rule your life?

When you love the Lord, you'll gladly receive His Word and obey it. Respond to the grace of God with loving faith and obedience. Commit your life to the Lord Jesus, put your faith in Him. Repent by turning your heart away from sin and follow the Lord. Confess clearly Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Upon your confession of faith, be baptized. Now baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you're baptized, God will wash away your sins (Acts 22 verse 16). He'll give you newness of life (Romans 6 and verse 4). Today, let Jesus be your Lord and Savior! Let Him rule your life, your thoughts, and your words. And save your soul.