

Week 1

In this study, please be sure to fill in all the blanks and answer all the questions in the spaces provided. That will make the study personal and meaningful to you. When you are asked to examine a given scripture, it will usually be printed in the left-hand column.

Unless otherwise indicated, scripture passages are taken from *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

Memory Verse:

2 Corinthians 4:5
We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

INTRODUCTION

Why This Study?

How many Bible studies are commanded in Scripture? I know of only one. At Matthew 28:18-20, as Jesus prepared to leave this earth, he gave his marching orders to his disciples:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Let's look carefully at this scripture. We are to make _____ of all nations. Jesus said we are to teach them "to _____ I have commanded you."

There must be a good reason for Jesus to command this study. It made a huge impact on me. I did this study as a new believer. It transformed my life and I pray it will yours.

I hope that you will consider this study to be so important that you'll want to teach it or help someone else teach it. This can be an important and continuing part of your service to the Lord and to your church throughout your Christian life and a continuing act of obedience to Jesus' command. Let's see why that is so.

Why should we study the teachings and commands of Jesus? Unless there is a compelling reason it might not seem important. Let's first examine who Jesus is and why we should obey him.

State in a sentence or two what Jesus means to you and what your relationship is to him: _____

Jesus is Lord

In our culture people often can't relate well to the statement, "Jesus is Lord." What does it mean that Jesus is "Lord"? I tried to answer that for my grandson when he was very young. I gave him a simple answer, "Think of Jesus as the boss." He understood that.

When Jesus lived on earth, people who had positions of authority were often called "lord." They also had kings in those days. When we speak of the Lordship of Jesus, we remember the scriptures that say he is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is more important than all kings and all lords.

Read Matthew 28:18. What did Jesus say? _____ authority in _____ and _____ has been given to me. Can anyone have more authority or be more important than that? _____.

At John 13:13, Jesus claimed two titles. He said he was _____ and _____.

At Colossians 1:17 Paul describes Jesus to the church at Colossus. He said Jesus is _____ all things. And he is the _____ of the body. . . so that in _____ he might have the _____.

At Philippians 2:9-11, Paul writes about the glory, power, and authority given to Jesus in. He said God exalted Jesus to the _____ place and gave him the name that is _____ every name. He describes Jesus' supremacy – that at the name of Jesus _____ should bow in _____ and on _____ and under the _____. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is _____ to the _____ of God the Father.

When we read about Jesus in the Gospels, we envision him walking along dusty roads in sandals and a long robe with his disciples. He seems to be very much like us, as indeed he was. He became a man with a physical body. Is this the same Jesus we have been reading about, that Paul is saying has the name that is above every name? _____

Although he is the same Jesus, he now sits at the right hand of God the Father with glory and majesty and power.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . .

John 13:13
"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

Colossians 1:17-18
He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Philippians 2:9-11
Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Revelation 1: 12-16

And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.

¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Revelation 5:12

In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise."

Let's look at how the Apostle John saw him in a vision as recorded at Revelation 1:12-16. He described Jesus as someone "_____." He was dressed in a long robe with a _____ around his chest.

His head and hair were _____ like _____. His eyes were like _____. His feet were like _____ glowing in a furnace. His voice was like the sound of _____.

In his right hand he held seven _____. Out of his mouth came a sharp _____.

His face was like the _____, shining in all its _____.

As recorded at Revelation 5:12, John saw Jesus, as the Lamb, receiving great honor in heaven. A hundred million angels sang, "_____ is the _____, who was _____."

Then John saw a vision of the end time. Again we are privileged to envision Jesus as he is now:

Revelation 19:11-16 "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

This is the LORD JESUS CHRIST who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth.

What is the most important statement you have read in today's study? _____

Has your view of the Lord Jesus changed? State how:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus is LORD.**
- **Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth.**
- **God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.**
- **Jesus is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

DAY 2

Acts 2:36

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

1 Corinthians 8:5-6

For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Jesus as LORD

How did Jesus become Lord? Peter told the Jews (see Acts 2:36): _____ has made this Jesus both _____ and _____.

Is there more than one Lord? In Jesus' days there were many "lords," but none with the power and authority of the Lord Jesus. "Lord" is capitalized because Jesus is Lord of lords. At 1 Corinthians 8:5, Paul answered the question saying there is but _____ Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom _____ things came and through whom we _____.

In the days of the early church, Caesar decreed that everyone in the Roman Empire would greet each other with the salutation, "Caesar is Lord."

In a story handed down about a first-century family of Christians, some Roman soldiers met the father and demanded that he greet them with, "Caesar is Lord."

He refused, saying, "Jesus is Lord."

When the father continued to refuse, he and his family were taken to the lions' arena in Rome and told that unless he proclaimed, "Caesar is Lord," one by one his family would be thrown to the lions.

He was horrified, but shook his head and repeated softly, "Jesus is Lord."

The officials angrily ordered his youngest child, a son, to be thrown to the lions. As the family watched in

horror, the boy was torn apart by the lions. Again the father was commanded to proclaim that Caesar is Lord.

Choking back tears, he responded as before, "Jesus is Lord."

One child after another was thrown to the lions. The officials themselves were appalled. They had expected the father to compromise his beliefs and say that Caesar was Lord. They sympathetically told the father that the words weren't important, that even though he didn't believe them, all he had to do was say them and he and the rest of his family would be saved.

With pain and anguish on his face, the man repeated, "I cannot. Jesus is Lord."

The entire family perished that day.

Their death shows that the early church knew Jesus Christ to be "Lord." To the early church, the fact that *Jesus is Lord* was worth dying for. Doubtless, they knew that Jesus said he would acknowledge before the angels of God those who acknowledge him, but he would disown before the angels of God those who disown him before men.

The first-century church was taught by Peter, Paul, and the other apostles. The father, who refused to call Caesar "Lord," might have heard Paul teach, "*There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ.*"

Romans 14:9

For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Matthew 28:18

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me.

Revelation 17:14

They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. .

Why Did Jesus Die and Rise Again?

At Romans 14:9, Paul explains that Jesus died and returned to life so he might be the _____ of both the _____ and the _____.

Does the Lord Jesus Have Power to Overcome?

At Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, "All _____ in heaven and on earth has been given unto _____."

At Revelation 17:14, we read that the enemies of God will make war against Jesus who is called the Lamb. Why will Jesus overcome them? Because he is _____ of lords and _____ of kings and has all authority in heaven and on earth.

Revelation 19:15

Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

Revelation 19:21

The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse. . .

Revelation 19:15 and 21 both describe Jesus as a warrior King. What do they say came out of his mouth? _____. What does 19:15 say he will do with the sword? _____.

How Does God Want Us to See Jesus?

Think of the use of repetition. If you repeat yourself many times, it's because you're trying to make an important point. However, if you mention something once or twice, likely the subject isn't worth repeating.

The same principle applies in Scripture. We might be repetitious out of habit, anger or impatience. But God isn't subject to our frailties.

When God repeats something, would you agree that he has a special purpose in mind? _____

Do you suppose he wants us to understand what he repeats? _____

God gives us multiple opportunities so that we truly will be without excuse if we fail to obey.

As we look at the frequency with which titles of Jesus are used in the New Testament, let's ask ourselves whether God's repetition is intentional.

Lord	618
Christ	543
Son of Man	84
Teacher	42
Son of God	37
King	35
Lamb	32
Savior	15
Prophet	15
Master	11
High Priest	7

Two titles seem to dominate, don't they? They are _____ and _____.

The title "Christ" is extremely important, meaning the "Anointed One". There are said to be over three hundred prophecies about the coming of the Anointed

One in the Old Testament. Jesus alone, fulfilled these prophecies, with the exception of those yet to be fulfilled. The fulfilled prophecies authenticate Scripture as God's word and authenticate Jesus as the prophesied Christ – the Anointed One – who was prophesied to come as King and Lord.

What is the most important statement you've learned today? _____

Has your view of Jesus changed since we began this study? If so, how? _____

Summary Statements

- **God made Jesus Lord.**
- **There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ.**
- **Jesus is Lord of lords, and King of kings.**
- **The title "Lord" is used of Jesus more than any other title.**
- **Jesus died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.**

DAY 3

Romans 10:9

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Quoting Joel 2:32 and Acts 2:21).

Salvation is Through Faith in the LORD Jesus Christ!

Have you heard that all you have to do is accept Jesus as your Savior and you will have eternal life? If so, you may be surprised to find that this is not true. There is no Scripture that either says or implies that.

On the other hand, there are many Scriptures that teach that salvation is attained through faith in Christ Jesus as Lord.

Romans 10:9 says that we must confess with our _____ that _____ and believe in our hearts that _____ raised him from the _____. It says if we do that we will be _____.

Romans 10:13 says that everyone who calls on the _____ of the Lord will be saved. What does it

Acts 16:31

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Colossians 2:6-7

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Acts 20:21

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4:5

For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

mean to call on the "name" of the Lord? In the days in which that was written, to call on the name of a person meant to invoke all that person was, all his attributes, power, talents, and titles. It was all-inclusive of the person.

When Paul and Silas were asked by the Philippian jailer what he must do to be saved (Acts 16:31), what did they say? "_____ in the _____ Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household."

What Did the Apostles Preach About Jesus?

In addition to the foregoing (and hundreds of other mentions of Jesus as Lord), what did the early church preach about Jesus as Lord?

It is common in many churches to hear that we should receive Jesus as our Savior. But there is no Scripture whatsoever that says that. Colossians 2:6 is the only scripture in the New Testament which tells in what way Christ Jesus is to be received: "Just as you received Christ Jesus as _____, continue to live in him . . ."

At Acts 20:21, Paul summarized what he taught during his ministry to the Ephesian elders, saying: ". . . they must turn to _____ in repentance and have faith in our _____ Jesus.

Is the evidence becoming overwhelming that Jesus must be Lord and that that is what the apostles taught? _____

Paul told the Corinthians what the apostles preached: "We do not preach _____, but Jesus Christ as _____, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (See 2 Corinthians 4:5.)

Paul said they preached that they were the Lord Jesus' servants because of who he is. You're beginning to see that believers are indeed his servants or, more specifically, his bond-slaves or bond-servants because of Jesus' power, might, and authority.

Bond-Servant of the Lord

The New Testament writers regarded their relationship to the Lord Jesus and the Father as that of Master and bond-servants. Unfortunately, this distinction is often lost today because most Bible translations translate

the Greek word as "servant." The New American Standard Bible does differentiate. (The verses quoted are from the NAS.)

Bond-servant defined. It was not uncommon, apparently, for an Israelite to be indentured (as a servant or slave) by one of his fellow Israelites for an unpaid debt. However, every seven years all indentured Israelites had to be set free by their Israelite masters, as required by the Law of Moses.

In some instances, genuine affection developed between master and servant. Sometimes the servant was treated well and lived much better than he had before. As a result, some servants did not want to be released from their position as slaves at the end of the seven years.

Slaves that did not want to be released could continue to serve their master, but there were conditions attached to such a decision. If the servant decided to remain as a slave to his master, he would never thereafter be released from his bondage – making him a slave for life. His decision had to be voluntary and public. He had to announce to the elders at the gates of the city that he wished to be his master's bond-servant. Thus, by his own volition, the bond-servant was a voluntary slave for life.

The ceremony for making a slave a bond-servant included having an awl driven through his earlobe into the door post of the master's house. Often the bond-servant was given a gold earring to wear, denoting his special position as bond-servant.

Jesus and Apostles as Bond-Servants

Jesus modeled being a bond-servant. Although he had come from God and was God, Philippians 2:6-7 says he did not regard _____ with God a thing to be grasped, but _____ Himself, taking the form of a _____, being made in the likeness of _____.

Paul spoke of himself as a bond-servant (Romans 1:1) and wrote (see Galatians 1:10), "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a _____ of Christ."

At Colossians 1:7 and 4:7, Paul calls Epaphras and Tychicus fellow bond-servants.

Philippians 2:5-7

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. (NAS)

Romans 1:1

Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, . . .
(See also *Titus 1:1* (NAS)).

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. (NAS)

James 1:1

James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. (NAS)

2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. (NAS)

Jude 1:1

Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. (NAS)

1 Corinthians 6:19

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

1 Corinthians 7:21-22

He who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.²² You were bought at a price.

At 2 Timothy 2:24, Paul lists the qualities a bond-servant of the Lord should possess: kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.

James, Peter, and Jude also called themselves bond-servants. It is apparent that the apostles all regarded themselves as bond-servants. But does that extend to the rest of us? Are all true Christians also bond-servants of the Lord Jesus?

John answered those questions when he began writing the Revelation of Jesus Christ:

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, . . . (NAS)

The book of Revelation was written to reveal God's plans for the end times. When John began his letter, saying "which God gave Him to show to His _____ - _____, he was calling each of us a bond-servant. Of course that only applies to someone who has a saving faith in Jesus as Lord.

A bond-servant is really a bond-slave. Remember that this is a **voluntary** relationship that a person commits to for life. A slave is owned by his master. Now we can understand what Paul is saying at 1 Corinthians 6:19: "You are not _____; you were _____ at a _____. See also 1 Corinthians 7:21-22.

What is the most important statement you have learned from today's study? _____

Summary Statements

- **Salvation is gained by believing in Jesus as Lord.**
- **Set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts.**
- **The early Christians preached Jesus Christ as Lord.**
- **Early Christians received Christ Jesus as Lord.**
- **Christians were bought at a price and are bond-servants of the Lord Jesus.**

DAY 4

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and ²⁰teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Luke 6:46

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Jesus' Command to His Disciples

If we are bond-servants of the Lord Jesus, what would be an expected consequence of that relationship? Shouldn't we, as bond-servants, obey his commands? Shouldn't we eagerly desire to learn his commands so we may please him? Matthew 28:19-20 are the direct command of the Lord Jesus to his disciples that pertain to what they are to do when he goes back to his Father.

What did Jesus say in verse 19 that we are to do?

The primary command was to make disciples of all nations. Then we are to do two things with these disciples: (1) we are to _____ them in the name of the Father and of the _____ and of the Holy Spirit; and (2) teach them to obey _____ I have _____ you.

Jesus' commands to the apostles - to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded - are also commands for us to obey. There are many other commands Jesus gave to his disciples that are the subject of this study.

Obedience to Jesus' Commands is Related to Salvation

This statement might cause some to immediately claim that this is a doctrine of salvation by works. It is not. Ephesians 2:8-10 makes it clear that salvation is not by works. Then how can obedience be related to salvation? Obedience is the evidence of a saving faith. The person who is not obedient does not have a saving faith. The following will illustrate clearly from Scripture the truth of these statements.

Some Refuse to Obey

Some people mouth the words, "Lord, Lord," but make no attempt to obey. I wonder how much of that is done today. Jesus saw it and asked the question you find at Luke 6:46. What were these people calling him? _____, _____. What were these people not doing? _____

Do you know of people today who use the words "Lord, Lord," but do not obey Jesus? _____
Do you obey Jesus? _____

Luke 6:47-49

I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice.⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Hebrews 5:9

He [Jesus] became the source of salvation for all who obey him.

Matthew 7:21

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many sing to Jesus that he is Lord but do not obey him. Isn't that a terrible affront to Jesus? Perhaps many don't understand the importance of the words of Jesus – his teachings and commands.

At Luke 6:47, Jesus gives an example of the importance of his words. In the first part of his illustration, he uses the example of a person who hears his words and _____ into _____. He is like a man building a house who dug down deep and laid the _____ on a _____. When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but _____ shake it.

But beginning in verse 49, Jesus tells of the man who hears his words and _____ put them into practice. He is like a man who built a house on the ground _____ a foundation. When the torrent struck that house, it _____ and its destruction was complete.

The key thought in Jesus' example was both hearing his words and then putting them into practice.

The writer to the Hebrews confirmed this in chapter 5:9. He said _____ became the source of _____ for all who obey him.

Salvation is Only For Those Who Do the Will of God

Have you ever heard the term “gospel-hardened”? It refers to people who attend church faithfully, have heard hundreds – even thousands – of sermons, yet fail to show evidence of a commitment to Christ in their lives. Consider that as you read Matthew 7:21. Who did Jesus say are the only ones who will enter the kingdom of heaven? _____

Again we see that only those who do the will of God will be saved. Do you believe you do the will of God and will enter the kingdom of heaven? _____
If not, why not? _____

What is the most important truth you learned in today's study? _____

Summary Statements

- **Jesus commanded us to teach new disciples to obey everything he commanded.**
- **Jesus is the source of salvation for all who obey him.**
- **Only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven.**
- **We must hear and obey Jesus' words.**

DAY

5

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 7:16

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.

John 8:28

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

John 12:49

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

The Will of God

What is the "Will Of God" That New Testament believers must obey? Matthew 7:21 says only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven. What is the "will of God" that must be obeyed by all those who will enter the kingdom of heaven? Some might say it is all the Scripture; others the 10 Commandments; others the command of Jesus that we are to love one another. In order for us to do the will of God, we must know what the will of God is. Let's see what Jesus said.

At John 6:38, Jesus sets the same standard for himself that Matthew 7:21 sets for us. Jesus said he came down from heaven to _____

Then Jesus began to show us how his teachings and commands relate to the will of God. At John 7:16, what did Jesus say was the origin of his teaching:

Next, at John 8:28 and 12:49, Jesus revealed the extent to which he was obedient to the Father. He said, "I do _____ on my own but _____ just what the Father has taught me. At 12:49 he again said, "the Father who sent me commanded me _____ and _____ to say it. Imagine that! God not only told Jesus what to say but how to say it. Jesus then reaffirmed "_____ I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

Pay close attention to what Jesus said: **all his words are God's words** – none are his own.

John 14:24 These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

John 3:34
For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

John 6:63
The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

Luke 6:47-49
I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

At John 14:24, Jesus gives God ownership of his words: "they _____ to the Father who sent me."

Jesus connected love and obedience when he said,

"The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (John 14:31).

The will of God for New Testament believers is everything that Jesus taught and commanded. Every word Jesus taught and commanded came from God.

The Words of Jesus

Jesus Spoke the Words and Will of God

As one might expect, if Jesus was speaking the words of God that were the will of God, those words are special. The following scriptures demonstrate that point.

At John 3:34, Jesus is the one whom God has sent. Jesus said he speaks the _____ of God.

At John 6:63, Jesus spoke to the quality and power of the words he spoke. "The words I have spoken to you are _____ and they are _____.

At Luke 6:47, we see again the parable Jesus taught about the men who built homes, one on a rock and the other without a foundation. This time we want to especially notice what Jesus said about **his words**. The person who built laying his foundation on rock is the one who _____ my words and puts them into _____. But Jesus said the one who heard his words and did not put them into _____ is like the man whose house collapsed the moment the torrent struck the house. Jesus said its destruction was complete.

Because Jesus spoke the will of God, we know that his words are from God. Indeed, we find that his words are spirit and they are life, they are the words of eternal life, and they are words that when heard and put into practice are like building a house with a foundation on stone that will not be moved when the torrent hits it.

At John 6:68, Simon Peter said to Jesus, "You have the words of _____."

John 6:68

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

We have seen that Jesus did not speak on his own, but spoke only what his Father told him to speak and even how to speak it. Thus, **every word Jesus spoke was the will of God.**

What do you understand when you read the words – "teachings and commands of Jesus?" _____

Teach Them to Obey All That I Have Commanded You

In light of what we've learned, let's look once again at Matthew 28:19-20. Now we can see why Jesus said we are to teach new disciples to obey **everything he commanded**. What Jesus commanded was the will of God. His commands are spirit and they are life. His commands are the words of eternal life.

Let's make sure we understand this. What did Jesus say we are to teach new disciples? Circle the letter of the answers most correct:

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and ²⁰teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

- A. Jesus said to teach them to obey the 10 Commandments.
- B. Jesus said we are to teach them to love one another.
- C. Jesus said we are to teach them to obey everything that he commanded his disciples.
- D. Jesus said we are to teach them to accept him as their personal Savior.
- E. Jesus said that we are to teach new disciples to do the will of God.

Jesus never endorsed all of the 10 Commandments nor did he say we are to teach them to accept him as their personal Savior. The answers are B, C and E. C and E are taught and commanded at Matthew 28:20; and 7:21.

What do you think is included in "everything I have commanded you," as Jesus used that in Matthew 28:20: _____

Christ's Law or Moses' Law?

There is great confusion in the church because people are not certain about what they must obey as New Testament Christians.

The ONLY thing Jesus said we are to obey is the will of God – Jesus' teachings and commands. We've seen that they are one and the same because Jesus' teachings and commands are God's words and are God's will.

Paul often addressed that problem as he did at 1 Corinthians 9:21. Did Paul say he was free from God's law? _____ Of course not. He said he was under _____ law. The teachings and commands of Jesus are Christ's law, exactly what this Bible study is all about.

What is it that Christians are to obey? _____

How important do you think the words of Jesus are?

What is the most important statement or teaching that you learned today? _____

1 Corinthians 9:21

To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

(See Galatians 6:2 for further reference to the law of Christ.)

Summary Statements

- Jesus came to do the will of God.
- Jesus' teaching and commands came from God the Father.
- Jesus did not speak on his own, but only what God the Father said.
- Jesus' words belong to God the Father.
- Jesus spoke the words of God.
- We are commanded to teach new disciples to obey all that Jesus commanded.
- Jesus' teachings and commands are called "Christ's Law."

Week

2

Memory Verse:

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.* (Romans 10:17)

**Note: The King James Version says "word of God" rather than "word of Christ."*

Hebrews 5:9

He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Mark 8:38

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power . . .

FAITH

Faith Comes Through the Word of Christ

At Romans 10:17, we learn that _____ comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the _____ of _____.

The note below the memory verse on the left shows the difference in translations for this verse. The King James Version says "word of God" whereas other translations say "word of Christ."

Thus far, we have learned that Jesus' words are God's words. They are one and the same. The word of God is the word of Christ. The phrase "word of Christ" is important because it distinguishes the word of God as spoken by Jesus from the Old Testament Law given by God to Moses.

Salvation or Punishment Related to Obedience

Salvation is for Those Who Obey Jesus

"[H]e" at Hebrews 5:9 refers to the Lord Jesus. It says that "he became the source of _____ for _____ who _____ him. This passage does say that all who obey him will be saved. Note the reverse: If you're not obedient, you will not be saved. Let's look further.

Mark 8:38 speaks of being _____ of Jesus and his _____. If we're ashamed of the words of Jesus, it is almost certain that we'll not obey them. Shame can arise when faced with the decision to either follow the world's way or the Lord's way. I wouldn't want Jesus to be ashamed of me at the time of judgment, would you?

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 answers our question, i.e., whether a person who is disobedient to the teachings and commands of Jesus can be saved. It minces no words:

"He will _____ those who do not know God and do not _____ the gospel of our Lord Jesus . . . with everlasting destruction."

Some might claim that this will be God disciplining his errant children. Lest anyone think that, verse 9 continues: "They will be punished with _____ destruction and _____ from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power."

Does that sound like discipline? It is not. It is God's judgment of hell for those who reject his Son and his words.

The Holy Spirit and Obedience to Jesus' Commands

The Holy Spirit is Given to Those Who Love and Obey Jesus

We've seen many connections to the teachings and commands of Jesus. We just learned that faith comes from hearing the word of Christ. Now we will see that receiving the Holy Spirit is related to obedience to the teachings and commands of our Lord Jesus.

John 14:15 says that if we truly love the Lord Jesus we _____ obey what he commands. It is not whether we should, could or might obey, but **will** obey. If we do obey, then Jesus will _____ the Father and he will _____ us another Counselor to be with us forever – the _____ of truth.

Acts 5:32 confirms what we just learned. Peter, defending the apostles before the Sanhedrin said, "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the _____, whom God has given to those who _____ him. Yes, the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey the Lord Jesus.

Must we have the Holy Spirit to be saved? Romans 8:9 says that if _____ does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not _____ to Christ. Surely no one would think we can be saved if we do not belong to the Lord Jesus.

Circle the letter of all the statements that are true:
A. We must have the Holy Spirit to belong to Christ.
B. The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Jesus.
C. When we obey (or commit to obey) Jesus out of our love for him, he asks the Father to give us the Holy Spirit.

Yes, they are all true!

John 14:15-17

"If you love me, you will obey what I command.
¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth.

Acts 5:32

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Romans 8:9

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

John 14:21

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 14:23

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

John 14:24

He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power . . .

Loved and Indwelled by Jesus and the Father

Those Who Have His Commands and Obey Them are Loved by Jesus and the Father

At John 14:21 we find that the basic criteria for a person who loves the Lord Jesus is that he _____ Jesus' _____ and obeys them. That person "will be _____ by my _____, and I too will love him and _____ myself to him." There is a special love by the Father and the Lord Jesus for those who have Jesus' commands and obeys them.

John 14:23 speaks of Jesus' _____. Jesus said, "If anyone _____ me, he will obey my teaching. My _____ will love him and we will come to him and _____ our _____ with him.

The Father and the Lord Jesus come to live within us through the indwelling Holy Spirit when we love the Lord Jesus and obey his commands.

No Obedience to Jesus' Teaching = No Love for Jesus

Jesus then stated the reverse at John 14:24. What about the person who does not obey his teaching? Jesus said such a person does _____ him. Then he assures us of the truth of those statements by saying that the _____ they hear are not his own, but rather they belong to the _____ who sent him.

What happens to those who don't obey? Are they still saved but have less rewards in heaven? Absolutely not! They are not saved. At 2 Thessalonians 1:8, God makes very clear that "He will _____ those who do not know God and do not _____ the gospel of our Lord Jesus." We learned earlier that God will not simply discipline them as sons. He will punish them with everlasting destruction and they will be shut out from the presence of the Lord. That describes hell.

Obedience to the Lord Jesus – King of kings and Lord of lords – is a serious matter. Disobey at great risk and eternal consequences. God will not tolerate those who disobey the teachings and commands of Jesus – the "gospel of our Lord Jesus."

What was the most important statement or Scripture you learned today? _____

Summary Statements

- Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ.
- Jesus became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.
- God will punish with eternal destruction those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit is given to those who love and obey Jesus.
- Those who obey Jesus will be loved and indwelt by the Father and the Lord Jesus.
- Those who do not love Jesus will not obey his teaching.

DAY 2

Matthew 11:29-30

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

1 John 5:3

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

Is It Hard or Impossible to Obey?

Many people continue to say it is impossible to obey the teachings and commands of Jesus. What did Jesus say?

At Matthew 11:30, Jesus said "my _____ is easy and my _____ is light." Does that sound like something terribly difficult or impossible? Hardly.

To confirm that, at 1 John 5:3, the Apostle John stated that love for God is to _____ his commands. Then he assured us, "his commands are not _____."

If you think that obeying scripture is hard or impossible, have you asked yourself why? Obeying is a learning process that changes our habits and causes us to behave in a way that honors God, rather than in a way that incurs his wrath.

For example, if I asked you to softly close a door that you've been slamming each time you walk through it, you might not remember what I asked the first time or two. However, as you work at remembering to close the door softly, you begin to form a new habit, thus changing your behavior and obeying my request. In like manner we are to learn and practice obedience.

1 Corinthians 2:16

We have the mind of Christ.

Romans 8:29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

1 John 2:6

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Revelation 21:8

The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

Matthew 12:50

For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

Obedience to Jesus' commands has a spiritual dimension that goes beyond making habits. As Christians we seek to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). As we seek his mind, ALL our habits begin to change. We begin to see things through Jesus' eyes and to understand what pleases and displeases God. When we have the mind of Christ, we try with all our heart, soul, and strength to do his will and please him.

Conformed to the Likeness of Jesus

When we have the mind of Christ, we are conformed to his likeness. At Romans 8:29, Paul said that God _____ a qualification for all those who would be saved, those who would be _____ of the Lord Jesus. Those who are predestined to be conformed to his likeness are the ones God foreknew would be saved. They will be brothers of the Lord Jesus. What was Jesus like? Above all, he was obedient to his Father.

Whenever we see in Scripture that God predestined something to happen, God will make it come to pass. God has predestined a salvation condition that must be satisfied – we cannot be saved unless we are conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

The Apostle John stated the same idea at 1 John 2:6 when he said, "Whoever claims to live in him _____ walk as Jesus did." Note that is not a suggestion but a strong statement that we **must** walk as Jesus did if we really live in our Lord Jesus. At 1 John 2:4, John had just written, "The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Jesus said (at Revelation 21:8) that the place for all _____ is the fiery lake of burning sulphur. Liars are condemned to hell.

Did you notice that being conformed to the likeness of Jesus is strongly related to obedience? At Matthew 12:50, Jesus said, "Whoever _____ the _____ of my Father in heaven is my _____ and sister and mother."

Once again we see reference to being a brother of the Lord Jesus, just as God predestined for those he foreknew will be saved. At Matthew 12:50, we are considered a brother (and sister and mother) of the Lord Jesus if we do (obey) the will of God.

How important do you think obedience is to the true Christian? _____

How We Are Judged and How We Are Rewarded

There is to be a pervasive teaching in western Christianity that anything beyond simple faith in Jesus as Savior is legalism. People have told me that to teach obedience to the teachings and commands of Jesus is to add to his finished work on the cross. Some say it is legalism, or a gospel of faith plus works. Others have stretched this concept so far as to claim that it is legalism to teach that Jesus must be one's Lord in order to be saved. By now you know that all the above are false.

Revelation 20:12

The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Revelation 20:13

. . . each person was judged according to what he had done.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Matthew 16:27

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will **reward each person according to what he has done.**"

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone **according to what he has done.**"

How We are Judged

At Revelation 20:12, it says that books were opened at the great white throne judgment. Then it says the _____ were judged according to what they had _____ as recorded in the books. The books will reveal whether we were obedient or disobedient.

Is this a surprise to you? _____ Are you one who has been taught that Ephesians 2:8-9 means you don't have to do anything? If you do, you would be "working for your salvation". Others claim that those who speak of obedience and/or works associated with salvation are preaching a false gospel. Although I agree with Paul that we are saved by grace, through faith, and not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, we are not to ignore other scriptures that say we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we obey those scriptures.

Ephesians 2:10 says we are God's workmanship, _____ in Christ Jesus to _____, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Imagine! We have been created by God to do good works! How can some claim we are not to do good works when Scripture says that we will be judged according to what we have done? What do you think is true and why? _____

How We are Rewarded

Jesus assured his disciples that he would come and _____ each person _____ to what he had _____. (See Matthew 16:27.)

At Revelation 22:12, Jesus repeated this assurance as he said, "My _____ is with me, and I will give to _____ according to what he has _____."

1 Corinthians 3:8

"The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor."

Titus 2:14

[Jesus]; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (NAS)

Paul wrote (at 1 Corinthians 3:8) that the man who _____ and the man who _____ have one purpose, and _____ will be rewarded according to his _____ labor. Each will be rewarded separately according to his own obedience to his calling.

At Titus 2:14, Paul wrote that Jesus, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless _____ and purify for himself a _____ for his own possession, zealous for good _____." (NAS.) Again we see the requirement for works and obedience.

These scriptures are good news for those who diligently served the Lord and did the works God prepared in advance for him to do. He will be happy to be judged according to what he has done.

Doesn't it make a lot of sense to be judged for what we have done? A person can claim to have faith and to believe, but if his actions don't show it, does he *really* have faith or believe? James called such faith dead. Again we see that God's way is the right way. Judge a man according to what he has done and you will judge him according to what he really believes, not according to what his mouth might say.

The downside, of course, is that if our deeds are evil we will be judged and condemned. That seemed to be the case when Ezekiel was warning the children of Israel:

Ezekiel 24:14 "I the LORD have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. **You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions**, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Even in the Old Testament, God's standard was the same; you will be judged according to your _____ and your _____.

Circle the letter of the one statement that is correct:

- A. We will be judged according to whether we have accepted Jesus as our personal savior.
- B. We will be judged according to our faith.
- C. We will be judged according to what we have done.

The only one that is correct is C.

What is the most important scripture or statement you have learned today? _____

Summary Statements

- **Jesus' yoke is easy and his burden is light.**
- **This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.**
- **We must walk as Jesus did – in obedience to God.**
- **We will be judged and rewarded according to what we have done.**
- **Jesus wants a purified people zealous for good works.**

DAY

3

Matthew 3:1-2

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea²and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Matthew 4:17

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Mark 1:15

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Repent

God defined repentance at Ezekiel 18:30-32:

Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

In preparation for the coming of Jesus, John the Baptist came, preaching and saying _____ for the kingdom of heaven is near. (See Matthew 3:1.)

Likewise, in Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15, when Jesus began to preach, the first thing he called on the people to do was to _____. Is repentance the first step that God demands in coming to a saving faith? _____.

Repentance Required for Salvation!

In this study we will encounter commands that say that we cannot be saved or cannot enter the of Heaven unless we do, or do not do, a certain thing. Some will object to this and say that we are saved through faith and NOTHING else. Although I agree with Paul's assertion at Ephesians 2:8-9 that we are

Luke 13:1-5

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

Acts 3:19-20

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus.

saved by grace, through faith, not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, we cannot ignore other scriptures that say we cannot enter the of God unless those scriptures are obeyed.

A saving faith includes many different requirements. For example, a diamond has many facets yet it remains one diamond. Likewise, there is one saving faith, and, it too, has many facets. As we'll see here, repentance is only one of the facets of a saving faith.

Jesus made repentance a salvation issue during a conversation recorded at Luke 13:1-5. People in the crowd thought that those who perished when the tower fell were worse sinners because they had suffered death. Jesus said they were not, but then said, "unless you _____, you too will all _____."

Was Jesus speaking of a physical death? Of course not! All of his listeners would suffer physical death. He was speaking of a spiritual death for those who would not renounce a life of sin and turn to God.

The First Sermon at Pentecost

In Acts 2, we read that Peter gave the first sermon after the Holy Spirit came upon the gathered disciples. After he explained who Jesus was and what the Jews had done to him, he concluded with, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Peter responded: "_____ and be _____, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of your _____." (Acts 2:38.) Likewise, after healing the beggar outside the temple, Peter preached to the crowd. He told them, "_____, then, and _____ to _____, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, . . ."

Again, note that in both cases the first thing Peter told them to do was to repent.

Luke 15:7

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Acts 17:29

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

Acts 26:19

First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

Revelation 2:4-5

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.
5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Revelation 2:15-16

Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

What Happens in Heaven When a Sinner Repents?

At Luke 15:7, Jesus reveals a scene in heaven that perhaps we do not often think about. Imagine the angelic hosts eagerly anticipating a repentant sinner and breaking out in _____ at his repentance!

Who is to Repent?

At Acts 17:29, Paul, while in Athens, said that in the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he _____ all people _____ to repent.

In his own defense, Paul told King Agrippa, to whom he had gone and what he had preached: "I preached that they should _____ and _____ to God and prove their _____ by their _____. To whom had Paul gone first? To those in _____, then to those in Jerusalem and all Judea, and to the _____ also. (Acts 26:19).

Do Churches and Christians Need to Repent?

When Jesus wrote a letter to the Church at Ephesus, he commanded: "Repent and do the things you did at first." What would happen if they refused to repent? Jesus continued, "If you do not repent, I will come to you and _____ your _____ from its place." Likewise, at Revelation 2:15-16, Jesus wrote to the church at Pergamum where some people held to the teachings of the Nicolaitans (a cult). He told them they must repent or he would come to them and "will fight against them with the _____ of my _____."

What might be the significance of Jesus removing their lampstand from its place or fighting against them with the sword of his mouth? _____

See also Jesus' letters to the other churches at Revelation 2:21-23, 3:3 and 3:19. All required the churches to repent. Do you suspect there are churches today that should repent? If so, why?

Revelation 16:9

They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

Revelation 16:10-11

Men gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

Will God’s Final Wrath Bring Repentance?

The book of Revelation reveals a future time when God’s wrath will be poured out on the earth. Will men finally repent? At Revelation 16:9, it says “they _____ to repent and _____ him.”

At Revelation 16:10 we read about the agony of the people suffering the wrath of God, “but they _____ to repent of what they had done.”

God’s call for repentance remains the same. Are you repenting of your sin and turning again to our Lord Jesus? _____ If not, why not? _____

If you are living in willful sin and have not repented, what is your hope of eternal life according to what you've learned in this study? _____

Reword your answer into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **The first command taught by John was to repent.**
- **The first command given by Jesus was to repent.**
- **Jesus taught, “...unless you repent, you too will all perish.”**
- **Peter preached that the Jews should repent.**
- **Paul taught that God commands all people everywhere to repent.**
- **Wherever Paul went, he preached that the people must repent and prove their repentance by their deeds.**
- **Jesus warned the churches to repent or he would fight against them.**

DAY 4

Romans 8:29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2 Corinthians 13:5

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test?"

Blessed Defined:

Blessed – does not mean "happy," a subjective state which each individual feels. Blessed, as used in the eight Beatitudes, means "to be approved" or "to find approval" – a positive judgment by God on the individual. When God "blesses" us, he approves us and we're aware of it.

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are the rules of living. They describe the inner character of those who are of the of our Lord. We should long to live them out as perfectly as we can, irrespective of the opinion of others. We should "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

The Beatitudes exemplify the life of Jesus Christ here on earth and are presented as a model for us. Consider Romans 8:29: God predestined that all true believers be _____ to the _____ of his Son. If we are conformed to the likeness of Jesus – and all true believers must become like Jesus – we will live out the Beatitudes in our lives.

If we are true believers there will be evidence of each Beatitude in our lives. Although this is not a means by which we should test others, it should be used freely to test ourselves. 2 Corinthians 13:5 instructs us to _____ ourselves to see whether we are in the _____. A useful test is whether or not we are living out the Beatitudes in our lives.

R. Kent Hughes, in his book *Are Evangelicals Born Again*, explains a proper application of the pronoun "theirs" as used in the Beatitudes. He points out that in the Greek it is in the emphatic. For example, in the first Beatitude, it means "theirs" in the sense of **theirs alone**, barring all others who approach God who are not poor in spirit. **None but those** who are "poor in spirit" will enter the kingdom of heaven. As we go through the Beatitudes I will remind you of that emphasis.

The First Beatitude

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs [and theirs alone] is the kingdom of heaven."

In order to understand the Beatitudes, we must rely on the definitions of the words. One of the prominent words is "blessed."

Blessed does not mean happy.
Circle T or F. (See definition on the left.)

Poor Defined:

Kent Hughes says the classical Greek has the meaning "someone who crouches about, wretchedly begging." It denotes a poverty so deep that the person must obtain his living by begging. He is fully dependent on the giving of others. He cannot survive without help from the outside. An excellent translation is "beggarly poor."

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Luke 22:27

But I am among you as one who serves.

John 13:14-15

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

John 7:16

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.

John 8:28

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

In the Beatitudes, when God "blesses" us he _____ us and we will be _____ of the approval of God.

Poor or poverty (see "Poor Defined" on the left) of spirit is foundational to the rest of the Beatitudes. A continual sense of spiritual need is the basis for ongoing spiritual blessing. Kent Hughes emphasizes repeatedly: without poverty of spirit no one enters the kingdom of heaven. The reward of the poor in spirit is the kingdom of heaven – the ultimate reward, the goal of our faith.

The opposite of poor in spirit might be self-sufficiency. If we think we are independently capable and that we can do all that is required for ourselves, we are not poor in spirit.

Poor in spirit denotes a recognition of dependency on God for everything.

God Approved of Jesus

God publicly showed his approval of his Son, the Lord Jesus. After Jesus was baptized, God's voice from heaven said, "This is my _____, whom I _____; with him I am well _____." (See Matt. 3:17).

Likewise, on the mount of transfiguration, God spoke from the cloud and said, "This is my son, whom I _____; with _____ I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (See Matthew 17:5 and Peter's confirmation at 2 Peter 1:17.)

Was Jesus Poor of Spirit?

Scripture testifies that Jesus was poor in spirit. He did not act as a ruler, though he was the son of God. Rather, he described himself when he said, "I am among _____ as one who _____." (Luke 22:27). Imagine the King of kings and Lord of lords washing the _____ of his disciples (John 13:14-15), a task given the lowliest of servants.

Furthermore, Jesus showed his dependence on God his Father by freely saying that nothing he did or said was of himself. Rather, Jesus stated, "My teaching is _____ my _____. It comes from him who _____ me." (John 7:16.)

In a statement that combines both the dependence of poverty of spirit and obedience, Jesus said: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38).

John 12:49

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

John 6:44

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

At John 12:49, Jesus further demonstrated his poverty of spirit by emphasizing that he was acting in response to the commands of his Father. Not only was he told _____ to say but _____ to say it.

We are Wholly Dependent (Beggarly Poor) on God.

At Ephesians 2:8-9, we learn that our salvation is not from _____, it is the _____ of God, not by _____ lest any man should boast.

Christians know that salvation is only possible through our Lord Jesus Christ. But Jesus warned that no one can come to him _____ the Father who sent me _____ him. (See John 6:44.)

The need for utter dependence on the Lord Jesus was driven home when, at John 15:5, Jesus said, "I am the _____; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from _____ you can do nothing." Any branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off, thrown into the fire and burned. We must remain in Jesus.

What was the most important statement you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God: _____

Summary Statements

- **The Beatitudes are the rules of Kingdom living.**
- **The Beatitudes tell of the inner character of those who are Christ-like.**
- **Jesus modeled the Beatitudes in his life.**
- **None but those who are poor in spirit will enter the kingdom of heaven.**
- **Jesus depended solely on his Father to tell him what to do and say.**
- **We cannot come to Jesus unless the Father draws us.**
- **Salvation is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God.**
- **We must remain in Jesus; without him we can do nothing.**

DAY 5

James 4:8-10

Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

A man has his father's wife. ²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

2 Corinthians 12:21

I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

The Second Beatitude

Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they [and they alone] will be comforted."

Blessed – approved by God – are those who mourn. Why would they mourn? What kind of mourning would be desired by God?

At James 4:8-10, the Apostle James tells us the kind of mourning that sinners should have. James describes these people as double-minded and sinners. He says they should grieve, _____ and wail. He tells them to change their laughter to _____ and their joy to gloom. Surely that is the kind of mourning God desires. Those who mourn in that way will surely be _____ by God. (See Matthew 5:4 – the second Beatitude.)

Paul speaks of another form of mourning. The church at Corinth had become worldly. They tolerated and even condoned sin. At 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, Paul rebuked the Corinthian church asking, "Shouldn't you rather have been filled with _____ and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?" Yes, that is what God would desire and the grief he would want us to have.

Another kind of mourning each of us has likely experienced is the grief and sadness for what we did to people, or for what we didn't do for them, before we came to know the saving grace of the Lord Jesus. For a long time the Lord would cause me to replay instances in my life where I could have spoken for the Lord Jesus and helped to change lives, but I didn't know Jesus then. This truly caused great grief and mourning in my heart. This is another kind of mourning that God would endorse and from which he would bring us comfort. He has to me.

There is another type of mourning that Paul felt for some in the Corinthian church. At 2 Corinthians 12:21, he said, "I will be _____ over many who have sinned earlier and have not _____ of the impurity, sexual sin and _____ in which they have indulged."

Many of us who have taught the Scriptures have felt that mourning when we see people who began well and then fall away into sin and self. Surely God will

Luke 15:17-20

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

comfort us if we have done our best to teach them truth.

The Prodigal’s Mourning and the Father’s Comfort

The story of the prodigal son illustrates this parable and shows the cause of mourning. This young man demanded his inheritance. He received it and went into a distant country where he engaged in wild living and lost all his fortune. The point is that he left his home and wholesomeness and went into the world and fell into sin.

More than likely his friends had all abandoned him. He no longer had money and had to work at any job he could find in order to eat – even feeding corn husks to pigs – which was about the lowest job a Jewish boy could ever imagine doing.

It was then that he remembered his father’s home and how well even the servants were treated there. He rehearsed in his mind what he would say to his father and how he would ask to simply be made as one of the servants. He was rehearsing repentance! He wanted to turn from his sinful ways and turn to his father.

From afar, the father saw his son returning home. He ran to him, threw his _____ around him, and _____ him. (See Luke 15:17-20.)

The father restored his son to his place in the family, gave him a robe, and held a feast for him.

God does the same with us. He knows our minds and hearts. When we repent, grieve and mourn because of the sinful lifestyle we’d gone into, he comforts us and welcomes us back into the family. And the angels in heaven rejoice over another sinner who repented.

What is the most significant statement or scripture you encountered about those who mourn? _____

Reword that statement or scripture into a prayer to God: _____

The Third Beatitude

Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they [and they alone] will inherit the earth."

What does it mean to be meek? We don't hear that word very often anymore, but when we do we might liken it with weakness or timidity. Meekness, however, is not that.

English terms do not define this word well. Rather than suggesting weakness, meekness is a character trait that is neither emotionally high nor low, but rather the quiet demeanor of one who has great power. Meekness is often associated with self-control.

Meekness is an equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.

Meekness is first and foremost expressed toward God. It is that spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good, without disputing or resisting. It is a humble heart that does not fight against God.

This was true of Jesus, our model. Having all of the Father's power available to him, he willingly and meekly accepted whatever came. Jesus knew that he would face nothing his Father did not permit. He was willing to accept and do everything his Father asked him to do.

Can true believers today be meek? _____

On what do you base your answer? _____

Of course we *can* be meek and *must* be meek. We are to submit willingly to our master, the Lord Jesus, just as Jesus submitted willingly to his Father.

Whose power is the believer's meekness based on?

Experience tells us that our own power is limited, but we know that the authority and power of Jesus is limitless. We must remain in Jesus – he is the vine and we are the branches. So long as we remain in

Matthew 26:53-56

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" ⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Matthew 21:5 (KJV)

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

Matthew 11:29-30

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Colossians 3:12-13 (KJV)

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; ¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Jesus, we can do much. If we do not remain in him, we can do nothing.

At Matthew 26:53-54, Jesus demonstrated meekness when he faced the mob that would arrest him. He disclosed to his disciples that he had power at his disposal – he could call on his _____ who would put more than twelve _____ of angels at his disposal. Jesus displayed his obedience to his Father and fulfilled the _____.

Thy King Cometh Unto Thee, Meek, . . .

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a colt, Matthew reminded us of the prophecy of Zachariah that said, "Behold, thy _____ cometh unto thee, _____, and sitting upon an ass, and a _____ the foal of an ass." (See Matthew 21:5.)

Again we see a demonstration of Jesus' meekness. As he entered Jerusalem, the people acknowledged him as King for the first time in his ministry. He could have reveled in the adulation of the people; instead he remembered the purpose for which he came: to give his life as a ransom for many, not to be recognized as the King of the Jews.

Learn From Jesus

At Matthew 11:29-30, Jesus invited our trust in him by saying, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for my _____ is easy and my _____ is light." If we trust fully in the Lord Jesus, knowing that whatever he has for us is God's will for us, then we will find Jesus' yoke easy and his burden light.

Meekness is the Mark and Manner of the Citizens of God's Kingdom.

Colossians 3:12-13 lists characteristics that a true Christian should possess. The attributes listed are ones we are to _____. We are _____ and _____ as the elect of God.

We are to be merciful, _____, humble, _____, long-suffering, _____, and forgiving one another.

Who is our model for forgiveness? _____. We are to forgive one another just as Christ forgave us.

1 Peter 3:4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle (meek) and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness (meekness) and respect.

2 Timothy 2:25 (KJV)
In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

James 1:21 (KJV)
Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

A Meek Spirit is of Great Worth in God's Sight

The King James Version properly translates the word "meek". Most translations, however, say it means "gentle". We've seen that "meekness" is a much stronger word than "gentle". Meekness is a show of restraint though possessing great power.

At 1 Peter 3:4, Peter talks about our inner self – an unfading _____ of a _____ and quiet spirit, which is of great _____ in God's sight. Peter tells us at 1 Peter 3:15 how we are to regard Christ Jesus: In your _____ set apart Christ as _____. Then he tells us we should always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the _____ that you have. How are we to give this answer? With _____ and _____.

We now begin to see that we should always be meek. Paul (at 2 Timothy 2:25) wrote about instructing others in _____. James says we are to receive with _____ the word of God which is able to save your _____. (See James 1:21.)

State the most important statement you read about being meek: _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Blessed are those who mourn, for they, and they alone, will be comforted.**
- **Blessed are the meek, for they, and they alone, shall inherit the earth.**
- **Meekness is an equanimity of spirit; it is not occupied with self at all.**
- **Meekness is the quiet demeanor of one who has great power.**
- **Jesus, who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth, modeled meekness for us.**

Week

3

Memory Verse:

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
(Matthew 6:33)

1 John 3:7-8

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

...

The Fourth Beatitude

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they [and they alone] shall be filled."

Righteousness is the character or quality of being right or just. It was formerly spelled "rightwiseness," which clearly expresses its meaning.

Consider what it meant "to thirst" in Palestine in Jesus' day. A person could dehydrate quickly – and even die – if his thirst was not quenched. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make about those who "thirst" for righteousness? _____

Two Kinds Of Righteousness

Scripture tells us of two types of righteousness: the first is an experiential righteousness that is attained by living righteously. The second is imputed righteousness which means that someone else's righteousness is imputed to you, so that you are seen as righteous. Both these types of righteousness are necessary.

At 1 John 3:7-8, the Apostle John describes what we must do to be righteous: "He who _____ what is right is _____, just as he is righteous." The apostle continues with the opposite in verse 8: "He who _____ what is _____ is of the _____, because the devil has been _____ from the beginning."

Paul told the Colossians that imputed righteousness is made possible "by _____ physical body through _____ to present you _____ in his sight, without blemish and free from _____." (See Colossians 1:22.)

Not only are we to be righteous in our speech and actions, but we also need Christ's imputed righteousness to cover those areas where we have failed to be perfectly righteous. Imputed righteousness is freely given by God to those who are his children.

One of the heresies rampant in the western world is that we need only imputed righteousness, not the righteousness that comes from right living.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 7:21

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:20

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Seek First His Kingdom and His Righteousness

Jesus made righteousness a priority. At Matthew 6:33 he said, “Seek _____ his kingdom and his _____, and all these things will be given to _____ as well.”

Jesus gave **first** priority to seeking his kingdom and _____ righteousness. Observe what he says here: He didn’t simply say “seek righteousness”; he said we are to seek “his” righteousness.

Do you see a similarity between “hungering and thirsting” and “seeking first”? If so, please explain:

When a person is very thirsty, he will make it a priority to satisfy his thirst. If left unsatisfied, it becomes an issue of life and death. This applies spiritually in the same way.

We have learned that doing right is the essence of righteousness. At Matthew 7:21, Jesus spoke of those – and only those – who will enter the kingdom of heaven: “Not _____ who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but _____ he who _____ the _____ of my Father who is in heaven.”

Surely we agree that those who do the will of God are doing right (are righteous). Now you see how important it is to be righteous. **ONLY** those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus made sure we understood the importance of righteousness at Matthew 5:20: “. . . _____ your _____ surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly _____ the kingdom of heaven.”

Again, Jesus said that we must do the will of God in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, something the Pharisees and teachers of the law were unwilling to do.

How important is your righteousness to God?

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today about righteousness? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God: _____

Matthew 7:1-2

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

James 2:12-13

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Ephesians 2:4-5

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

The Fifth Beatitude

Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they [and they alone] will be shown mercy."

When a mother pleads for her guilty son before a judge, she does not plead for justice. She pleads for *mercy*.

We are all guilty before God. We deserve to be condemned by him. His justice must condemn us, but his mercy can save us.

Jesus said that there is something that we can do (or not do) that will prevent God from showing us mercy. If you judge others without mercy, will God show you mercy? _____. (See Matthew 7:1-2.)

The Apostle James emphasized that same point that he had learned from the Lord Jesus. At James 2:13 he said, ". . . _____ without _____ will be shown to anyone who has not been _____."

Paul told us of God's great mercy at Ephesians 2:4-5. He said that "because of his great _____ for us, God, who is rich in _____, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by _____ you have been _____."

Yes, God's mercy is shown by his grace – he provided a way, through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, that we can be saved.

At Romans 12:1, Paul urges us, ". . . brothers, in view of God's _____, to offer your _____ as living sacrifices, _____ and _____ to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

Even though God is merciful, we can prevent him from showing us his mercy on the great judgment day when we appear before him. How do we prevent God from showing us mercy? _____

Titus 3:4-6

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

We Need God’s Mercy

At Titus 3:4-6, Paul talks about the _____ and _____ of God. Then in verse 5 he said, “he _____ us, not because of _____ things we had done, but because of his _____.” That is what God desires – to save us based on our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, not on our works or righteous things we’ve done.

Paul told the Ephesians how God’s grace, shown in his mercy, permitted us to be saved “through _____ -- and this not from _____, it is the _____ of God – not by _____, so that no one can boast.” (See Ephesians 2:8-9.)

Once again, however, our own unrighteousness can prevent God’s mercy from being poured out on us through Jesus Christ. Consider the following:

Hebrews 10:26-31. If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died **without mercy** on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much **more severely** do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

God’s mercy granted us a sacrifice for sins so that we can be saved. In verse 26 we learn that we will stop that sacrifice for sins from applying to us if we deliberately _____ on _____ after we have received the knowledge of the _____.

Is it important that we receive God's mercy? _____

How will you judge others in the future? _____

Why should you not deliberately keep on sinning? _____

Phrase a prayer to God about being merciful:

Summary Statements

- **Seek FIRST his kingdom and his righteousness.**
- **Blessed are the merciful, for they [and they alone] will be shown mercy.**
- **Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.**

DAY 2

Hebrews 12:14

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 7:26

Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

The Sixth Beatitude

Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they [and they alone] will see God."

Hagnos – meaning pure from defilement; not contaminated – is translated as "pure" in Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 5:22, James 3:17 and 1 John 3:3. The Greek word *katharos* is translated "pure", as being cleansed, in numerous New Testament scriptures. The Greek work *hagnos* is from the same root as *hagios* meaning holy and *hagiasmos* meaning separated to God.

The definitions above indicate that "pure" and "holy" come from the same root. This Beatitude becomes a salvation issue when it emphasizes that "they alone" will see God. This understanding is corroborated at Hebrews 12:14. In the last half of that verse, the author states, "without _____ no one will _____ the Lord."

Salvation Issue Reinforced

At Hebrews 7:26, characteristics of our Lord Jesus (who is also our high priest) are set forth: He is

Romans 8:29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

1 John 3:2-3

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Philippians 1:9-11

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

_____, blameless, _____, set apart from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

Note that the definitions for *hagios*, *hagnos*, and *hagiasmos* are all present in this one verse – meaning pure, holy, sanctified. This has special meaning for us because at Romans 8:29 it states, “For those God foreknew he also _____ to be _____ to the _____ of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many _____.”

This becomes a salvation issue when we understand that we must become like Jesus – conformed to his Likeness if we are to be saved. We learned that Jesus is holy, blameless and pure. We must also be the same. God predestined that only those who are conformed to the likeness of his Son will be saved.

John said the same at 1 John 3:2-3: “. . . we know that when he [Jesus] appears, we shall be _____ him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him _____ himself, just as he is _____.”

Paul Prayed for Purity

As one who had led them to the Lord Jesus, Paul now prayed for their maturity in their faith. At Philippians 1:10, Paul prayed that the Philippians may be _____ and _____ until the day of Christ.

Paul taught that they should control their thoughts. At Philippians 4:8, he said that they should think about “whatever is _____, whatever is _____, – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

Paul prayed that they would be pure and taught that they should think about whatever is pure. Jesus is pure so we must be pure if we are to be conformed to his likeness.

Do you think righteousness is related to purity? _____ Explain how you think they are or are not related?

1 Timothy 5:22

. . . and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Titus 2:5

. . . to be self-controlled and pure, . . .

1 Timothy 1:5

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Titus 1:15

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure.

James 3:17

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Exhortations to His Spiritual Sons

When Paul wrote to Timothy, his spiritual son, he emphasized purity. At 1 Timothy 5:22, Paul said, "Keep yourself _____. At 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul equated righteousness, _____, love, and _____, with having a _____ heart. Perhaps Paul stressed this because Timothy was young and more inclined to the _____ desires of youth.

At 1 Timothy 1:5, Paul taught that the goal of this command is love, which comes from a _____ heart and a _____ conscience and a _____ faith.

When Paul wrote to Titus, another spiritual son, he exhorted him to be self-controlled and _____. (See Titus 2:5.) Paul also taught Titus about the nature of the person who is pure and those who are corrupted. He said, "To the _____, all things are _____, but to those who are _____ and do not _____, nothing is pure.

James taught about the wisdom that comes from heaven. He said it is _____ of all _____. (See James 3:17.)

How important do you think purity must be in the life of the true believer? _____

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today about the need to be pure? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God: _____

Summary Statements

- Only those who are pure in heart will see God.
- The Lord Jesus was/is pure; we must be pure.
- Keep yourself pure.
- Heavenly wisdom is first of all pure.

The Seventh Beatitude

Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they [and they alone] will be called sons of God."

James 3:17-18

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Romans 14:13,17-19

Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. . . ¹⁷ the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Colossians 1:19-20

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The Greek word *eirene* ☪ describes harmonious relationships between men.

From the Beatitude itself, how many will be called sons of God who are NOT peacemakers? _____.

This is another Beatitude that raises the salvation issue. Being a peacemaker is a necessary quality of those who will be saved – those who are conformed to the likeness of our Lord Jesus.

The second characteristic of James' list of heavenly wisdom is "peace-loving." At James 3:18, he says, "Peacemakers who sow in _____ raise a harvest of _____."

Paul describes what the peacemaker should not do in Romans 14:13: "Make up your mind not to put any _____ block or _____ in your brother's way." He describes the kingdom of God as "of righteousness, _____, and joy in the Holy Spirit" and then encourages the Romans by saying that this "is _____ to God and approved by men."

Paul does not suggest that peacemaking and peaceful living come without effort. Just the contrary, in Romans 14:19 he states, "make every _____ to do what leads to _____ and mutual edification."

Jesus Is the Model Peacemaker

We can always look to Jesus, our model, for how we are to live as peacemakers.

God chose to reconcile all things to himself through our Lord Jesus. How? "By making _____ through his blood, shed on the _____."

The supernatural peace that leads to peacemaking does not come from us. It is not the peace of the world. At John 14:27, Jesus said, "_____ I leave with you; my _____ I give you." Yes, it is the peace of the Lord Jesus that is given to believers so they will be neither troubled nor afraid.

Romans 8:6-7

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

How does Jesus give us his peace? Since Jesus left the earth, he works on earth through the Holy Spirit. At Romans 8:6-7, Paul shows the contrast of the worldly person: "the mind of _____ man is _____, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is _____ and _____."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today about peacemaking? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Only peacemakers will be called sons of God.**
- **The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.**
- **Make every effort to do what leads to peace.**
- **Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.**

DAY
3

The Eighth Beatitude

Matthew 5:10: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs [and theirs alone] is the kingdom of heaven."

Have you been persecuted because of righteousness? The Eighth Beatitude teaches us that **only those who are persecuted because of righteousness** will gain the kingdom of heaven.

True believers must be persecuted if they are to inherit the kingdom of heaven,. Why would that be so? Those who are not persecuted are like the world. They pose no threat or challenge to those actively opposed to Christianity.

More than likely, most of us have experienced persecution. We know there is a war between wanting to be accepted and liked by others and

following the Lord Jesus. Many have families that reject them and friends that turn away.

Sometimes even jobs are lost because they have chosen to follow the Lord Jesus. Yet that is little compared to the sufferings of many of our brothers and sisters in foreign lands - particularly countries controlled by Muslims - where churches are burned and Christians are threatened with loss of life unless they renounce Christianity and return to Islam.

Email arrived 5 May 1998 from Singapore: "Brother one critical thing happened. On 5/4/98 we baptized 8 persons. One Mr. Kashinath from 'Islampur Thanda' [Village] took baptism. On 6/4/98 all people of that Thanda including his parents manhandled him and abused him for taking baptism. Now they excommunicated him from their community. At present he is staying in his field along with his wife and five children. No proper shelter for them. Bro. Kashinath went to the police station to report this matter. On the way to the police station he was attacked again. The police came to me and our team leader Mr. Udaykumar and he asked us to come to police station for enquiry. Mr. Kashinath himself answered for all the question from the police department. He is very strong in his faith in spite of persecution."

In China, thousands have been sentenced to "re-education camps" for attending prayer meetings or Bible lessons and many killed while in prison.

The British newspaper *The Observer* reported that in Cairo, Egypt, a teenage Coptic Christian girl was kidnapped by Muslim extremists who forced her to fast, pray and memorize parts of the Koran. During her nine-month captivity, she was raped repeatedly. Her captors poured sulfuric acid on her wrist to obliterate a tattoo of the cross, and threatened to pour it on her face if she removed the Islamic veil they forced her to wear. Terrorized, she signed papers of conversion to Islam, then escaped and was sheltered by a group called "Servants of the Cross."

Writers Marshall and Shea report on two of the most implacable foes of Christianity:

(1) Muslim militants: Since 1989 the Sudanese Government has been engaged in a wholesale war against Christians, roughly one fifth of the population. Marshall reports that the goal of the ruling National Islamic Front led by Hassan Al-Turabi - who some

consider the country's de facto leader – is to "eradicate non-Islamic religion."

In the North, Al-Turabi's forces control the necessities of life. "Non-Muslims are given the choice of converting to Islam or being denied food, clothing and shelter," Marshall says. Thousands of women and children have been sold into slavery to Muslim masters who then force them to convert to Islam.

Sudan's Nuba Mountains, where Christians have lived since the sixth century, are now a wasteland of mass graves, destroyed villages and camps filled with starving women and children. Half a million Nuba Christians, virtually all men, have been killed in the past decade. "The word 'genocide' is thrown around too frequently," says Marshall. "In the case of Sudan, however, it is a factual description."

Saudi Arabia is another country where, Shea says, "freedom of religion simply does not exist." All citizens must be Muslims. Expressions of Christianity – wearing a cross, reading a Bible or uttering a non-Muslim prayer – are prohibited and punished by prison or death.

The Saudi religious police search for hidden church services among the Filipinos, Koreans, Indians and other foreign workers. In December 1992, two Filipino Christians, allegedly arrested for preaching Christianity, were sentenced to death on Christmas Day. After an international outcry, the sentence was commuted to deportation.

(2) Communist oppressors: The collapse of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European client states shook China's leaders, who noted the church's role in fostering the collapse. According to a *Puebla Programme* report, China's state-run press, referring to Christianity, proclaimed, "If China does not want such a scene to be repeated in its land, it must strangle the baby while it is still in the manger."

Many of China's estimated 40 million Christians still worship in fear. They rise on Sunday at 3 a.m. and go to secret worship centers in the homes of evangelists. Police roam the countryside seeking out these house churches.

In Xinjiang Province, police burst into one home and found 17 worshippers. When five women admitted being the leaders, they were detained, beaten and tortured.

Life for China's Christians has taken a turn for the worse since 1995, when Ye Xiaowen, whom Marshall describes as "a prominent atheist and Communist hardliner," was placed in charge of the government's Religious Affairs Bureau. Last year a Catholic priest, the Reverend Charles Guo Bole, was convicted of illegal evangelical work, including "organizing Bible classes" and "establishing underground evangelical church centers." He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment at a "laogai", a reform-through-labor camp.

Can We Expect to be Persecuted?

Was Jesus persecuted? Indeed he was! During his earthly ministry he was rejected by the religious authorities, arrested, beaten and tortured, and finally nailed to a cross.

Jesus said, "Remember the _____ I spoke to you: 'No _____ is greater than his _____.' If they _____ me, they will _____ you also." (See John 15:20.) Did you notice that Jesus' last statement is exactly on point with the Eighth Beatitude? Because they *did* persecute Jesus, they *will* also persecute us.

It is important to remember that there are *reasons* behind our persecution. The Eighth Beatitude says "**persecuted because of righteousness.**" At John 15:20, Jesus referred to those who will be persecuted as **his servants**.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today about persecution because of righteousness? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

John 15:20

"Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.'

Summary Statements

- Only those who are persecuted because of righteousness have a right to the kingdom of heaven.
- Jesus' servants will be persecuted.

DAY 4

1 Peter 2:20-21

But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1 Peter 4:15-16

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

The Ninth Beatitude

Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward [and yours alone] in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

This Beatitude and the Eighth Beatitude address persecution. In this Beatitude, Jesus includes being insulted and slandered. There are two notable differences between this Beatitude and the Eighth. In the Eighth Beatitude the persecution is because of righteousness; in the Ninth Beatitude the insults, persecution, and slander are because of the person of _____.

Jesus makes the important distinction that the things said against us must be false. If people are saying evil things about you that are true, what kind of unfaithful follower of Jesus are you? Peter seemed to have encountered people who were claiming persecution but who were being punished for doing evil things. He spoke of this twice.

At 1 Peter 2:20-21, Peter asked, "How is it to your credit if you receive a _____ for doing _____ and endure it? But if you _____ for doing good and endure it, this is _____ before God.

Then Peter reminded them, "To this you were called, because _____ suffered for you, leaving you an _____, that you should follow in his steps." (See 1 Peter 2:21.)

At 1 Peter 4:15-16, Peter emphasized again that we are not to suffer for evil deeds: "If you _____, it should not be as a _____ or _____ or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler." Then Peter assured them, "However, if you _____ as a Christian, do not be _____, but praise God that you bear that _____.

Suffering Refines Our Faith

At 1 Peter 1:6-7, Peter says to rejoice, though now he concedes that we may have had to suffer _____ in all kinds of _____. But then he continues with

2 Timothy 3:12-13

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,¹³ while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Luke 21:10

"But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name."

Luke 21:16-19

You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.¹⁷ All men will hate you because of me.¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish.¹⁹ By standing firm you will gain life.

Hebrews 10:33-34

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.³⁴ You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

encouragement for them: "These have come so that your _____ - of greater worth than _____, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved _____ and may result in _____, glory and _____ when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Persecution Was Prophesied

Paul warned Timothy: "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be _____, while _____ men and _____ will go from bad to _____, deceiving and being _____." (See 2 Timothy 3:12-13.)

At Luke 21:12, when his disciples asked about the end times, Jesus warned, "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and _____ you. They will deliver you to synagogues and _____, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of _____ name."

Then Jesus' warnings became personal: "You will be betrayed even by _____, brothers, relatives, and _____, and they will put some of you to death. All men will _____ you because of me." (See Luke 21:16-17.)

But even though they had to go through those awful times, Jesus assured them, "But not a _____ of your head will _____. By standing firm, you will gain _____." (See Luke 21:16-19).

The writer to the Hebrews (at 10:33-34) recited what had happened to his readers, "Sometimes you were publicly exposed to _____ and _____; At other times you stood side by side with those who were so _____. You _____ with those in prison and joyfully accepted the _____ of your _____, because you knew that you yourselves had better and _____ possessions."

The Beatitudes reveal the principles of the Christian life. Jesus lived out the Beatitudes perfectly, acting as our model.

Do you live out the Beatitudes in your life? _____.
If not, why not? _____

Matthew 11:29-30

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Remember what Jesus said: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). Do you think you'll be able to live the principles in the Beatitudes? _____. Please explain why. _____

I recently received this email from revivalist Andrew Strom and thought it would be helpful for you to read:

**A Sinless Life – Is It Possible?
by Andrew Strom**

Let me be very clear in opening this topic: We are talking about the "inner man" here. And this is the secret to the 'sinless' life.

Paul wrote about it in Romans - John too in 1 John 3. Much of Wesley's powerful preaching revolved around this one issue. And Finney wrote about it this way: "I could not feel a sense of guilt or condemnation by any effort I could make. My sense of guilt was gone, my sins were gone, and I do not think I felt any more sense of guilt than if I never had sinned... I felt myself justified by faith, and, so far as I could see, I was in a state in which I did not sin."

Wow! Shock! Are we saying that it is possible to live in a state in which there is no consciousness of "present sin" at all? Am I saying that this is actually "normal" Christianity? Yes, that is exactly what I am saying.

"Normal" Christianity is this: Walking before God with a totally clean conscience and a pure heart - as our 'normal' state before Him. Utterly clean. No STRIVING or "TRYING to be good". This is clearly what the New Testament describes as normal. Literally walking before God with "no consciousness of present sin." Notice that Finney (above) refers to this as a state of "justification by faith."

And he is absolutely right. That is exactly what it is. It is as basic as that – elemental Christianity."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today about the Ninth Beatitude? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **If they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute us.**
- **We are blessed when we suffer because of Jesus.**
- **By standing firm we will gain life.**
- **My yoke is easy and my burden is light.**

DAY 5

You Are the Salt of the Earth

Matthew 5:13: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."

People did not always take salt for granted as we do now. For centuries it was rare and expensive. More wars were fought over salt than over gold. Rome built a highway, the Via Salarium, just to transport salt.

Roman armies were paid in salt which was called a "salarium," hence the English word "salary," derived from Latin.

Superstitions arose about salt. Indians used it to ward off evil spirits; and spilled salt meant bad luck.

Scientists tell us that salt has an important connection with life itself. All body fluids of mammals are salty.

When Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth," He was describing something expensive and precious. Being the "salt of the earth" means keeping life on earth; if salt disappears, life on earth will disappear.

What is the purpose of salt? To flavor, season and preserve. Likewise, we are to flavor, season and preserve the world. Matthew 5:13 teaches us that "_____ are the salt of the earth." How can we be the salt of the earth? _____

Mark 9:50

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

Colossians 4:6

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

John 15:6

If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Hebrews 6:4-6

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, ⁶ if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

When Jesus said this, he was sitting on a mountain-side teaching the Jews, God’s chosen people, what is now called “The Sermon on the Mount.” He was also teaching us. He asked, “If the salt loses its _____, how can it be made _____ again? Then he tells them what happens to the value of salt that has lost its flavor: “It is no longer _____ for anything, except to be _____ out and trampled by men.”

Mark recorded Jesus’ command at Mark 9:50: “Have _____ in yourselves, and be at _____ with each other.”

At Colossians 4:6, Paul said “Let your conversation be _____ full of grace, seasoned with _____, so that you may _____ how to answer everyone.

We can conclude from these verses that salt is good – it produces peace, grace, and maturity. We also know that salt is important because Jesus chose to use it as an analogy to make his point: our lives depend on it. What characteristic of a Christian’s life may be the “salt” to which Jesus refers? _____

How could "if the salt loses its saltiness" refer to you?

Jesus said that salt that loses its saltiness is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. How could it lose its saltiness?

We see the same message at John 15:6. Jesus is speaking of the need to remain in him: “If anyone does _____ remain in _____, he is like a branch that is _____ away and _____; such branches are picked up, _____ into the fire and _____.”

Note the parallels: both the bad salt and the branches are thrown away because they are useless. One is trampled by men and the other is burned.

Do we lose our saltiness when we don’t _____ in Jesus?

Impossible to Be Brought Back to Repentance

Hebrews 6:4-6 describes those who fully and completely knew Jesus. Verse 5 begins, “It is _____.”

Hebrews 10:26-27

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Matthew 24:12-13

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Luke 11:33

"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

John 8:12; 9:4-5

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. . . . John 9:4-5 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

John 12:46

"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

Verse 6 continues, "if they _____ to be brought back to _____ because . . . they are _____ the Son of God all over again.

Matthew 24:12-13 states that the love of most will grow cold because of wickedness. Hebrews 10:26 warns, "If we _____ keep on _____ after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no _____ for sins is left, but only a _____ expectation of judgment and of raging _____ that will _____ the enemies of God." Doesn't that sound like salt thrown out and trampled by men and branches that are cut off, thrown away, and burned?

To retain our saltiness we must _____ in Jesus!

You Are the Light of the World!

Matthew 5:14-16: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Jesus is speaking about how believers should be seen in a dark and sinful world. They are to be as a lamp that gives forth light. At Matthew 5:14, we are like a city on a hill that cannot be _____. Likewise, (verse 15) we're like a lamp put on a _____, and it gives light to everyone in the house. We are to let our light _____ before men, "that they may see your _____ deeds and praise your _____ in heaven." That appears that our light may be visible to others through our _____. Why are we to let our light shine before men?

Jesus Is the Light of the World

Again we see Jesus is our model. At John 8:12, he said, "I am the _____ of the _____. Whoever follows me will never walk in _____, but will have the light of _____." Jesus concluded (9:5) by saying, "While I am in the _____, I am the light of the world."

At John 12:46, Jesus affirmed that teaching: "I have come into the world as a _____, so that no one who believes in me should stay in _____."

2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?

Ephesians 5:8

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

Colossians 1:13

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Romans 13:12

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Ephesians 5:8

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

What Does Light Represent?

At 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul contrasts believers and unbelievers, _____ and wickedness, and light with _____. At Ephesians 5:8, Paul said that we were once _____, but now we are _____ in the Lord.

Then in verse 9 Paul tells us what the fruit of the light is: "for the fruit of the light _____ in all goodness, _____, and truth.

Jesus modeled righteousness for us. Righteousness is the fruit of light and is contrasted with wickedness, just as light is contrasted with darkness.

What Does "Darkness" Represent?

If light represents righteousness, then darkness represents wickedness. At Ephesians 5:11, Paul commands, "Have _____ to do with the _____ deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." Paul says that light has fruit and the deeds of darkness are fruitless. In verse 12, Paul reinforces that conclusion as he connects the deeds of _____ to what the disobedient do in secret. The disobedient are wicked.

Paul taught that God rescued us from the _____ of darkness. (See Colossians 1:13.) At Romans 13:12 he exhorts us to "put aside the _____ of darkness and put on the _____ of light."

What are the deeds of darkness? Paul gave a partial list at Ephesians 5:3-6:

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

As Paul said at Ephesians 5:8, " _____ were once _____, but now you are _____ in the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 5:4-5
But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

John 3:19-20
This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Believers are Sons of the Light!

Those who have received Jesus as their Lord are now sons of the light. When Paul wrote to the faithful in Thessalonica he said, "But you, brothers, are not in _____ so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all _____ of the _____ and sons of the _____. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

At John 3:19 Jesus said, "This is the verdict: Light has come into the _____, but men loved _____ instead of _____ because their deeds were _____. Everyone who does evil _____ the light, and will not come into the _____ for fear that his _____ will be exposed.

How can you obey the command to retain your saltiness? _____

How can you better obey the command to be light? _____

What is the most important statement you learned today? _____

Apply that statement into a prayer to the Lord: _____

Summary Statements

- **You are the salt of the earth.**
- **We must not lose our saltiness or we will be thrown out.**
- **You are the light of the world.**
- **Whoever follows Jesus will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**
- **The fruit of light is goodness, righteousness and truth.**
- **We must put aside the deeds of darkness.**

Week

4

Memory Verse:

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3-4).

Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law

Matthew 5:17-20: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

The above passage of Scripture is key to understanding much – if not all – New Testament teachings about "the law." Before we take a closer look, read it carefully so that its meaning will become clear to you. A misunderstanding of this passage will lead to false interpretations and applications of many other scriptures.

What Did Jesus Come to Do?

At Matthew 5:17, Jesus said: "Do not think that I have come to _____ the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to _____ them."

Jesus' next statement is often misunderstood. He continued in verse 18, "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth _____, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until _____ is _____."

In verse 18 (above), what event did Jesus say would affect the Law? _____
Yes, it was **when everything was fulfilled**. It is important to note that Jesus spoke only about the Law here. The prophets were not mentioned. That is significant because many prophecies about the Lord Jesus have yet to be fulfilled.

Luke 18:31-33

"We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.³² He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him.³³ On the third day he will rise again."

John 19:30

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Colossians 2:13-14

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

Romans 10:4

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Romans 10:4 (Amplified Bible) "For Christ is the end of the Law – the limit at which it ceases to be, for the Law leads up to Him Who is the fulfillment of its types, and in Him the purpose which it was designed to accomplish is fulfilled. – That is, the purpose of the Law is fulfilled in Him – as the means of righteousness (right relationship to God) for everyone who trusts in and adheres to and relies on him."

Jesus Fulfilled the Law

On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus said to his disciples, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and _____ that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be _____." (Luke 18:31). Notice that in this verse Jesus speaks about all the prophecies being fulfilled. The key is that it refers to the prophecies about the **Son of Man** – one of Jesus' titles while he was on earth as a man.

John 19:30 states (just before Jesus died on the cross): When he had received the _____, Jesus said, "It is _____." With that he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

What was finished? Jesus had finished the task the Father had given him. He accomplished his purpose and fulfilled all the prophecies about the Son of Man.

At Colossians 2:14 Paul wrote that "He forgave all our sins, having _____ the written code, with its _____, that was against us and that stood _____ to us; he took it away, _____ it to the cross.

The law and its regulations were canceled; he took it away and nailed it to the cross. It is gone – finished.

Paul said the same at Romans 10:4: Christ is the _____ of the _____ so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. **It is the end of the law!**

Now look at the Amplified Bible's version of the same verse – Romans 10:4: "For Christ is the _____ of the _____ – the limit at which it _____ to be, for the Law leads up to Him who is the _____ of its types, and in Him the purpose it was designed to accomplish is _____."

If the Law were still in effect, we would all be condemned for worshiping on the wrong day, that is, not observing the Sabbath. The Sabbath is Saturday. Most Christian churches throughout the world gather on Sunday for worship, the first day of the week, the day that the resurrection of Jesus is honored and remembered.

- 1) Jesus himself often broke the Sabbath (according to the regulations of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law). He deliberately healed on the Sabbath.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 9:21

To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

We've learned that Jesus fulfilled the law, that he ended it, that it was canceled and nailed to the cross.

The Law of Christ

From Romans 10:4 and Colossians 2:13-14 a person could mistakenly think there is no law for the Christian to follow as we have seen the "law" was nailed to the cross.

It was the Old Testament Law given through Moses that was nailed to the cross. The Lord Jesus gave many teachings and commands that Christians are to obey. At Galatians 6:2, Paul said, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the _____ of _____." Yes, Paul called the teachings and commands of Jesus "The Law of Christ."

Paul affirms this at 1 Corinthians 9:21: "To those not having the _____ I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under _____), so as to win those not having the law."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **You are the salt of the earth.**
- **We must not lose our saltiness or we will be thrown out.**
- **You are the light of the world.**
- **Whoever follows Jesus will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**
- **The fruit of light is goodness, righteousness and truth.**
- **We must put aside the deeds of darkness.**

DAY 2

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Today we will continue to discuss Matthew 5:17-22, focusing on Matthew 5:18-22.

Which Law Must the Christian Obey?

Let's digress for a moment. At Matthew 7:21, Jesus gave a requirement for salvation: "Not _____ who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the _____ of heaven, but _____ he who does the _____ of my Father who is in heaven."

The need to obey the will of God in order to be saved raises an important question. Which law is the will of God that Christians must obey? Is it the Old Testament Law or is it Christ's law?

We already know the answer to this question: The Old Testament Law was nailed to the cross; Christ is the end of the Old Testament Law; and the Old Testament Law was canceled.

The question is raised, however, because of what Jesus said at Matthew 5:18:

Anyone who breaks one of the least of **these commandments** and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches **these commands** will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Sadly, it seems most people interpret "these" to mean the Old Testament Law. If this is the correct interpretation, then we are obligated to follow all the regulations of the Old Testament Law, including sacrificing animals, following meticulous cooking rules, worshiping on the Sabbath, circumcising all males, observing certain holidays and feast days – just to name a few.

"These" Refers to Jesus' Commands

There are many proofs that "these" commands must refer to what Jesus was teaching at that very time. The most convincing proof to me is found in Jesus' great commission at Matthew 28:19-20: He said, "make disciples of all nations . . . _____ them to obey everything _____ have commanded you."

Yes, they were to teach **everything Jesus commanded!** Thus when Jesus said to teach "these commands" at Matthew 5:19, he had to be referring to the commands he gave the people at that time.

Matthew 7:24-25

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

John 12:49-50

"For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

John 1:1-2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

Revelation 19:13

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

What did Jesus not do? He did **not** command his followers to teach and obey the Old Testament Law.

There is much more proof that "these" commands must apply only to what Jesus taught, not the Old Testament Law. At Matthew 7:24, Jesus said, "Therefore everyone who hears _____ words of _____ and puts them into practice is like a _____ man who built his house on the rock." Note the same word "these" (as in Matthew 5:19) referring to Jesus' words. The person who hears and obeys Jesus' words is like a wise man. In verse 25, Jesus referred to his words as "the rock" – a solid foundation.

So what do "these" commands refer to? When Jesus began to teach the Sermon on the Mount, beginning at Matthew 5:1, he sat down on a mountainside and began to teach. He first taught the Beatitudes – the commands about kingdom living – and then the commands about salt and light. All through Matthew chapters 5-7 he continues to teach many more commands to the people.

Also, from the Introduction you'll remember John 12:49-50, and many other similar scriptures, where Jesus said, "For I did not speak of my _____ accord, but the _____ who sent me commanded me _____ to say and _____ to say it." Jesus spoke God's words to the people – God's commands!

There is still another reason why the words "these commands" must refer to what Jesus had commanded and was commanding (as found in Matthew 5-7). In the Gospel of John we are introduced to who Jesus is and who he was before he came to earth. John explained at John 1:1, "In the beginning was the _____, and the _____ was with God, and the _____ was _____. He was with God in the beginning.

Yes, Jesus was called the "Word of God" when he was with the Father before coming to earth as a man. He is sometimes called the "Incarnate Word of God." Even now in heaven, his name is once again the Word of God. We know that because when John saw an end-time vision of the Lord Jesus he wrote: "He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his _____ is the _____ of _____." (See Revelation 19:13.)

Surely the Incarnate Word of God, who speaks the words of the Father, has the right to command us.

Matthew 5:20

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 23:27-28

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

A Salvation Issue

Jesus concluded our study passage with a salvation issue. At Matthew 5:20 he said, “for I tell you that unless your _____ surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly _____ the kingdom of heaven.”

Goodness! The Pharisees and teachers of the law were meticulous in keeping the Law of Moses, to the point of appearing faultless. How can we surpass that? Yet we must, if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven!

The answer is in the heart. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and teachers of the law about their lack of righteousness (at Matthew 23:27-28): “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you _____! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the _____ but on the _____ are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you _____ to people as _____ but on the inside you are full of _____ and _____.”

Yes, God commands righteousness on the inside as well as on the outside. God does not tolerate hypocrisy.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Christians must obey the Law of Christ.**
- **“These” commands at Matthew 5:18 refer to commands Jesus was teaching the people.**
- **Jesus is the incarnate Word of God.**
- **Our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.**
- **God looks at the heart and will not tolerate hypocrisy.**

DAY

3

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

1 John 3:14-15

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

Matthew 15:18-20

But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Do Not Murder

Matthew 5:21-22: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Jesus expanded the command, "Do not murder," to include an angry heart. He said both are subject to judgment. Jesus said in verse 22 that anyone who is _____ with his brother will be subject to _____. Then Jesus taught a surprising command: "Anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in _____ of the fire of hell."

Exodus 20:13 states: You shall not _____. This is the sixth of the 10 Commandments.

The Apostle John confirmed the Lord's command: "Anyone who _____ his brother is a _____, and you know that no murderer has _____ life in him." This has become a **salvation issue!**

Murder and Hate Is a Heart Problem

At Matthew 15:19, Jesus said, "For out of the _____ come evil thoughts, _____, adultery, sexual immorality, _____, false testimony, slander."

God looks at the heart. If hate is present, he equates it to murder. Accordingly, we can expect judgment if we do not repent.

Be Pure Before God

Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

In the above Scripture, Jesus said "your brother has something against _____." You are the one who is at fault and you must make it right with your brother.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵

But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Luke 12:57-59

"Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?"

⁵⁸ As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

The closest the New Testament Christian comes to bringing a gift to the altar is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. When we come to the Lord's table, we are to reverently remember his suffering and death which atoned for our sins by shedding his blood.

At 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, Paul warns us about coming before the Lord in an unworthy manner. He said, "Whoever eats the _____ or drinks the _____ in an unworthy manner will be _____ of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to _____ himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without _____ the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."

We must not harbor unforgiveness when we come before the Lord. We first must be pure, undefiled and forgiven of our sins.

At Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus taught: "If you forgive men when they _____ against you, your heavenly Father will also _____ you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not _____ your sins." We must forgive others so God will forgive our sins.

Maintain Peace With All Men

Matthew 5:25-26: "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny." See also Luke 12:57-59.

Jesus wants his followers to be known for their love for one another, not for an adversarial spirit. Taking a person to court involves a legal suit where often one person is unwilling to honor the terms of a contract. Jesus seems to be speaking to such a person because it is this person's adversary who is taking him to court for not keeping the terms of the contract.

At Matthew 5:25, Jesus warns, "Settle matters quickly . . . or he may hand you over to the _____, and the judge may hand you over to the _____, and you may be thrown into _____." Jesus then

Romans 12:18

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Matthew 22:21

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

Matthew 15:19

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

concluded, "I tell you the _____, you will not get out until you have paid the last _____." In that statement, Jesus implies that this person is trying to get out of paying what is due. Jesus does not condone that for his followers.

Paul made the same point at Romans 12:18, saying: "If it is _____, as far as it depends on _____, live at peace with _____." He said the same, but even stronger at Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore make _____ to do what leads to _____ and to mutual edification."

Although we no longer have debtor's prisons, those who cheat on their income taxes are still subject to imprisonment if convicted.

What did Jesus say about paying our taxes? When his enemies were trying to trap him, Jesus answered, "Give to _____ what is Caesar's, and to God what is _____." (See Matthew 22:21.) To make that current for us, Jesus would say, "Give to the Internal Revenue Service what is owed to it, and to God what is owed to him.

Do Not Commit Adultery

Matthew 5:27: "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

What did the Old Testament Law say about adultery?

Jesus defined adultery very differently when he said, "I tell you that _____ who looks at a woman _____ has already committed _____ with her in his _____."

Adultery is ordinarily defined as "unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another." This definition describes the physical act, which the law carefully defined. Jesus, however, greatly expanded the definition of adultery to make it a crime of the mind and heart. (See Matthew 15:19.) If a man lustfully looks at a woman, he has already violated Jesus' definition of adultery. He also expanded the definition to include simply "a woman" whereas the conventional definition

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Do not be deceived:
Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders
¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Revelation 21:8

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.”

requires that the person be the spouse of another.

This is a **salvation issue!** Paul told us, “Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor _____ nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the _____ nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the _____ of God.”

Adultery is condemned by God. Adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God.

At Revelation 21:8, Jesus declared the fate of the adulterer: “But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the _____, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the _____ lake of burning _____.”

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Anyone who is angry at his brother will be subject to judgment.**
- **Hate is equivalent to murder.**
- **No murderer has eternal life in him.**
- **Out of the heart come evil thoughts such as murder.**
- **We must be reconciled with our brother to be pure before God.**
- **Be fair and honest in your relationships with all men.**
- **Lusting after a woman is equivalent to adultery.**
- **Adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.**

DAY 4

1 John 3:6

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hebrews 10:26-27

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Do Not Sin!!!

Matthew 5:29-30: If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

A Salvation Issue! It doesn't take much to get the point, does it? Jesus speaks bluntly: ". . . better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole _____ to be thrown into _____."

We must remember the awfulness of sin in the eyes of a holy God. Jesus came to earth, died and rose again in order to redeem all who have a saving faith from the curse of sin. If sin cost the death of God's son, then one can understand the great penalty for those who ignore that redemption and continue in sin – eternity in hell.

The Apostle John states that no one who continues in sin has either _____ him or _____ him. (See 1 John 3:6.)

True or False

T F We can continue in sin if we confess it to God.

T F Only those who repent of their sin can be saved.

Repeatedly, Scripture emphasizes that death (hell) is the wage of sin. Fortunately, as Paul says at Romans 6:23, the _____ of God is eternal _____ in Christ Jesus our _____.

What is the cost for continuing in sin? The writer of Hebrews, at 10:26-27, tells us: "If we deliberately keep on _____ after we have _____ the knowledge of the _____, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a _____ expectation of judgment and of raging _____ that will consume the _____ of God."

Paul enumerated sins that would prevent a person from inheriting the kingdom of heaven at Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and Colossians 3:5. Please read these scriptures.

Do Not Divorce!

Matthew 5:31-32: "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery."

Matthew 19:9

"I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Mark 10:11-12

"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹² And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

Luke 16:18

"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

According to a Barna poll, more Christians get divorced than atheists. The highest divorce rates are in the Midwest in Baptist and non-denominational churches – 32% and 33%, respectively. Only 23% of atheists are divorced.

It was said in Jesus' day that if a man wanted to be with another woman, he would only have to divorce his wife and marry the other woman. It was a legal way to be unfaithful to your wife. The divorced wife was often forced to marry again because she couldn't provide for herself.

At Matthew 5:32, Jesus said that "anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital _____, causes her to become an _____, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits _____." According to Jesus, if a man divorces his wife, he causes his wife to become an adulteress when she remarries and the man who marries her becomes an adulterer.

Matthew 19:9 extends adultery to the man who divorces his wife and remarries. Mark 10:11 states that if a man or woman divorces their spouse and remarries, they commit adultery. Jesus confirmed this again at Luke 16:18.

What About Separation?

At 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul instructed believers about divorce and separation: "To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must _____ separate from her husband. But if she does, she must _____ unmarried or else be _____ to her husband. And a husband must _____ divorce his wife."

There are marriages where separation would seem appropriate. For example, an out-of-control spouse

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Do not be deceived:
Neither the sexually
immoral nor idolaters nor
adulterers nor male
prostitutes nor
homosexual offenders
¹⁰ nor thieves nor the
greedy nor drunkards nor
slanderers nor swindlers
will inherit the kingdom of
God.

who beats his wife (or husband). Even so, this is not God’s will for our lives, according to Paul. He states that a wife must not separate from her husband. He also states a husband must not divorce his wife.

The Penalty for Adultery

At 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul listed many forms of sexual sin, specifically naming adulterers. Paul concluded by saying none of those “will _____ the _____ of _____.”

What reasons, besides marital unfaithfulness, would permit a person to divorce his spouse? _____

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus had to die to take away our sins.**
- **No one who lives in Jesus keeps on sinning.**
- **One who continues to sin has neither seen Jesus nor known him.**
- **Never deliberately sin.**
- **Many will not inherit the kingdom of heaven because of their sins.**
- **Christians may not divorce except because of marital unfaithfulness.**
- **He who marries a divorced woman becomes an adulterer.**
- **He who divorces his wife causes his wife to become an adulteress (when she remarries).**
- **The spouse who divorces becomes an adulterer if they remarry.**

DAY 5

Leviticus 19:12

Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

Do Not Swear!

Matthew 5:33-37: "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.'³⁴ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne;³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.³⁷ Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

It was neither uncommon nor forbidden in Old Testament times to swear to emphasize that what you've said is true. Swearing was the highest level promise that you could use in making an agreement.

Jesus said at Matthew 5:33, that long ago the people were taught, "Do not _____ your oath, but _____ the oaths you have made to the Lord." See also Leviticus 19:12 which says the same.

Jesus changed the Old Testament Law. He said, "But I tell you, do not _____ at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne, or by the earth, for it is his _____. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one _____ white or black." (See Matthew 5:34-35.)

What does Jesus command us to do instead? "Simply let your _____ be _____, and your 'No,' 'No'; anything _____ this comes from the _____ one. (See Matthew 5:37, above.)

Most of us know that if we are testifying as witnesses in a courtroom, we are commonly told to raise our right hand and "swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God." Years ago this was done while putting one hand on the Bible.

This is contrary to what Jesus commanded. Long ago, knowledgeable believers refused to take this oath because it violated Jesus' command. As a result, the courts use an alternative oath, similar to the following:

James 5:12

Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your “Yes” be yes, and your “No,” no, or you will be condemned.

Exodus 21:23-25

But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Leviticus 24:19-20

If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured.

1 Peter 2:23

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

“Do you certify, knowing full well the penalty for perjury therefore, that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?” In this manner believers avoided “swearing” and violating the command of the Lord Jesus.

James stated Jesus’ command very strongly: “Above all, my brothers, do _____ swear — not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No,’ no, or you will be _____”.

This might seem like a simple command to keep. However, it can be difficult if we put more care into what others think of us than in obeying the Lord Jesus. In a courtroom you should ask for the alternative oath. If you choose to swear like everyone else, then you are choosing to disobey the Lord Jesus.

An Eye for an Eye?

Matthew 5:38-39: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

In this remarkable command, Jesus reversed Old Testament Law when he said, “Do _____ resist an _____ person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to _____ the other also.”

At Exodus 21:23-25, Moses recited specifically that it was _____ for life, _____ for eye, _____ for tooth, _____ for hand, foot for foot, _____ for burn, wound for _____, bruise for _____. At Leviticus 24:20, the principle is, “As he has _____ the other, so he is to be _____.” See also Deuteronomy 19:21.

Jesus Submitted to Evil People

At 1 Peter 2:23, Peter described how Jesus submitted to evil people who wanted to destroy him. “When they hurled their _____ at him, he did not _____; when he _____ he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who _____ justly.”

When Jesus was accosted by the mob that was sent by the Pharisees to arrest him, he told his disciples,

Matthew 26:53-54

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

"Do you think I _____ call on my Father, and he will at once put at _____ more than twelve _____ of angels? But how then would the _____ be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Jesus pointed out that he had all the power and authority at his disposal to destroy his opponents in a moment. This made his submission to his captors even more extraordinary.

Why do you suppose God wants us to submit to evil men? _____

The movie *The Witness*, starring Harrison Ford, was set in an Amish community in Pennsylvania. One of the scenes involved a local hooligan roughing up a strong Amish man who refused to fight back – he was intent on following Christ’s command not to resist an evil person but to turn the other cheek. The contrast was stark: God’s way or man’s way.

Harrison Ford plays a policeman from a large city who is living amongst the Amish community. His character became enraged at the hooligan’s behavior and thrashed him.

Let’s look at some scriptures to see what happens when we obey Jesus’ command not to resist an evil person.

At Romans 8:28, we see a promise: “And we know that in _____ things God works for the _____ of those who _____ him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Then at 1 John 5:3, we find: “This is love for God: to _____ his commands.”

Not resisting an evil person goes against everything we would do naturally. But Romans 8:28 says God will use all things for the good of those who love him. Those who love him are the ones who obey him – including the command to not resist an evil person.

True or False

- T F It requires greater strength of character not to resist an evil person than “eye for eye.”
- T F It is easier to demand “eye for eye” retaliation than not to resist an evil person.
- T F Not resisting requires trusting God.
- T F “Eye for eye” is revenge.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

1 John 5:3

This is love for God: to obey his commands.

Romans 12:19

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Do other translations confirm that Jesus said not to resist an evil person? Most Bible translations I checked say "do not resist." However, *Today's English Version* says, "But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you." Some simply say, "Do not resist evil [as does the Greek]," another says "Do not resist violence." The *New Century Version* says not to stand up against an evil person. *The Message* says,

"Here's another old saying that deserves a second look: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' Is that going to get us anywhere? Here's what I propose: 'Don't hit back at all.' If someone strikes you, stand there and take it."

Jesus did not propose this. He commanded it. We see the same basic meaning in all the translations.

One translation suggested that Jesus meant we should not take revenge. Paul supported that argument at Romans 12:19: "Do not take _____, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is _____ to avenge; I will _____,' says the Lord." That is applicable to Jesus' command. We are not to take these matters into our own hands. We are to let our Master, Lord, and King defend us as he will.

Let Him Have Your Cloak

Matthew 5:40-41: "And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

Jesus continued with a radical change to Jewish thinking: "If someone wants to sue you and take your _____, let him have your _____ as well. If someone _____ you to go one mile, go with him _____ miles."

His command is no less radical to us. Do you notice something in common between the prior command and this one? Both would slow down or stop hostilities. Resistance tends to escalate anger; submission cools it. Jesus is giving us a command for kingdom living unlike the way of the world. In the world a person who is wrong screams, "I'll sue!" In the Lord's kingdom, if someone believes we have wronged him, our duty is to immediately say, "I'll make it right and even give you more than you ask."

Likewise, when Jesus said, "If someone forces you to go _____ mile, go with him _____ miles," he was showing us another way to win over a hostile person. We know the man is hostile because he forced the person to go the first mile. Imagine his consternation when his "victim" says, "That's all right! I'll go with you two miles."

Our master – the Lord Jesus – paid a bill he didn't owe – the price to redeem you and me from the penalty for sin. If for no other reason, let's obey this command to honor him and to be like him.

These two commands fulfill Matthew 22:38-39: "This is the first and greatest _____. And the _____ is like it: _____ your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:38-39

"This is the first and greatest commandment.
³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Give and Lend

Matthew 5:42: "Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

Jesus continues with radical commands, unlike what we might think would be correct: "Give to the one who _____ you, and do not turn _____ from the one who wants to _____ from you."

Have you ever been accosted by a person who asks, "Mister, got a dollar for a cup of coffee?" Does that person fall within the command Jesus gave us to give to the one who asks us? Circle one: YES NO
Please explain why:

If you suspect the person will use the money for drugs or alcohol should you give him the money? Circle one: YES NO Please explain why: _____

Jesus also said we should not turn away from those who want to borrow from us. This sounds like "The Golden Rule." If you need something, wouldn't you hope someone would give it to you? If you sought to borrow something, wouldn't you hope it would be loaned to you? Of course you would.

True or False

- T F We must be concerned about our possessions.
- T F Obey God when we don't understand why.
- T F Jesus wants to build kingdom people out of us.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- Jesus' disciples must not resist an evil person.
- If struck on one cheek, turn the other one also.
- If someone wants to sue, offer him more than he seeks.
- If someone forces you to do something, offer to do more than he asks.
- Jesus was our model for not resisting evil people.
- Give to anyone who asks.
- Loan freely to the one who wants to borrow from you.

Week 5

Memory Verse:

He became the source of salvation for all who obey him (Hebrews 5:9).

Love Your Enemies

Matthew 5:43-48: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ **But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**⁴⁵ **that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**⁴⁶ **If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?**⁴⁷ **And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?**⁴⁸ **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

Once again, Jesus reverses the usual understanding and sets a new standard. At Matthew 5:44-45, he says: "But _____ tell you: _____ your _____ and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be _____ of your Father in heaven."

2 Timothy 3:12

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Leviticus 19:18

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”

Luke 6:27-28

“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

At Matthew 5:45, Jesus tells about the impartial love of his Father in heaven: “He causes his _____ to rise on the _____ and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the _____.”

Then, at Matthew 5:46-47, Jesus illustrates how you and I should act toward others: “If you _____ those who love you, what _____ will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your _____, what are you doing more than others? Do not even _____ do that?” Although Jesus was asking rhetorical questions, it is obvious he expects more of us and that there are no rewards unless we do more than the tax collectors and pagans.

At Matthew 5:48, Jesus commands us, “Be _____, therefore, as your heavenly _____ is perfect.”

God does not withhold his sun and rain, but gives freely to all – righteous and unrighteous alike. Likewise, as children of our heavenly Father, we are expected to do the same with our attitudes and actions toward others. While those in the world may respond with anger and hostility, we must respond with love, compassion and forgiveness.

We are to pray for those who persecute us. Will those of us in western nations be persecuted? At 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul wrote Timothy, “_____ who wants to live a _____ life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Persecution happens in many different ways. It can be by mocking fundamental Christians, refusal to allow prayers in schools or Bibles on the job. In many places it means loss of jobs, imprisonment, and even death. Whatever kind of persecution we suffer, our master commands us to _____ for those who persecute us.

At Leviticus 19:18, God said “do not seek _____ or bear a grudge against one of _____ people, but love your neighbor as yourself.” Not that this command was limited to relations between “one of your people.”

Jesus changed that to include everyone. His command recorded at Luke 6:27 is comprehensive: “Love your _____, do good to those who _____ you, bless those who _____ you, pray for those who _____ you.” This is the Golden Rule in action. Wouldn’t you like to be treated in this way – good for hate, blessings for curses, and

prayer instead of mistreatment?

Jesus told a story to illustrate how his command can be lived out and described who "our neighbor" is. Read Luke 10:30-35 before we go further.

Most likely, the victim was a Jew. The Jews looked down on the Samaritans because they were considered half-breeds because they had intermarried with Gentiles. Although the priest and Levite were both Jews, they wouldn't stop to help a fellow Jew. The detested Samaritan, however, had compassion. He approached him, bandaged his wounds and took care of him.

Jesus told this story to the Pharisees after telling them they were to love their neighbor as themselves, in response to their question, "And who is my neighbor?"

At Luke 10:36-37, Jesus asked, "Which of these three do you think was a _____ to the man who fell into the hands of _____?" The expert in the law correctly replied, "The one who had _____ on him." Jesus told him, "Go and _____ likewise."

Luke 10:36-37

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Be Careful How You Give

Matthew 6:1-4: "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Jesus said we are to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. (See Matthew 5:16.) The difference in this instance is the phrase "to be seen by them." Our purpose is to give glory to God so that men will praise him.

What is the price for giving "to be seen by men"? "If you do, _____ will have no _____ from your Father in heaven."

Jesus called the people hypocrites who gave with

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

great fanfare, to be honored by men. Jesus said, "They have _____ their reward in full." In the first sentence of Matthew 6:1, Jesus states a qualifying command. What is it that we are not to do?

Jesus commanded us how to give: "When you _____ to the needy, do not let your _____ hand know what your _____ hand is doing, so that your giving may be in _____. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will _____ you."

How does this apply to giving in our church? Often churches provide offering envelopes so that the amount given will not be seen. Others provide bags so the amount in your hand will not be seen as you place the money into the bag.

What do you think about churches that offer to put your name on a plaque if you will give a certain amount? _____
Or churches that ask you to make a public pledge to give a certain amount? _____

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Love your enemies.**
- **Pray for those who persecute you.**
- **Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**
- **Do not do good deeds to be seen by men.**
- **When you give, do it in secret.**
- **God sees the heart and your motivation.**
- **Do not do anything to be seen by others.**
- **Whatever you do, do it to be seen only by God.**

DAY 2

Pray In Secret

Matthew 6:5-8: "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Do you notice the similarity between this scripture yesterday's scripture? They are parallel. At Matthew 6:5, Jesus begins with a command to us not to be like the _____. The hypocrites love to _____ standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to _____. Those who desire to be seen by men have received their _____ in full.

Then Jesus commanded, "But when you _____, go into your room, close the _____ and pray to your Father, who is _____. Then your Father, who sees what is done in _____, will reward you."

Jesus then told us what *not* to do: "When you pray, do _____ keep on babbling like _____, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father _____ what you need before you _____ him."

Would it be acceptable to pray quietly (but audibly) with your family in a restaurant?
(Circle one) YES NO

Should you not have people pray aloud in a Bible study? (Circle one) YES NO Why? _____

What critical issue is common to this scripture and to yesterday's scripture that Jesus condemns?

According to Matthew 6:6, what will happen when you pray the way Jesus commands? _____

Matthew 6:7 condemns the practice of _____ like pagans. What religious group or church breaks this command, if any? _____

According to Matthew 6:8, why should we not be like the pagans who keep on babbling? _____

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13: "This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

True, born again believers are privileged to call God their Father. In fact, Jesus commanded that they call God – and only God – their Father. At Matthew 23:9, Jesus commanded, "Do not call anyone on _____ 'father,' for you have one _____, and he is in heaven." Believers are not to call any person on earth "father," including their human fathers. Hence, many other names are used today to address our earthly father, such as "dad," "pops," or "Sir." What other names do you know for "dad"? _____

Matthew 23:9

And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.

Hallowed: means to make holy, signifies to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing the opposite of *koinos* common; it is translated "Hallowed," with reference to the Name of God the Father in the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2.

At Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus taught we should pray, "Our Father in heaven, _____ be your name, your _____ come, your _____ be done on earth as it is in _____." When we say "hallowed" we mean God's name should be set apart as holy.

When we pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying that God's will be done perfectly here on earth – beginning with each one of us. We should obey God's will as perfectly as we can.

In verse 11 we pray for our _____ bread. Note this is not a long-term need, but simply a *daily* need. We're not to ask God to supply tomorrow's bread or next week's food, but simply day by day.

James 1:13

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone

Revelation 21:27

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Matthew 18:34-35

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.
³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

In verse 12 we ask for forgiveness. But it is a conditional request. Jesus taught, "_____ us our debts, _____ we also have _____ our _____." We are asking for forgiveness only to the extent that we have forgiven others.

Jesus concluded by teaching, "And lead us not into _____, but deliver us from the _____ one." Jesus did *not* say that God would tempt us. At James 1:13, the apostle makes clear, "God cannot be _____ by evil, nor does he _____ anyone."

Conditional Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15: For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Immediately following the Lord's Prayer, Jesus again taught about forgiveness: "For if you _____ men when they _____ against you, your heavenly Father will also _____ you. _____ if you do _____ forgive men their sins, your Father will not _____ your sins."

It is utterly essential that God forgive us our sins if we are to enter the kingdom of God. At Revelation 21:27, Jesus spoke about heaven and said, "Nothing _____ will ever enter it, nor will _____ who does what is shameful or deceitful, but _____ those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. We are impure if our sins are not forgiven.

Please take your Bible and read the story Jesus told about a king who forgave a servant an enormous debt. Later, this forgiven servant forcibly tried to collect a small debt from a fellow servant. This story is found at Matthew 18:23-35.

Note that the king reinstated the entire debt and then: "In anger his master turned him over to the _____ to be _____, until he should pay back all he owed." Jesus concluded, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat _____ of _____ unless you _____ your brother from your heart."

The parable began by stating that the servant could not pay. If he couldn't pay before, he surely couldn't pay while being tortured by the jailers. He was no longer forgiven, nor could he gain forgiveness.

Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation . . .

At Colossians 1:22, Paul reminded us that God "has _____ you by Christ's physical body through _____ to present you _____ in his sight, without blemish and _____ from accusation."

If our sins are not forgiven, we are full of blemishes and, accordingly, the objects of accusation.

Jesus died on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven and that we could be reconciled to God. We will not enter the kingdom of God or be reconciled to God if our sins are not forgiven.

Should you forgive only those who ask to be forgiven? (Circle one) YES NO Explain why:

Circle T or F

- T F In order to be saved, our sins must be forgiven.
- T F We only need to forgive those who ask to be forgiven.
- T F God is loving and kind and will forgive us whether or not we have forgiven others.
- T F Jesus' death provided the way for us to be reconciled to God and our sins forgiven.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Is there anyone you have not forgiven? _____ If there is, what must you do about it? _____

Summary Statements

- **Pray in secret.**
- **Forgiveness by God is conditional upon our forgiveness of others.**
- **We must be forgiven of our sins to enter heaven.**

DAY

3

Fast to Please God

Matthew 6:16-18: "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Jesus commanded us not to be like the hypocrites: "When you _____, do not look _____ as the hypocrites do, for they _____ their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have _____ their reward in full."

Again, Jesus emphasizes that we must not do anything to please or impress men. There is only one we wish to please – our Father in heaven.

Jesus commanded: "When you fast, put _____ on your head and _____ your face, so that it will not be _____ to men that you are fasting, but only to your _____, who is unseen; and your Father who sees what is done in _____, will reward you."

We have seen Jesus admonish us to give and pray in secret, and now to fast so men will not notice. The opposite – giving, praying, and fasting to be noticed – is self-centered and conceited.

At Philippians 2:3, Paul commanded, "Do _____ out of selfish _____ or vain _____, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."

At James 3:16, the apostle forcefully stated, "Where you have _____ and _____ ambition, there you find disorder and every _____ practice."

While in Singapore, I sat at a table with a pastor and his wife. He had preached at the service I attended. I was surprised to learn he was having his first meal in ten days – he just completed a fast. During the service he didn't mention his fast nor did he appear to be fasting. He did not fast to be noticed by men.

- T F We are to pray, give and fast to please God.
- T F We are not to pray, give or fast to please men.

Philippians 2:3

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

James 3:16

For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

Store Up Treasures in Heaven

Matthew 6:19-21: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Jesus taught about priorities at Matthew 6:19-21: "Do _____ store up for _____ treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But _____ up for yourselves _____ in heaven, where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your _____ is, there your _____ will be also."

Luke 16:13

"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

Luke 12:32-34

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

The mindset of the Western world seems to be set on storing up treasures for ourselves. We save for our retirement, our medical needs, traveling expenses, etc. Jesus said to do the opposite: "Do _____ store up treasures on earth." Is that correct? No. I left out two words: _____. The words are "for yourselves." If we are bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus, we own nothing; everything we have we hold in trust for our Lord and his kingdom.

In verse 21, Jesus said our heart will be where our treasure is. Is our treasure on earth or in heaven? At Luke 16:13, Jesus said, "No man can serve two _____. Either he will hate the one and _____ the other, or he will be devoted to the one and _____ the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Describe how you regard your possessions. Are they God's or yours? _____.

At Luke 12:33-34, Jesus commanded, "_____ your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not _____ out, a _____ in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your _____ is, there your _____ will be also."

Jesus is hitting at the core values of our civilization. To suggest that we should not lay up treasures for ourselves on earth and then to command that we

should sell our possessions and give to the poor is threatening – if we're attached to our possessions.

Matthew 6:20 says, "But store up for _____ treasures in _____, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

Yes, we're encouraged to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven! We do that through financial support and personal involvement. We also gain treasure in heaven for every person we help to convert and disciple to become fully devoted followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our financial support of ministries is the most common way to lay up treasure in heaven. We must pay very careful attention to see if these ministries produce fruit. Our treasure may be dependent upon how effectively they do their jobs, just as investing in stocks in the stock market will be as successful (usually) as the progress of the company in whose stock we invest.

At Matthew 6:21, Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." That same statement was repeated at Luke 12:34. If our heart lusts after the things of the world, then those things have become our idols.

That conclusion is stated by Paul at Ephesians 5:5, "For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or _____ person – such a man is an _____ – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Are we not greedy if we seek treasure on earth *for ourselves* instead of treasure in heaven? Are we not greedy if our "heart" lusts for earthly treasure? If that makes us "greedy" then we are also idolaters who will have no place in the kingdom of heaven.

State any adjustments you might have to make in your life because of Jesus' teaching on treasure:

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Ephesians 5:5

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- Do not be obvious about fasting to be seen by men.
- Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth.
- Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
- Seeking after earthly treasures may be greed.
- If our heart is with earthly treasure that may be greed.
- No greedy person will inherit the kingdom of heaven.

DAY 5

1 John 2:9-11

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

Is Your Body Full of Light?

Matthew 6:22-23: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

To understand this teaching, we must understand the meaning of "light" and "darkness."

The Apostle John defines darkness as a moral darkness: "Anyone who _____ to be in the light but _____ his brother is still in the darkness." (See 1 John 2:9.)

At 1 John 2:10, John defines "light" as a moral light: "Whoever _____ his brother lives in the _____, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble."

At 1 John 2:11, John again describes darkness: "But whoever _____ his brother is in the darkness and _____ around in the darkness; he does not know where he is _____, because the darkness has blinded him."

Now we're in position to understand Jesus' teaching about the eye: "The eye is the _____ of the body."

If your eyes are _____, your whole body will be full of light.”

A lamp lights an area. Jesus said the eye is the lamp of the body that makes the whole body full of light if the eyes are good – morally good! He who loves his brother is morally good.

At Matthew 6:23, Jesus contrasted the light with darkness: “But if your eyes are _____, your whole body will be full of _____. If the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness.”

Perhaps we could best understand eyes that are good by considering a person who is good. When he looks upon the world, he sees good. He interprets things in a good way and expects good of others and himself. He lives in light.

To understand eyes that are bad, consider a man who hates his brother. There is anger in his eyes, his view of the world is hateful and ugly, and he expects others to be hateful and angry towards him as he is towards others. He lives in darkness.

At John 6:23, Jesus exclaimed, “How great is that darkness.” John thought likewise when he said, “whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” Indeed, how great is that darkness!

Mammon

This word occurs in the Bible only in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:9, 11, 13. It means simply wealth or profit, but God sees in it an egocentric covetousness which claims man’s heart and thereby estranges him from God (Matthew 6:19ff.): when a man ‘owns’ anything, in reality it owns him.

James 4:4

You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

Not Two Masters

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (Mammon – KJV).

Jesus taught we cannot serve two masters. He told of a dynamic that we may not have considered: “Either he will _____ the one and _____ the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” Then he declares who the conflicting “masters” are that he is speaking of: _____ and _____.

James told us of a similar conflict at James 4:4: “Don’t you know that _____ with the world is _____ toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a

1 John 2:15

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Luke 14:33

Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

_____ of the world becomes an _____ of God.

The Apostle John agreed. At 1 John 2:15 he said, "Do not _____ the world or _____ in the world. If anyone loves the _____, the love of the Father is _____ in him." As usual, this contrast makes this a salvation issue.

List some things people say and do that show that they love the world: _____

You could probably think of many more things others do or say – and therein lies the rub: We must judge ourselves and ask, "Are there things in my life that show I love the world?"

"Who is my master?" Is it God, or is it mammon – money, job, houses, cars, hobbies, sports, power, prestige?

At Luke 14, Jesus recites the cost of following him and being his disciple. He concludes in verse 33: "Any of you who does not give up _____ he has cannot be my _____."

Again we see that this is a salvation issue. No one can be saved who is not a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said we must give up everything we have or we cannot be his disciples. It now becomes clear how money (or mammon) cannot be our master. If it is, we love the world and hate God and will have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Do Not Worry About Your Life

Matthew 6:25: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"

Jesus commanded: "Do not _____ about your _____, what you will eat or drink; or about your _____, what you will wear. Is not _____ more important than _____, and the _____ more

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28

In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Week

6

Memory Verse:

If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15).

important than clothes?" People of all generations have had a tendency to worry about all sorts of things that Jesus said not to worry about.

Paul addressed the same issue at Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be _____ about _____, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your _____ to God. And the _____ of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your _____ and _____ in Christ Jesus."

What can we be anxious about? According to Paul, nothing at all. Jesus said we're not even to worry about our life.

Why must we be free from worry and anxiety? It is because all true believers are children of God whom he cares for. Furthermore, God promises at Romans 8:28, "In _____ things, God works for the _____ of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

What Can Worry Do?

Matthew 6:26-27: Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

Jesus tells us to look at the birds of the air to show us that God cares for all of his creation. He then assures us by asking, "Are _____ not much more _____ than they?" Then he asks the question that shows the futility of worry: "Who of you by _____ can add a single hour to his life?"

The underlying question is, "Do we trust God?" If we do, then we don't need to worry; if we don't trust God, then we don't believe him either, and then we should really worry – about our salvation.

Your Heavenly Father Knows

Matthew 6:28-32: "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and

John 14:1

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.”

Proverbs 12:25

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.

tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

At Matthew 6:28-30, Jesus further emphasized that God cares for his people: “And why do you worry about _____? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even _____ in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how _____ clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more _____ you, O you of _____ faith?”

This is a trust issue. At John 14:1, Jesus said, “Do not let your _____ be troubled. Trust in God; _____ also in _____.”

Many easily claim to have faith and trust in God (and the Lord Jesus) for their salvation. However, to trust God for their day-to-day provision and protection seems difficult. How can we expect God to heal us, feed us, and clothe us if we don't have faith and trust that he will do so?

At Matthew 6:21-22, Jesus taught, “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.” How do you suppose God feels about professing Christians who run around like pagans, concerned with what they'll eat, drink, or wear? Do you suppose God regards them as having lack of trust and belief in him that could compromise salvation? It is surely possible.

Seek First His Kingdom

Matthew 6:33-34: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

At Matthew 6:33, Jesus commanded, “Seek _____ his _____ and his _____ and all these _____ will be given to you as well.

Therefore, do not _____ about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each _____ has enough trouble of its own."

In this passage, the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the priorities of God's kingdom. Whose kingdom and whose righteousness are we to seek first? _____
What two things are we to seek first?
_____ and _____

For those who do seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, what will happen for them? _____

Yes, all the things the pagans worry about – food, drink, and clothes – will be given to those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. This is a promise made by Jesus as told to him by God, his Father.

At Matthew 6:34, Jesus concluded his statement about worry. He told us to live in the present: "Therefore do not worry about _____, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough _____ of its own."

We are to live each day to the fullest, accomplishing all that we can, worrying about nothing.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **We can't accomplish anything by worrying.**
- **Don't worry because God knows we need clothes and food.**
- **Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.**
- **Do not worry about tomorrow.**
- **Make the most of every day.**

DAY 2

James 2:12-13

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Do Not Judge

Matthew 7:1-2: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

This passage should frighten many of us. At Matthew 7:1-2 Jesus said, "Do _____ judge, or _____ too will be judged. For in the _____ way you judge others, _____ will be judged, and with the _____ you use, it will be measured to you."

You probably know people with critical spirits. They seem to judge everyone and everything. They claim to know what should have been done – thinking they know better – often after the fact.

Judging others is a sin because Jesus commanded us *not* to judge. God will judge each of us according to what we have done. At James 2:12-13, the confirmed this. He urged believers to remember that they also will be judged: "Speak and _____ as those who are going to be _____ by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without _____ will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over _____!"

I can't imagine being judged by God without mercy. I need God's mercy shown to me in great abundance. I dare not be judgmental of others. I must show mercy to others, or God will judge me without mercy.

Are We Qualified to Judge?

Matthew 7:3-5: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Jesus gave a reason we should not judge: "Why do you look at the _____ of _____ in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in _____ own eye?" Jesus is implying in this

Romans 14:1

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

1 Corinthians 13:12

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Romans 14:10

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³ God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

passage that we have obscured vision ourselves yet we judge a brother over a minor defect.

We are sometimes eager to help our brother get rid of his problem while we ignore a major problem in our own lives. Jesus called such people hypocrites! He commanded, "You _____, first take the plank out of your _____ eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the _____ from your brother's eye."

At Romans 14:1, Paul said "Accept him whose faith is _____, without passing _____ on disputable matters. At 1 Corinthians 13:12, Paul speaks to the real problem: "Now we see but a _____ reflection as in a mirror."

Jesus wasn't referring to real specks and planks. He was speaking about someone who has a small error of understanding while the person eager to help has a major misunderstanding of religious truth. We must be sure we know what we are asserting as truth before we confidently begin to "help" our brother with whatever minor issue he might have.

Many professing Christians believe that they alone have a handle on the truth. They might even believe that their particular group is the only one that will have salvation. Paul addressed that at Romans 14:10: "You, then, why do you _____ your brother? Or why do you look _____ on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."

Nevertheless, we are to judge certain matters that have to do with righteousness and wickedness *in* the church. At 1 Corinthians 5:12, Paul admonished the Corinthian church: "What business is it of _____ to judge those outside the church? Are you not to _____ those inside? God will _____ those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

The Corinthian church was experiencing and tolerating wickedness. Even though a man was sleeping with his father's wife, the church said nothing. Paul said they must make moral judgments and not even associate with people who claim to be believers and are living in sin. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-11.

True or False

- T F We must not associate with people who claim to be believers but who are living in sin.
- T F We must not judge what is right or wrong.
- T F We should never expel a person because of sin.

To Whom Should the Gospel Not Be Preached?

Matthew 7:6: "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces."

Jesus is talking about the sacred and valuable – the Gospel. His disciples would soon be going into the world to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a dying world. To whom should they not preach? He warned them not to preach to those he called dogs and pigs, saying, "If you do, they may _____ them under their feet, and then turn and _____ you to pieces."

At Matthew 10:14, Jesus instructed the apostles: "If anyone will not _____ you or _____ to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for _____ and _____ on the day of judgment than for that town."

Paul in particular learned the truth of Jesus' warning. The Jews often opposed him in various cities. At Acts 18:6, Paul obeyed Jesus' command not to give the sacred to the dogs: "When the _____ opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his _____ in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own _____!" On other occasions, Paul was beaten and stoned, perhaps when he didn't heed Jesus' command.

We must look for signs that God is working in the hearts of people. They are the ones to be given the sacred and valuable pearls of the Gospel. Those who violently oppose the Gospel are not yet ready to be entrusted with the invaluable Gospel.

God was working in the hearts of the Bereans. At Acts 17:11, it says, "they received the message with great _____ and examined the _____ every day to see if what Paul said was true."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Matthew 10:14-15

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Acts 18:6

But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." (See also Acts 13:44-52.)

Acts 17:11

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
- In the same way you judge others, you will be judged.
- Be certain you see clearly before you attempt to help your brother understand better.
- We must show mercy to others if we wish God to show mercy to us.

DAY 3

1 John 5:14

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

James 1:6-8

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Ask, Seek, Knock

Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Jesus gave us both kingdom rules and practical advice at Matthew 7:7. Often, my wife Dar and I marvel at the truth of this scripture in our everyday lives. Jesus commanded, "_____ and it will be given to you; _____ and you will find; _____ and the door will be opened to you." Note that Jesus' commands come with a promise in each case.

Then Jesus explained further at 7:8, "For everyone who asks _____; he who seeks _____; and to him who knocks, the door will be _____.

Jesus' commands about asking, seeking and knocking are based on the condition that the John stated at 1 John 5:14: "If we ask anything, according to _____, he hears us." That is quite different from asking anything and getting it.

James said much the same at James 1:6-8, though with a harsher tone: "When he asks, he must believe and not _____, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That

1 Corinthians 2:16

But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours.

James 4:2-3

You do not have, because you do not ask God.³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

man should _____ think he will receive _____ from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.” James sets forth the criteria that the person must believe with an unwavering faith – not doubting.

John said we should ask according to the will of God. Jesus always acted according to the will of God. At 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul said, “But _____ have the _____ of Christ.” Who is Paul speaking to?

At 1 Corinthians 1:2 we learn that he addressed his letter to: “The church of God in Corinth, to those _____ in Christ Jesus and called to be _____, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our _____ Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours.” Paul is saying that dedicated, holy, sanctified believers have the mind of Christ. If we ask, seek, or knock with the mind of Christ, our prayers will be answered.

At James 4:2-3, the _____ gave us another reason why when we ask we do not receive, “because you ask with wrong _____, that you may spend what you get on your _____.” It is obvious that James is referring to people that don’t have the mind of Christ and ask for things that are not the will of God.

Confidence in God

Matthew 7:9-11: “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Jesus used an example each parent could identify with – giving gifts to their children. He assured them, “If you, then, though you are _____, know how to give _____ gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give _____ gifts to those who ask him!”

We’ve learned, however, that God’s gifts must be sought with unwavering faith and according to the will of God – with the mind of Christ. Jesus’ teachings regarding asking, seeking, and knocking are for his

Matthew 26:39

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

John 9:2-3

His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

2 Corinthians 12:8

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

John 15:7-8

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you."⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

disciples – members of the kingdom of God.

Believers are sometimes faced with unanswered prayers, or prayers that are answered in ways contrary to their expectations. How did God answer Jesus' prayer? Let's look.

When facing imminent death on the cross, Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it is _____, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." (See Matthew 26:39.) We know God did not relieve Jesus of the cross. God's will superseded Jesus' wish.

All of John 9 is devoted to the story of Jesus' healing of a man born blind. At John 9:2-3, his disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who _____, this man or his parents, that he was _____ blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents _____," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of _____ might be displayed in his life. God caused a man to be born blind many years earlier so that the power of God would be displayed in his life when Jesus healed him."

Unpleasant events occur in our lives so that God may receive glory. We are his servants. He has the right to use us in any way he sees fit.

At 2 Corinthians 12:8 we learn that Paul pleaded with the Lord to remove a thorn in his flesh. But the Lord said, "My _____ is sufficient for you, for my _____ is made perfect in weakness."

At John 15:7-8, Jesus stated two essential criteria for our prayers to be answered: "If you _____ in me and my _____ remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you." We must remain in Jesus and his words must remain in us. If we obey this command, we will surely have the mind of Christ and will ask according to the will of God.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

DAY

4

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Matthew 22:39

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.

Summary Statements

- Ask and it will be given to you.
- Seek and you will find.
- Knock and the door will be opened to you.
- When we ask, we must believe and not doubt.
- We must ask according to the will of God.
- We must not have wrong motives when we ask.
- Our Father gives good gifts to those who ask him.
- God's will may not be what we ask for.

The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:12: So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The reverse – don't do to others what you would not want them to do to you – is found in rabbinic Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

Jesus stated the opposite and gave it a broader scope, "So in _____, do to _____ what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." By adding that this principle applies to *everything*, Jesus left no room for exceptions.

At Romans 13:8, Paul stated it slightly differently: saying that we have a "continuing _____ to _____ one another, for he who loves his _____ has fulfilled the law."

The second greatest commandment was recited by Jesus at Matthew 22:39: "_____ your neighbor as _____." This is another way to define the Golden Rule.

Not only are we to study what Jesus said is the way his disciples should live, we are also to obey the commandment Jesus said was second in importance of all the commands, which, when restated, is often

called "The Golden Rule." This command teaches us the way we must live in our relationships with believers and non-believers alike – Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do To You.

The Gate is Narrow

Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

John 10:7-9

"I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.

⁸ All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.

John 14:6

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus taught, "Enter through the _____ gate. For wide is the _____ and broad is the road that leads to _____, and many enter through it. But _____ is the gate and _____ the road that leads to life, and only a _____ find it."

Christianity is a hated religion because it is exclusive, not inclusive. John 10:7, 9 suggests why. Jesus said, "I tell you the _____, I am the _____ for the sheep. . . I am the gate; whoever enters through _____ will be saved." Jesus is saying what no other man can truthfully say – whoever enters through him will be saved.

Jesus made an even stronger statement at John 14:6: "I am the _____, the _____, and the _____. No one comes to the Father _____ through _____." There is no mistaking this message. Jesus is saying the only way to the Father is through him.

The world is awash in religions. Three of the largest – Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism – do not acknowledge that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, i.e., the only way to the Father. It is only Christianity that makes such an extraordinary claim. Christianity's claims are based on what the Lord Jesus himself said as recorded in the four Gospels. We learned earlier that everything Jesus said and did was the will of his Father, not his own. Therefore, Jesus' claims to be the only way to the Father were claims of God the Father himself.

All other religions fulfill Jesus' statement at Matthew 7:13 that "wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it."

Romans 1:5

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

Likely only a small percentage of those claiming to be Christians will respond to Jesus' warning that "small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." We've seen, and will see again pointedly, that there are many things God requires in order to gain eternal life.

To avoid any misunderstanding, keep in mind that *faith* is the *only* requirement for those who would be saved. God's grace combined with our faith will gain us eternal life. Here's the rub: faith requires obedience – the principal, necessary element that comes *from* faith. At Romans 1:5, Paul revealed that he had received apostleship in order to call people from among all the _____ to the _____ that comes from faith. Yes, it is the obedience that comes from faith that we will find is essential to our salvation. We've already learned that we are to be obedient to the teachings and commands of Jesus – the very subject of this Bible study.

A Tree and Its Fruit

Matthew 7:15-20: "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Jesus warned, "Watch out for _____ prophets. They come to you in _____ clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves." These people will look like one of you. They may be charismatic, appear warm, and loving. The difference is inside where it cannot be faked. They are not born-again believers.

At Matthew 7:16-20, Jesus tells how to recognize these false prophets: "By their _____ you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from _____, or figs from _____? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A _____ tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a _____ tree cannot bear good fruit. . . by their _____ you will recognize them."

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

Luke 6:45

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

In Arizona there are many citrus trees. Some of our streets are lined with ornamental orange trees. They're lovely, evergreen trees that can be trimmed in very attractive shapes. The oranges show through the leaves, giving the appearance of abundant fruit. One day I was walking by such trees and picked up an orange and peeled it. It was awful – totally inedible! You'd never know it from its appearance.

At Galatians 5:22, Paul tells us what is inside the true believer – “the _____ of the Spirit is _____, joy, peace, patience, kindness, _____, faithfulness, _____ and self-control.” This fruit is not planned or produced consciously. It is an involuntary result of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The false prophet will lack that, though many of those attributes can be faked for a while. Our job is to be discerning – to see what his “inside” is really like. First, though, we should examine our own lives. What kind of fruit are we bearing? When others look at our lives, what do they see? Are we among those play “Churchianity” or are we true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who have been born again and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

At Matthew 7:19, Jesus describes the end result of false prophets: “Every _____ that does not bear _____ fruit is cut down and thrown into the _____.” As we will see throughout this study, Jesus frequently uses the analogy of being cut down and thrown into the fire to describe those who are condemned by God.

Have you ever noticed that when two people stand quietly side by side you can tell almost nothing about them except what you can discern by their physical appearance. But when they open their mouths and speak, you can often tell where they come from, what their level of education is and their upbringing.

At Luke 6:45, Jesus tells us the primary way to discern the good man from the bad: “For out of the overflow of his _____ his _____ speaks.” His heart represents what is inside him; his mouth reveals what is inside.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.
- Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
- False prophets come in sheep's clothing; by their fruit you will recognize them.

Only the Obedient Will Be Saved

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

DAY

5

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Romans 1:5

We received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

Jesus said that everything he did and said while on earth was what his Father told him to do and say (John 8:28, 12:49-50, 14:10, 14:24, 14:31).

We've learned that it is essential for salvation that Jesus be our Lord. Jesus warned, "Not everyone who _____ to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will _____ the kingdom of heaven, but _____ he who _____ the will of my Father who is in heaven." It's not enough to call Jesus "Lord"; we must do what he says.

Many will say, "That's salvation by works; you're claiming you can be saved through obedience." Let's review again what it says at Ephesians 2:8-10: "For it is by _____ you have been saved, through _____ - and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God - not by _____, so that no one can boast."

In a prior lesson we learned at Romans 1:5 that Paul called people to the obedience that comes from _____. Thus, saving faith and obedience are inseparable: obedience is the necessary *evidence* of a saving faith.

We learned earlier that everything Jesus said and did while he was on earth was the will of His Father. Jesus revealed the *will of God* that we are to obey as Christians.

Hebrews 5:9

Jesus became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Luke 6:46

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

1 John 5:3

This is love for God: to obey his commands.

John 14:15

If you love me, you will obey what I command.

John 14:21

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." (See also John 14:23-24).

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

This is corroborated at Hebrews 5:9 where the author wrote that Jesus "became the source of eternal _____ for all who _____ him."

In this Bible study, we are learning Jesus' teachings and commands. But it's not enough to simply *know* what Jesus taught. Matthew 7:21 says it is "only he who _____ the will of my Father" who will enter the kingdom of heaven. At James 1:22 the warns: "Do not merely _____ to the word, and so _____ yourselves. _____ what it says."

At Luke 6:46, we see that even in Jesus' day men called Jesus "Lord," but didn't obey him. If Jesus is my Lord, I must obey him. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). When I gave myself to the Lord Jesus, he became my master and I became his bond-slave. The primary response of a slave to his master is to obey. To claim Jesus as Lord but not obey him is an oxymoron.

Finally, our obedience to our Lord Jesus and to God, our Father, is our way of showing our love to them. At John 14:15, Jesus said "If you _____ me, you will _____ what I command." Jesus says that our obedience is evidence of our love for him again at John 14:21: "Whoever has my commands and _____ them, he is the one who loves me."

Read John 14:15-17. What happens when we commit to love and obey Jesus? He asks the Father to give us the Holy Spirit. See Acts 5:32 to verify that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey him.

At Matthew 28:19-20, as Jesus was about to go into heaven, he gave his final instructions to his disciples: "Go into _____ the world and make _____ of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to _____ everything I have commanded you." We are to teach new disciples _____ Jesus commanded.

The purpose of this Bible study is to fulfill that command. We must first receive Jesus as our Lord and commit to obey him. Then the Father will give us the Holy Spirit. We must study Jesus' teachings and commands so that we'll know what to obey, and then obey them. As we do that, we'll enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. We will be born again – new creatures with a new nature, God will be our Father, and we will be his children.

What if We Don't Obey?

Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

What if we don't commit to obey the will of God? Jesus gave us a glimpse of what it will be like for such people at judgment day: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not _____ in your name, and in your _____ drive out demons and perform many _____?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you _____!'"

To me, this is one of the most frightening passages of Scripture. Surely those people believed they were saved. They called Jesus "Lord." They prophesied, drove out demons and did miracles in Jesus' name. Today, most would regard such people as Christians blessed with great spiritual gifts.

That's not how Jesus will regard them. He will say he *never* knew them. He will call them evildoers. These are people that did not obey him. The power by which they did these miraculous things was not the power of the Holy Spirit – they were never given the Holy Spirit. It is only those who *do* the will of God that will enter the kingdom of heaven. We're not saved because we think we're saved. We are saved if we do what our Lord Jesus tells us to do. We must be his obedient servants.

True or False

- T F If we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are assured of having eternal life.
- T F If Jesus is our Lord we must obey him.
- T F We must do the will of God to be saved.
- T F Obedience is not required for salvation.

Consider your own life. Have you been obedient to the Lord Jesus? _____ Is Jesus your Lord? _____

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- Calling Jesus "Lord" is not enough.
- Jesus must be our Lord and we must obey him if we would be saved.
- Whatever Jesus said is the will of God that Christians are to obey.
- Jesus only *knows* those who receive him as Lord and commit to obey him. All others are evildoers.

Week 7

Memory Verse:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

The Wise and Foolish Builders

Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Jesus told contrasting stories of two builders, one a wise man, the other a foolish man: "Therefore everyone who hears _____ and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the _____. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its _____ on the _____. But everyone who hears _____ and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it _____ with a great crash."

Four words are repeated twice that are the key to the story: _____.

They are, "these words of mine." Jesus was on the Mount teaching the people all the commands we've been studying. Imagine the strong impact when he taught these people that they are to hear *his* words and put *them* into _____.

This subject is exceedingly important. Many cults and deviant teachings have arisen because people are confused about what teaching they should follow. Some have said, "Paul wrote to the Gentiles so we must follow the Pauline Epistles." Others claim that because the entire Bible was given by God, the Old Testament Law must also be obeyed, which included animal sacrifices. Very few people do this, though recently I saw a video clip of a cult in Peru who did that.

Fellow lawyer Scott Hillstrom and I were enjoying a coffee at the Coffee House in Christchurch, New Zealand. Scott said something that surprised me, "All I need is the red-letter part of the New Testament." At the time I thought that was an outrageous statement, thinking, "All the New Testament is the inspired word of God." Upon reflection, however, Scott was right. Jesus' words are what we need most. Everything else must be interpreted based on them.

The emphasis throughout the New Testament is on the words, the teachings, and commands of Jesus! In the prior lesson we saw one of his commands at John 14:15: "obey what *I* command." Likewise, John 14:21 refers to "*my* commands." John 14:23 speaks of "*my* teaching."

As noted before, in the great commission Jesus requires believers to make disciples "teaching them to _____ everything ____ have _____ you."

At 1 Corinthians 9:21, Paul said he was "under Christ's law." At Galatians 6:2, he referred to "the law of Christ." Paul recognized that the body of teachings and commands taught by Jesus was the standard by which the Christian life would be judged. At 2 Thessalonians 1:8, Paul spoke of the _____ of our Lord Jesus.

At Matthew 24:35, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but _____ will never pass away."

All of these citations – and many more – point to the words of Jesus as being of paramount importance.

John 14:15

If you love me, you will obey *what I command*.

John 14:21

Whoever has *my commands* and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.

John 14:23

"If anyone loves me, he will obey *my teaching*."

Matthew 28:20

". . . teaching them to obey everything *I have commanded you*."

1 Corinthians 9:21

I am not free from God's law but am under *Christ's law*.

Galatians 6:2

. . . you will fulfill the law of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:8

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey *the gospel of our Lord Jesus*.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away, but *my words* will never pass away.

Mark 8:38:

"If anyone is ashamed of me and *my words* in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

John 1:1, 10

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

True or False

T F All Scripture is equally important.

T F The words of Jesus are what we must obey.

Jesus said that the man who heard his words and did not put them into practice was a foolish man. The storms came against his house and it fell with a great crash.

We must build our house – our understanding of true Christianity – on the words of Jesus and put them into practice. Then we will have built upon the rock and when the storms of life come, we will remain secure and solid on the rock.

Jesus spoke about the end times at Mark 8:38: "If anyone is ashamed of me and _____ in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of _____ when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

God forbid that the Lord Jesus would be ashamed of us. Let us honor and obey the Lord Jesus and *his words*.

Jesus Taught With Authority

Matthew 7:28-29: When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law."

Jesus, at 12 years old and unschooled by the religious authorities of the Jews, had amazed their leaders when he spoke with them in the temple. Now he was speaking to hundreds and thousands of people, changing the Old Testament Law, and exhorting those listening to hear and obey what he was saying.

Unbeknownst to most, it was the Son of God talking to them. It was the Word of God made flesh dwelling with man, teaching them the will of God. (See John 1:1, 10.)

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- We must honor and obey the words of Jesus.
- When we hear and obey Jesus' words we are building on the rock.
- Jesus' teachings and commands are Christ's law.
- Jesus' words will never pass away.
- We must teach new disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded.
- Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, taught with authority.

DAY

2

Jesus Heals the Leper

Matthew 8:1-4: When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ² A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. ⁴ Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

The leper said, "Lord, if you are _____, you _____ make me clean." Did this man have faith to be healed? _____ His request was based only on Jesus' willingness to heal him. He specifically stated, ". . . you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out and touched the man. "I am _____," he said. "Be _____." Jews were not allowed to touch people with leprosy. Lepers were required to shout that they were lepers and unclean when they were around people. Jesus showed compassion to this man by touching him. He

also showed himself above the Old Testament Law by breaking the regulation forbidding touching of a leper which said that he would then become unclean.

At Matthew 8:4, Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell _____. But go, show yourself to the _____ and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

In order to be reintegrated into society, the man had to conform to the regulations concerning leprosy. He had to make an offering and be declared healed (clean) by the priest. Jesus commanded him to do this so that his restoration would be complete.

The Faith of the Centurion

Read Matthew 8:5-13

The Centurion astonished Jesus with his great faith. He asked for healing for his servant. Jesus agreed to go with him. But the Centurion said, "Just say the word and my _____ will be _____."

Many had seen people healed by Jesus' touch or had seen them healed in his presence. But this Centurion believed Jesus could heal from afar by just saying the word.

Jesus responded, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." Jesus continued, "I say to you that many will come from the _____ and the _____, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of _____.¹² But the _____ of the kingdom will be thrown _____, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and _____ of teeth." Jesus foretold the Gospel being taken to the Gentiles. Sadly, he also foretold that most of the Jews would reject him and be thrown outside the kingdom of heaven into hell.

It is very important to note in this story that Jesus was not physically present to heal the Centurion's servant. He didn't put his hands on the servant to heal him. Likewise, Jesus is not physically present when we need healing. Yet by faith we know that he heals today, just as he healed the servant.

If we are true believers, we know that Jesus is with us in spirit. At John 14:23, Jesus promised he would come to those who love and obey him and make his home with them.

John 14:23

"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Jesus Heals Many

Read Matthew 8:14-17

Who asked Jesus to heal Peter's mother-in-law?

How did Jesus heal her? _____

How many of the sick did Jesus heal? _____

The Lord Jesus saw Peter's sick mother-in-law in the same way he sees and hears us even before we think to pray for his help. He also protects us from harm that we don't even know exists. Our faith should be strengthened when we realize that all who came to him were healed; none were turned away.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **If Jesus is willing, he can do anything. He can heal any disease, and accomplish any purpose.**
- **We need faith like the centurion's – a belief that Jesus can heal anywhere, anytime.**
- **Jesus drove out demons with a word.**

The Cost of Following Jesus

Matthew 8:18-22

When a teacher of the law told Jesus he would follow him wherever he'd go, Jesus replied, "Foxes have _____ and birds of the air have _____, but the Son of Man has no _____ to lay his head." Jesus seems to be saying that to follow him is not fun and games. There would be no place this man could call home. Jesus and his disciples had no permanent dwelling place.

DAY

3

Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me _____ and _____ my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the _____ bury their own _____." Almost certainly this man's father was still alive. Apparently he wanted to close out a chapter in his life before following Jesus. Jesus would not accommodate him – his command was to follow him now! Jesus implied that this man's parents were spiritually dead. He said, "Let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus Calms the Storm

Matthew 8:23-27

God continues to reveal more about his Son through this story. Some of Jesus' companions were fishermen who knew the lake well, yet this storm made them afraid. They woke Jesus saying, "Lord, save us. We're going to drown." Oftentimes the words "We're going to drown," are emphasized more than what they said first: "Lord, save us!" The disciples had seen Jesus do amazing things, though never anything like this. They woke him, hoping he could save them.

Jesus' replied, "You of little _____, why are you so _____?" Then he got up and _____ the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

It's possible that Jesus rebuked his disciples because they feared. He had already taught them to be anxious for nothing. Although they asked Jesus to save them, they didn't have the faith to know that he could. This was beyond anything they had ever seen him do. After Jesus calmed the winds and waves, they asked, "What kind of _____ is this? Even the _____ and the _____ obey him!"

God revealed to them – and to us – that his Son has all power and authority in heaven and on earth. We also need to trust that he can and will do all things.

The Healing of Two Demon-possessed Men

Read Matthew 8:28-34

(See also Mark 5:1-17 and Luke 8:26-37.)

This passage of scripture tells us of violent, demon-possessed men. The demons in these men recognized Jesus, shouting, "What do you want with us, _____"

Luke 5:8

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

of _____?" The demons revealed their knowledge of their future judgment day when they asked Jesus, "Have you come here to _____ us before the _____ time?"

After they begged to go into a herd of pigs, Jesus said, "_____." The entire herd rushed down a steep bank into the lake and died in the water. Why is this revealed to us? Perhaps God wants to show us further evidence of the reality of demons and what they are capable of.

When the herdsmen informed the townspeople about what had happened, they all came out to see Jesus. Instead of welcoming him and acknowledging his saving power – clearly evident in the formerly demon-possessed men – they _____ with him to _____ their region.

What is it about Jesus that caused such a reaction? At Luke 5:8, in a similar situation, after Jesus had caused Peter to have a supernatural catch of fish, Peter said, "Go _____ from me, Lord; I am a _____ man!" Is it fear of being too near because of our guilt?

Where do you stand? Are you willing to worship Jesus so long as he doesn't get too close? Describe your relationship to the Lord Jesus: _____

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Summary Statements

- **Following Jesus does not imply luxurious living.**
- **When Jesus calls, he wants you to follow immediately.**
- **We are to be calm and trusting even in life-threatening circumstances.**
- **Jesus has power to control nature.**
- **We must welcome the Lord Jesus, not ask him to leave us.**

DAY 4

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

Instead of studying the Matthew 9:1-8 passage, please read Mark 2:3-12. The story as told in Mark includes more details that will help you become more familiar with the story.

(See also Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 5:18-26.)

In this familiar story, we read about four men who bring their paralytic friend to Jesus to be healed. Because they couldn't get through the crowd, they dug through the roof and lowered him through the opening to where Jesus was.

When Jesus saw their faith he said, "_____, your _____ are _____." As we read, the teachers of the law thought to themselves, "He's _____! Who can forgive _____ but God alone?" In response to their mental criticism, Jesus asked, "Which is easier: to say to the _____, 'Your sins are _____,' or to say 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get _____, take your _____ and go _____."

The paralytic got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This _____ everyone and they _____ God, saying, "We have _____ seen _____ like this!"

Scripture has already shown us that Jesus can heal. This time we're taught that Jesus can also forgive sins. The teachers of the law were correct in that God alone can forgive sins. They failed to recognize, however, that God the Son was in their presence. Do you realize that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he has the power to forgive your sins?
YES NO

The Calling of Matthew

Read Matthew 9:9-13

When Jesus called him, Matthew got up and followed him. Jesus then went to Matthew's home and had dinner with him and his friends. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your _____ eat with tax _____ and 'sinners'?"

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a _____, but the _____. But go and

Matthew 23:4

They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have _____ come to call the righteous, but _____."

Jesus associated with the "sinners" of his day. Even though the tax collectors were looked down upon as corrupt people who had sold out to Rome, Jesus ate with them and called one of them to be his disciple.

Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6 to the Pharisees: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." When Jesus came, the religious leaders were legalistic. They performed the required sacrifices and meticulously tithed, but they lacked mercy. At Matthew 23:4, Jesus said of them, "They tie up _____ loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a _____ to move them."

How does Hosea 6:6 speak to you? Please explain:

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

Read Matthew 9:14-15

"John's disciples" refers to the disciples of John the Baptist. They asked Jesus, "How is it that we and the Pharisees _____, but your _____ do not fast?" Apparently, it was customary for religious Jews to fast. Their question was reasonable because Jesus was considered an important religious teacher.

Jesus responded by associating "mourning" with fasting: "How can the guests of the _____ mourn while he is with them? The time will _____ when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then _____ will fast." The last sentence shows that Jesus was well aware of his mission; that he would be taken from them by the cross, and then by his ascension into heaven.

Patches and Wineskins

Matthew 9:16-17 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. ¹⁷ Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

Jesus uses two analogies here that convey the same message. First he says, "No one sews a patch of _____ cloth on an old _____, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the _____ worse." This is an example of using everyday knowledge to make a point everyone can understand. Likely, many garments were patched in those days.

The second analogy is about wineskins. It was a known fact that fermenting wine stretched wineskins. The wineskins could not be re-used because they could no longer stretch. They would simply burst. Jesus said, "the skins will _____, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined."

The key is found in the last sentence: "No, they pour new _____ into new _____, and both are preserved."

Jesus was not referring to literal cloth and wineskins. He was talking about the Gospel – his teachings and commands. He said that you can't take his Gospel and layer it onto something old – the analogy is an old cloth or an old wineskin. His Gospel must not be layered onto Judaism and the old Law of Moses. If it is, both will be ruined.

The Judaizers attempted to do just that as they sought to change the Gospel taught to the Galatians to one that required keeping Judaism's holy days, circumcision of the males, and certain eating restrictions. Paul's response to that was one of the strongest in all of Scripture (see Galatians 1:9): "If anybody is preaching to you a _____ other than what you accepted, let him be eternally _____."

The Lord Jesus' Gospel brought freedom from slavery to sin and freedom from Moses' Law.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Galatians 1:9

If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

DAY 5

Summary Statements

- **Jesus heals and forgives sins.**
- **Be determined to bring requests to Jesus.**
- **Jesus associated with "sinners" and ate with them.**
- **Jesus knew his time would come to die and leave his disciples.**
- **Don't add the Gospel to something else.**

Examples of Great Faith

Read Matthew 9:18-26

A ruler came and knelt before Jesus and said, "My daughter has just _____. But come and put your hand on her, and she will _____." Notice his humble posture: he came and knelt before Jesus. He then showed his great faith when he said, "But _____ and put your _____ on her and she will _____." His attitude and faith were so powerful that Jesus simply got up and went with him.

A woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years interrupted their journey. She came up and _____ the edge of his _____. She said to herself, "If I only _____ his cloak, I will be healed." Jesus turned and saw her. "Take _____, daughter," he said, "your _____ has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

The ruler must have heard and seen what Jesus had been doing. Great faith arose in him. He believed that this person could bring his daughter back to life. The ruler assured Jesus that he had faith in him. He knew Jesus could raise his daughter from the dead. Note that up to this point, there is no recorded miracle in the book of Matthew where Jesus has raised anyone from the dead.

The woman with the blood issue somehow knew in her heart that if she managed to touch Jesus' robe, she would be healed. Note that there is no prior record in any of the Gospels of anyone being healed by touching Jesus' robe. God must have given her both the idea to touch his robe and faith to believe that, by doing so, she could be healed.

Explain why you need the same faith, to believe Jesus can do for you things you've never heard of him doing: _____

The story returns to the ruler and his daughter: When Jesus entered the ruler's _____ and saw the _____ players and the noisy crowd, he said, "Go away. The girl is not _____ but asleep." But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put _____, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. The news of what Jesus did spread throughout the region.

Likely, the flute players and the noisy crowd were a group hired to mourn publicly. God seemed to have orchestrated these events so that all would agree that the little girl had indeed died. Many had probably seen the dead girl and were convinced that she was dead. Jesus went in and took the girl by the _____, and she _____ up.

These events increased Jesus' credibility when the people learned that this "Teacher" could raise people from the dead.

Did you know that people are being raised from the dead in many countries? In most cases, this happens in a place where there is someone with great faith, and a place where God wants to authenticate his Son as Lord and King and Master and Savior.

Is there something in your life that needs to be raised from the dead? It could be your health, your finances, your marriage, or children who have strayed. Ask the Lord Jesus to touch you, or your loved one, or whatever you need raised from the dead: _____

Remember James 1:6-7: We must believe and not doubt.

True or False

T F We must ask for only what we know Jesus did.

T F We can ask for anything that is according to the will of God.

James 1:6-7

When he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **A prayer in humility and faith has great power.**
- **The woman with the issue of blood did what she believed would heal her.**
- **Many people knew the ruler's daughter was dead.**
- **Ask for anything you need; Jesus has all power.**
- **We must believe and not doubt.**

Week

8

Memory Verse:

For this very reason Jesus died and rose from the dead, that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living (Romans 14:9).

Jesus Heals the Blind and Mute

Please read Matthew 9:27-34.

Two blind men followed Jesus calling out, "Have _____ on us, _____ of David!" Finally they were in Jesus' presence. Jesus asked them, "Do you believe I am _____ to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. Then he _____ their eyes and said, "According to your _____ will it be done to you"; and their _____ was restored.

The blind men realized that it would be merciful if Jesus healed them. They also had the faith to ask and receive healing.

While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not _____ was brought to Jesus. And when the _____ was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "_____ like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

This miracle is especially significant because the Jewish exorcists always required the demons to speak before they would cast it out. Thus, they could not cast a demon out of a mute person. Jesus seemed to ignore that and simply drove out the demon. Again Jesus showed power and authority that the people had never seen before. As they said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." The Pharisees, however, denied his power, claiming it was by Satan himself that Jesus drove out demons.

The Workers Are Few

Read Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the _____ and _____, teaching in their synagogues, _____ the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and _____. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were _____ and helpless, like _____ without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The _____ is plentiful but the _____ are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out _____ into his harvest field."

The updated commission for you and me is found at Matthew 28:18-20: We are to make _____ of *all* nations. After baptizing them we are to _____ them to _____ everything Jesus commanded. The harvest is still plentiful. The workers are still few, partly because Christians don't seem to realize that each one of them is to make disciples and fulfill the great commission by teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded.

Jesus said we are to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his field.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Read Matthew 10:1-10

This passage of Scripture describes how Jesus sent out the twelve. This was their first time out on their own. He first called them to him and gave them _____ to drive out evil spirits and to heal _____ disease and sickness. He gave them instructions: "Do not go among the _____ or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of _____. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the

Matthew 28:18-20

". . . All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.

sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out _____. Freely you have received, freely _____. Do _____ take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take _____ bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.”

Note in the first verse how Jesus prepared his disciples by giving them authority to do what he was commanding them to do. This is also how the Lord Jesus will prepare us when he commissions us.

In verse 5, Jesus instructed them not to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans. Why do you suppose he did this? Could it be that he was making sure the Jews were without excuse? If he and his disciples had gone to others, the Jews could later claim that their Messiah hadn't come to them. How then would they recognize him? Our commission is different – it is to all nations. (See Matthew 28:19.)

In verse 8, Jesus commanded the disciples to do everything he was doing – healing the sick, casting out demons, and even raising the dead. He said to do this freely. In verses 9-10, Jesus said they were to take nothing with them, no money, and no extra clothes.

What lesson can we learn from this? If the Lord Jesus sends us out without anything extra, we'll find he can and will provide all that is needed.

Blessings or Curses

Read Matthew 10:11-13

Jesus told the disciples what they were to do as they preach the good news. They were to search for and stay in the home of some worthy person at each _____. As they entered the home, they were to give it their _____. For a deserving home, they were to let their _____ rest on it; if it is not, they were to let their peace return to them.

Leave Those Who Will Not Listen

Read Matthew 10:14-15

Jesus said something frightening: “If anyone will not welcome you or _____ to your _____, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that

Acts 13:50-51

They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹ So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for _____ and _____ on the day of _____ than for that town. I am sending you out like sheep among _____."

Paul and Barnabas obeyed this command years later when they were persecuted. They "shook the _____ from their _____ in protest against them and went to Iconium."

If we are speaking with people who reject us and our words and become abusive, we should heed Jesus' command to leave them, shake the dust off our feet, and find someone else who is receptive to the Gospel.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus often heals according to the person's faith.**
- **Put no limits on what the Lord Jesus can do.**
- **The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.**
- **The twelve were sent out to preach with only the clothes on their backs.**
- **People who reject and won't hear the Gospel will be cursed by God.**

There is Danger; Be Shrewd and Innocent

Matthew 10:16 "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Jesus told his disciples, "I am sending you out like _____ among wolves." We know that sheep are in great danger among wolves. Without a good shepherd, wolves will ravage a flock of sheep.

DAY
2

Therefore, we must be as wise as _____ and as innocent as _____. We must be innocent of any wrongdoing, but thoughtful about what we do so that we do not unnecessarily bring harm upon ourselves.

Be on Guard Against Men

Read Matthew 10:17-20

Jesus warned his disciples and prophesied about what would happen to them: "Be on your _____ against men; they will hand you over to the local _____ and _____ you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before _____ and _____ as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not _____ about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the _____ of your _____ speaking through you."

At John 2:23-25, we see that though Jesus had the temporary adulation of the people because of the miraculous _____ he was doing, he would not _____ himself to them. He knew how fickle they could be and that one day they would turn on him and demand that he be crucified.

Jesus' prophecies came true. Paul was arrested and testified before kings; other apostles were arrested and brought before the Jewish leaders.

Family Members Will Betray You

Matthew 10:21: "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death."

Jesus prophesied about what would happen in later times: "Brother will _____ brother to _____, and a _____ his child; children will _____ against their parents and have them put to _____."

At Matthew 24:10, When speaking of the end times, Jesus prophesied much the same: "At that time _____ will turn away from the _____ and will betray and _____ each other."

Many speak of a great end-time revival, but Scripture does not. It speaks of a falling away from the faith and great persecution. At Matthew 24:9, Jesus said,

John 2:23-25

²³ Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. ²⁴ But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. ²⁵ He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Matthew 24:9-11

"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people."

Matthew 24:12-13

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

2 Corinthians 2:15-16

For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. (See also Colossians 1:21-23.)

Colossians 1:22-23

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

"then you will be handed over to be _____ and put to death, and you will be _____ by all nations because of me."

All Men Will Hate You

Matthew 10:22: All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. (See also Mark 13:13.)

This short verse contains three important truths. The first is Jesus' prophecy: "All _____ will hate you." We're already seeing this in a way that has never been seen before - Islam is a religion that hates Jews and Christians. The next truth is the last part of that sentence, ". . . because of me . . ." There is persecution of Christians throughout the world because of Jesus. He made exclusive claims that others hate. He said he is the only way to God (John 14:6). Most like to think there are many ways to God. Remember what Paul said at 2 Corinthians 2:15-16: To such people we are the smell of death.

Finally, Jesus speaks of the need to persevere. He said, "he who stands _____ to the _____ will be saved." Paul understood and preached the same at 1 Corinthians 15:2, "By this _____ you are saved, if you hold _____ to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in _____."

When Persecuted Flee

Mathew 10:23: "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes." (Read Acts 9:23-25 of Paul's escape.)

We learned that in personal relationships we are to turn the other cheek when a man strikes us. Not so when persecution comes. Jesus commanded: "When you are _____ in one place, _____ to another."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Be shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.**
- **Be on guard against men.**
- **The Holy Spirit will give you words to speak in your defense.**
- **In the end times, Christians will be betrayed to death by their family members.**
- **In the end times all men will hate us, but we must stand firm to the end or we will have believed in vain.**
- **When persecuted in one place, flee to another.**

DAY 3

Romans 8:29

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

We Must Be Like Jesus

Matthew 10:24-25: "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!"

Jesus taught, "A _____ is not above his teacher, nor a _____ above his master. It is enough for the student to be _____ his teacher, and the servant _____ his master. If the _____ of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the _____ of his household."

The essence of discipleship is that the disciple becomes like his master. We've seen many times that we are called to make disciples of all nations. The purpose is to teach people to be like Jesus.

It is absolutely necessary that we be like Jesus. At Romans 8:29, Paul revealed that God has predestined that all true believers *will* be conformed to the likeness of his Son, our Lord Jesus. This is not an option, but a requirement God established before the foundations of the earth. If we would be saved, we must be like Jesus.

1 John 2:6

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

The John understood the same. At 1 John 2:6 he said, "Whoever claims to _____ in him [God] must _____ as Jesus did."

Because this is a salvation issue, we must teach new disciples the teachings and commands of Jesus. As they begin to learn his teachings and commands, they come to know him and his ways. As a result, they are more and more conformed to his likeness and they learn to "walk as Jesus did."

Do Not Be Afraid

Matthew 10:26-27: "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

Jesus knew that hardship and persecution would visit his followers soon and that the natural man would be afraid of the people who would oppose them. Again he said, "So do not be _____ of them."

Then Jesus said, "There is nothing _____ that will not be _____, or hidden that will not be made known." What does he mean? One possibility is the great day of judgment when all men's deeds will be laid bare before the judge. He may be referring to events in the natural world. Certainly, little remained hidden for President Bill Clinton when one fact after another was revealed about the relationships that he tried to hide.

Then Jesus said, "What I tell you in the _____, speak in the _____; what is whispered in your _____, proclaim from the roofs." Jesus is saying that whatever he reveals to his followers is not to be hidden, whether it is revealed in dreams or visions or quietly told to them during the night. He is saying that he does not give us information that is to be kept quiet or that is just for us. Whatever he reveals is to be shared for the benefit, warning, rebuking, and encouragement of others.

True or False

T F Jesus reveals things to us for only our benefit.

T F We should not tell others what Jesus gives us privately.

1 Peter 2:17

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Fear God!

Matthew 10:28: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Today many people falsely say that to "fear" God means that we are to respect him or to be in awe of him. At Matthew 10:28, Jesus dispelled that false teaching. He said, "Do not be afraid of those who _____ the _____ but cannot kill the _____. Rather, be _____ of the one who can destroy both soul and body in _____."

Jesus used the word "afraid". Most people would be afraid (or "fear") the person who can kill his body. Jesus said not to be afraid of such a person, but instead to fear him (God alone) who can destroy both body and soul in hell. There is no element of "respect" or "awe" in this. It is naked fear.

At 1 Peter 2:17, the told us to love other believers, to fear God, and to honor the king. At Proverbs 1:7, King Solomon began writing his Proverbs with the truth: "The _____ of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

There are many instances in Scripture where people disobeyed God and were destroyed. God warned Israel. Nevertheless, they disobeyed him and God's warnings came true.

Throughout this study we have found – and will continue to find – teachings and commands that are salvation issues. Each says that unless we obey, we will not, or cannot, have eternal life. God means what he says; we can count on it.

God Values You!

Matthew 10:29-31: Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Some might think God is only concerned with the macro view of the world – interested only in great events, perhaps between nations or the leaders of

nations. Jesus gives us a much greater view of God. He reveals that God is also concerned with the micro view – even the smallest details. Jesus said, “Are not two _____ sold for a penny? Yet not _____ of them will fall to the ground apart from the _____ of your Father.”

Then Jesus told us something science has only learned recently: “And even the very _____ of your head are all _____. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” It was only when science learned about the incredible complexity of DNA that we learned that God could have numbered the hairs of our head through our DNA. In fact, if we had the capacity to read DNA properly, we might be able to determine the number of hairs on our head.

When we wonder if something is too insignificant for God to care about, let’s remember that he is interested in the smallest details of our lives and that even the very hairs on our heads are numbered.

We also learn that our God is infinite in his greatness. Considering all the people on this earth, no computer is capable of storing the volume of knowledge Jesus reveals that God has and knows.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- We must be like Jesus if we would be saved.
- Do not be afraid of those who oppose you.
- Fear God.
- God cares about the smallest details of our lives.

DAY 4

We Must Acknowledge Him, Not Disown Him

Matthew 10:32-33: "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

On page 6, I included a story handed down from the early church regarding a first-century Christian who was accosted by Romans soldiers. The soldiers commanded that he greet them by saying, "Caesar is Lord." The man refused. Instead he said, "Jesus is Lord." The soldiers arrested him and took him and his family to the Coliseum in Rome where he was again commanded to say "Caesar is Lord." The father refused and one by one his family was thrown to the lions.

This story very clearly illustrates what it means to refuse to disown Jesus. Although it cost this man the lives of his family, as well as his own, he refused to disown his Lord. The soldiers even said, "You don't have to mean it. Just say the words and you can go free." But this man understood what Jesus said in verse 33: "But whoever disowns me before _____, I will _____ him before my Father in heaven."

Luke 9:24

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."

The man might have also learned what Jesus said at Luke 9:24, "For whoever wants to _____ his life will _____ it, but whoever _____ his life for me will save it."

To disown Jesus is **a salvation issue**. Can you imagine what it would be like to stand before the throne of God and hear Jesus say, "I don't know him"? This can surely happen if you have disowned him.

However, this is not the unforgivable sin. If you have disowned him, you must wholeheartedly repent. Confess it to God; ask for forgiveness and strength to properly acknowledge him before men whenever you have the opportunity.

We could disown Jesus in subtle ways. What actions would disown Jesus? _____

Jesus Brought a Sword; Division Will Result

Matthew 10:34-36: "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.
³⁵ For I have come to turn `a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household."

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

This is shocking! Isn't Jesus called the Prince of Peace? At John 14:27, Jesus said, "_____ I leave with you, _____ peace I give you." Yet in this passage Jesus says he didn't come to bring _____ to the earth, but a _____. The key to understanding is found in Jesus' next sentence: "For I have come to turn `a man against his _____, a daughter against her _____, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man's enemies will be the _____ of his _____ household."

At John 14:27, Jesus is speaking about the peace within each of us as believers in him. We will have the peace that passes understanding.

It is in our relationships with others that we find the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy of the sword. Family relationships are sometimes split when one of the members becomes a Christian and the others are bitterly opposed. Islam teaches that it is honorable to kill a family member that converts to Christianity. Radical Hindus, Chinese communist authorities, Muslims, etc., persecute Christians, even to death.

In the history of the church, first the Jews persecuted Christians to the death. Then the Roman Empire sought to crush Christianity by killing many, sometimes releasing lions to kill them in the Coliseum. The Roman Catholic Church hunted down, tortured and killed thousands of true believers, sometimes by burning them at the stake.

At Matthew 24:9-13, Jesus prophesied of a time "at the end" when true believers will be "_____ and put to _____, and you will be _____ by all nations because of me." Jesus said, "At that time many will turn _____ from the faith and will betray and _____ each other."

Matthew 24:9-13:

"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."

Love Jesus Above ALL

Matthew 10:37-39: "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

It is hard to imagine more radical statements than those made by Jesus in this passage. The people are listening to a person they believe is a Jewish rabbi – a teacher. This teacher is saying to them, "Anyone who _____ his father or mother more than _____ is not worthy of me; _____ who loves his son or daughter _____ than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his _____ and follow me is not worthy of me." Surely anyone listening must have been astonished to find Jesus making such claims.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

These claims were consistent with the prophecies of the coming Messiah – the Son of God, who alone would be worthy of such loyalty and love and praise. It was also consistent with Matthew 22:37, where Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with _____ your soul and with all your _____." Jesus is God the Son.

Luke 9:24

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."

When Dar and I left the comfort of living in the United States where we enjoyed our children, grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters and many friends, to move to New Zealand, we often heard people say to us, "Oh, I could never do that. I could never leave my grandchildren!" I often thought of this passage when I heard this. One of my daughters rebuked me, saying, "How can you go away and desert your grandchildren?" My mother said, "You won't be here for our funeral." Again, this passage came to mind.

Once again Jesus presents a salvation issue: "Whoever finds his life will _____ it, and whoever _____ his life for my sake will _____ it." The term "find" makes this a little hard to understand. It is clearer when looking at Luke 9:24, where Jesus said, "Whoever wants to _____ his life will _____ it, but whoever _____ his life for me will save it."

If we are true bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus, our lives are not our own. They belong to him. We have no

right to try to save our lives for ourselves. It is our duty to lose our lives for our Master. He has promised to reward those who do this with eternal life.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **If we acknowledge Jesus before men, he will acknowledge us before his Father in heaven.**
- **If we disown him before men, he will disown us.**
- **Following Jesus will often bring division in relationships; family members will turn against each other.**
- **We are to love Jesus above all others, including our own lives.**

He Who Receives You Receives Me

Read Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus sets up a chain of command: "He who receives _____ receives _____, and he who receives _____ receives the one who sent me." At 2 Corinthians 5:20 Paul says we are Christ's ambassadors, the very same concept Jesus is teaching.

An ambassador is "received" by the foreign government to which he's sent. The ambassador has the authority to commit his country. Jesus says that we represent him, as if we are his ambassadors. Those who receive him because they received us, will also receive his Father.

Then, in verse 41, Jesus talks about the rewards given to those who receive his representatives. The key, I believe, is in verse 42. Jesus plainly says that if anyone receives someone because he is Jesus' disciple, he will be rewarded and not lose his reward.

DAY 5

2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Helping other believers is something everyone should be eager to do, as Jesus promised rewards for those who do.

Authentication of Jesus

Read Matthew 11:2-6

John the Baptist heard in prison what Christ was doing. He sent his disciples to ask him, "Are _____ the _____ who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus replied, "God back and _____ to John what you _____ and _____: The blind receive _____, the lame walk, those who have _____ are cured, the deaf _____, the _____ are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of _____."

At John 1:29, we read where John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the _____ of God, who takes _____ the _____ of the world!"

How sad it must have been for Jesus to be asked that question by John's disciples. Who could know better than John that it was Jesus who was the promised Messiah. But John was languishing in prison, incarcerated by King Herod. He is an example to us of how we can sometimes doubt, even what we know is true. But Jesus was gracious and sent back word to John about the miraculous things he was doing, knowing that John would realize such things could only be done by God working through his Messiah.

Jesus chose to authenticate himself to John by reciting the miraculous things he was doing. At John 20:31, we read that Jesus' miracles were used in Jesus' day to authenticate him as the _____, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

God continues to authenticate Jesus even today by doing powerful miracles among those who do not know him, mostly in third-world countries.

How has God made Jesus real to you? _____

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 20:31

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Who Was John the Baptist?

Read Matthew 11:7-15

Jesus began to talk to the crowd about John the Baptist. He called him a _____, and more than a _____. In addition to being a prophet, John was the fulfillment of the prophecy at Malachi 3:1: "I will send my _____ ahead of you, who will _____ your way before you."

Malachi 3:1

I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

In verse 11, Jesus sets up what seems to be a contradiction. First he says, "Among those born of _____, there has not risen anyone _____ than John the Baptist." Then Jesus said, "Yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." How can these two statements be reconciled? One way is to recognize that John the Baptist was still under the Old Covenant. Jesus' death on the cross would begin a New Covenant in Jesus' blood. Those saved under the New Covenant were greater than those who relied on the blood of animals to take away their sins.

Malachi 4:5-6

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

In verse 12, Jesus said, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it." The NIV notes suggest that forceful men enter the kingdom and become Christ's disciples. To do this takes spiritual courage, vigor, power and determination because of ever-present persecution.

In verse 14, Jesus said, "And if you are willing to _____ it, he is the _____ who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear." At Malachi 4:5, we read the prophecy: "I will send you the _____ Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes." Likely, this prophecy has a double fulfillment. See Revelation 11 for the second fulfillment, where Elijah is likely one of the two witnesses spoken of in this chapter.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Week 9

Memory Verse:

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it (Luke 9:24).

Summary Statements

- Those who receive us receive Jesus.
- Those who receive Jesus receive God, his Father.
- Jesus is authenticated to each of us through the great miracles God did through him.
- John the Baptist was both a prophet and an answer to prophecy.
- Believers under the New Covenant are greater than those under the Old Covenant.

What Would the Jews Accept?

Matthew 11:16-19

Having just talked about John the Baptist, Jesus continued: "To what can I compare _____ generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and _____ out to others: 'We played the _____ for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not _____.' For John came neither eating nor _____, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and _____, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of _____ and "sinners.'" But _____ is proved right by her actions."

God the Father and the Lord Jesus were long-suffering toward the religious leaders. No matter what God did to get their attention, they wouldn't listen or respond. Instead, whomever God sent to them – whether John the Baptist or Jesus the Messiah – they found fault. They attacked the person so they could deny the message.

What does Jesus mean by "But wisdom is proved right by her actions"? _____

Do we ever denigrate the messenger, perhaps our own pastor, so that we can deny his urgent call to repentance, commitment, righteousness, and the need to be conformed to the likeness of our Lord Jesus? _____

Woe on Unrepentant Cities

Matthew 11:20-24

Then Jesus began to _____ the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not _____. "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the _____ that were performed in you had been _____ in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in _____ and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and _____ than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be _____ up to the skies? No, you will go _____ to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in _____, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more _____ for Sodom on the day of _____ than for you."

This is a frightening passage. Although the Son of God personally preached in their cities, the people refused to repent. Jesus said their hearts were hard – harder than the hearts of those in other cities that had been destroyed because of their wickedness. Jesus said those cities would have repented had they seen the miracles Jesus performed.

How about you and me? We have the benefit of Scripture that reveals to us the entire preaching, teaching, and healing ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ – a much greater revelation than was available to the cities Jesus condemned. Yet, do we repent? Have we truly repented? Or are we doomed to go down to the depths with Capernaum?

In this passage Jesus gives us a glimpse of the stern judgment of God. As we learned earlier, we must fear this awesome, holy, righteous God or we will be condemned. We must hear from Jesus and act on what he commands.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

DAY 2

1 Corinthians 1:20-21

Where is the wise man?
Where is the scholar?
Where is the philosopher
of this age? Has not God
made foolish the wisdom
of the world? ²¹ For since
in the wisdom of God the
world through its wisdom
did not know him, God
was pleased through the
foolishness of what was
preached to save those
who believe.

Summary Statements

- We are to have open ears and hearts to hear the message God intends us to hear.
- We are not to reject the messenger as an excuse to reject the message.
- We must repent humbly and wholeheartedly or we will be subject to judgment.

Hidden From the Wise

Matthew 11:25-26: At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

Jesus showed that God's ways are not man's ways when he said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have _____ these things from the _____ and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was _____ good pleasure.

At 1 Corinthians 1:20, Paul said the same: "Has not God made foolish the _____ of the world? For since in the _____ of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, _____ was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to _____ those who believe."

Notice that high intelligence might be a hindrance when it comes to humbly receiving the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. Regardless of our level of intelligence, we must still humble ourselves before the God of the universe, who made all things, who knows all things, and who in love gave us the way to reconcile ourselves to him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father Knows the Son

Matthew 11:27: "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Matthew 28:18

"All authority in heaven and on earth have been given to me."

Colossians 1:17-18

He is before all things . . . so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

John 10:30

"I and the Father are one."

Jesus told us of the intimate relationship between himself and his Father: "_____ things have been committed to me by my _____. No one knows the _____ except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and _____ to whom the Son _____ to reveal him."

At Matthew 28:18, Jesus said as much, but this time expressed it in terms of authority. At John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and the Father are _____." At Colossians 1:17-18, Paul emphasized that Jesus is _____ all things . . . that in _____ he might have the _____.

Let the Weary Get Rest

Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

In this passage, Jesus teaches us three important lessons. First Jesus invited the weary: "Come to _____, all you who are _____ and burdened, and I will give you _____." What welcoming words for a weary world! All those people who have been enslaved by sin can come to Jesus and find rest.

In the second lesson, Jesus commands us: "Take my _____ upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in _____, and you will find _____ for your souls."

Dad and I saw a yoke on oxen in Maine when we were visiting there. The yoke is a large, solid piece of lumber laid across the necks of the oxen, fastened securely to the horns. No ox can move its head independently. They must move in unison.

Jesus says we're to take his yoke upon us and learn from him. He will be the lead; we will follow and go where he goes; and do what he does. In my mind's eye, I think of a huge Peterbilt truck tractor with a yoke across it to a little Volkswagen bug. Imagine you and I as the VW bug, and Jesus as the Peterbilt. The error in this analogy is that the disparity in power is almost infinite. Jesus has all power and authority while we have almost none. Nevertheless, Jesus commands us to take his yoke on us so we will learn

from him. He says we will find rest for our souls. How easy that is to understand! Many of us have been trying to haul this huge load around with us under our own power. When we have taken on the yoke of the Lord, suddenly the other half of that yoke has infinite power. We can virtually rest while in a yoke with Jesus. It is his power, and his alone, that will accomplish his purposes. We must be under his yoke and cooperate with the Lord so we're not a hindrance to his work.

My Burden Is Light

Matthew 11:30: "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Recall that in the prior verse, we discussed that Jesus is on the other half of that yoke. Is it any wonder that his yoke is easy? Is it a surprise that his burden is light? Of course not.

Picture two oxen yoked together. They must move perfectly in tandem. That is the picture of the true believer who is fully conformed to the likeness of Jesus. They can move easily together, accomplishing Jesus' purposes for his kingdom.

There is a caveat. Jesus' rest is only for those willing to be under his yoke. Those who are unwilling are pulling the load by themselves. Don't expect help from the Lord Jesus until you're willing to be under his yoke.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **God has hidden the truth of the Gospel from the "wise".**
- **Only the Father truly knows the Son.**
- **Take Jesus' yoke upon you and learn from him.**
- **His yoke is easy; his burden is light.**

DAY 3

Lord of the Sabbath

Read Matthew 12:1-8

This is a story about Jesus and his disciples going through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."

Jesus answered, "Haven't you read what _____ did when he and his _____ were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the _____ bread – which was not _____ for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read in the _____ that on the _____ the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one _____ than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire _____, not _____,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is _____ of the Sabbath."

This simple story is profound in meaning. The Jewish temple was amazing and revered by the Jews. This person – Jesus – had the audacity to say he was greater than the temple.

The Jews had hundreds of regulations governing what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. Pulling the grains from the stalks and eating them was allowed during the week, but illegal on the Sabbath, according to their regulations. Jesus said he was Lord of the Sabbath. It is hard to imagine how that must have reverberated within the leaders who understood what Jesus was saying.

Jesus admonished them for misunderstanding God: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." At Hosea 6:6, we read this theme in the Old Testament: "For I _____ mercy, not _____, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." We learned earlier the Beatitude: "Blessed are the _____, for they will be shown _____."

The Jews were caught up in rigorous, legalistic observance of the Old Testament Law. They had lost the theme of mercy. But while we easily condemn them, the real question for us is whether we have lost the plot in our "service" to the Lord. Jesus commands us to love one another as he loves us. If we don't

Matthew 5:7

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

do what we do in love then our efforts are worthless. (See 1 Corinthians 13.)

Healing on the Sabbath

Read Matthew 12:9-14

Going on from that place, Jesus went into their synagogue, and a man with a _____ hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it _____ to heal on the Sabbath?"

Jesus said to them, "If any of you has a _____ and it falls into a _____ on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more _____ is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is _____ to do _____ on the Sabbath."

Then Jesus said to the man, "_____ out your hand." So he stretched it out and was _____ restored, just as _____ as the other. But the Pharisees went out and _____ how they might _____ Jesus.

Jesus demonstrated that the regulations of the Jews should not supersede mercy. Jesus said it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

Sadly, the response of some professing Christians is similar to that of the Pharisees. When their false beliefs are confronted with biblical truths, they seem determined to "kill" the messenger.

I had such an experience when I was doing radio interviews regarding my book, *Saving Faith*. Some of the people sounded so angry at having their doctrines challenged they seemed ready to harm me. This also occurred while teaching a Sunday school class, shortly after becoming a believer. Inadvertently, I challenged an important (but false) doctrine and the people were so angry they were grinding their teeth.

Do you have "pet" beliefs that make you angry when they're challenged? _____

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- God desires mercy, not sacrifice.
- Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.
- Jesus is greater than the temple.
- It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

God's Chosen Servant

Read Matthew 12:15-21

After Jesus explained to the Pharisees the truth about the Sabbath, they went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

Jesus did not get in their face to "prove he was right." Instead, he "_____ from that place. Many followed him, and he _____ all their _____, warning them _____ to tell who he was." Why would he warn the people not to tell who he was? Two reasons quickly come to mind. First, it would create even greater crowds; second, it would alert the Pharisees to where he was and what he was doing. That does not imply that Jesus was "in hiding" because he feared the Pharisees. He knew his mission would one day be fulfilled on the cross. His time had not yet come. He obeyed whatever his Father told him to do.

The remainder of the passage shows how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies, "He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets." Jesus was not interested in winning an argument; he was interested only in doing the will of his Father.

Jesus was gentle: "A bruised _____ he will not break, and a _____ wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory." The first part of the sentence is separated from the last phrase by many centuries. At Revelation 19:11, we see a description of Jesus as he "leads justice to victory:" I saw heaven _____ open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called _____ and _____. with _____ he judges and makes war. (See Revelation 19:11-16.)

DAY 4

Revelation 19:11

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

At Matthew 12:21 we read, "In his name the _____ will put their _____." When will that be? It must be the millennial reign of Christ. (See Revelation 20:1-6.) Large amounts of the Old Testament scriptures prophesy about the 1000-year reign of Christ Jesus on the earth.

Jesus was gentle, just as we must be as we seek to be like Jesus. Although he had all power and authority, his manner was meek.

Jesus and Beelzebub

Read Matthew 12:22-28

Then they brought Jesus a _____ man who was blind and mute, and Jesus _____ him, so that he could both _____ and see. All the people were _____ and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

At Matthew 9:32-33, we learned about Jesus' encounter with a mute man and learned why it was astonishing that he healed him. In this case, the man is mute and blind. Yet Jesus delivered him of demon possession and restored to him his sight and voice.

We learned that Jewish exorcists did not exorcise people who were mute because they thought it was necessary to have the demon speak and identify itself. This couldn't happen with a mute person. The people were rightfully astonished when Jesus cast demons out of such people. They wondered whether Jesus could be the prophesied Messiah who they knew would be the "Son of David."

Matthew 9:34

But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

At 12:24 we read: But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the _____ of demons, that this _____ drives out demons." At Matthew 9:34, the Pharisees said the same after Jesus drove the demon out of the mute man.

At 12:25-27, Jesus used logic against the Pharisees: "Every _____ divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household _____ against itself will not stand. If _____ drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out _____ by Beelzebub, by whom do _____ people drive them out? But if I drive out demons by the _____ of _____, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

The Jewish exorcists would certainly say they drove out demons by the Spirit of God. Why would the Pharisees claim Jesus didn't? Such a claim surely made them seem small and vindictive.

The Pharisees' mindset could also be true of us. Are we jealous when someone seems to have a greater knowledge of God than we do? Is that person getting more attention because of what or how he's doing something? Do we make snide remarks about the person to attempt to discredit them? All such acts are in themselves of Satan and not of our Lord Jesus. We must be discerning about the content of other people's messages, but welcoming when the content is biblical. Jesus drove out demons by the Spirit of God and the kingdom of God had in fact come upon those Pharisees, but they denied it. Let's make sure that we don't.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus is God's chosen servant.**
- **Jesus was gentle, not quarrelsome.**
- **He will lead justice to victory.**
- **Jesus can heal anyone, including blind and deaf demon-possessed men.**
- **Jesus was the promised Messiah – the son of David.**
- **Jesus drove out demons by the Spirit of God.**

DAY 5

First Tie Up the Strong Man

Matthew 12:29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

Note

By His victory over Satan in the wilderness and exorcism of demons, Jesus demonstrated that He had bound the "strong man" and that Satan was powerless to prevent the coming of the kingdom. The binding of Satan was a symbol of the messianic age in Jewish apocalyptic literature. (New Geneva Study Bible, p. 1525)

Who is the strong man? This passage is set in the context of Jesus casting out demons. The "strong man" is Satan.

Jesus' victory over Satan when he was tempted in the desert shows his superiority over Satan himself. Jesus' victory is the true binding of the strong man.

The note on the left describes how Jesus bound Satan, the strong man, and robbed his house each time he cast out a demon. By showing he was able to cast out any demon at any time, Jesus demonstrated his superiority over Satan and his kingdom.

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

Read Matthew 12:30-32

Jesus said, "He who is not _____ me is _____ me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." Not opposing Jesus is not enough. If we are not with him, we are against him. By now you know that being "with" Jesus involves a whole-hearted commitment. Those who believe they are doing good might really be scattering if they are not gathering with Jesus.

Jesus continued, "And so I tell you, every _____ and _____ will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the _____ will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be _____, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will _____ be forgiven, either in this age or in the _____ to come."

The context is the casting out of demons by Jesus and the claim by the Jewish leaders that Jesus is casting them out by Beelzebub (Satan). Although Jesus is casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Jewish leaders are attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. I believe that is what Jesus is saying is the unforgivable sin.

How can we commit such a sin today? In the same way – by attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. Suppose there is a mighty work of God going on – where people are getting healed, getting set free from demons, etc. But your theology says this can't happen. According to you, all these works ended at the Apostolic Age. Your response is to claim that these people are being healed and set free by the power of Satan instead of by the Holy Spirit. You could be right. Matthew 7:23 tells of such people, but

Matthew 7:22-23

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'
²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

woe to you if you are wrong.

Give Account of Every Word

Read Matthew 12:33-37

Often Jesus used the analogy of trees and fruit. Here he teaches, "Make a tree _____ and its fruit will be _____, or make a tree _____ and its fruit will be _____, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

"You brood of _____, how can you who are _____ say anything good? For out of the _____ of the heart the _____ speaks. The good man brings _____ things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings _____ things out of the _____ stored up in him.

"But I tell you that men will have to give _____ on the day of _____ for every careless word they have spoken. For by your _____ you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be _____."

At James 3:6, the _____ agrees, saying the tongue "is a _____ of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the _____ person, sets the whole course of his life on _____, and is itself set on fire by _____."

At Revelation 21:8, John quotes Jesus who spoke about those who would be condemned: ". . . and all _____ - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning _____."

Nothing reveals as much about a person as that person's speech. Our speech is a form of fruit that reveals what kind of tree we are - whether good or evil. If others notice your background, education, morals and godliness (or godlessness) from your speech, how much more does God notice? Those whose speech is evil show that their hearts are evil. Jesus made the point that all liars (read gossips) have their place in the fiery lake of burning sulphur.

The condemnation of liars, perjurers, gossips, etc., is the same for murderers, the sexually immoral, idolaters and those who practice magic arts. All will be punished in hell - the fiery lake of burning sulphur.

If your speech is impure, recognize that it means your heart is impure. Repent! Tell the Lord you want to change and that you want the fruit of your life to be pleasing to him, and to become holy and righteous.

James 3:6

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

Revelation 21:8

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus tied up Satan – the strong man and now robs his house by casting out demons from those who are demon possessed.**
- **Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.**
- **We cannot be neutral to be saved; we must be with Jesus.**
- **We will have to give account for every careless word we have spoken.**
- **By our words we will be acquitted, and by our words we will be condemned.**

Week 10

Memory Verse:

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught (Colossians 2:6-7).

The Sign of Jonah

Read Matthew 12:38-42

Then some of the _____ and teachers of the law said to him, "_____, we want to see a miraculous _____ from you."

Jesus answered, "A _____ and _____ generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the _____ of the prophet Jonah. for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge _____, so the Son of Man will be _____ days and _____ nights in the heart of the heart. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the _____ with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one _____ than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and _____ it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one _____ than Solomon is here."

Although Jesus had already done many great things – healed the sick, made the blind see, raised a little girl from the dead – the religious leaders were not satisfied. They still wanted another sign. Likely, no sign would have been convincing enough.

Jesus' response was harsh. He said it is wicked and adulterous people who seek signs.

He *did* say God would give them a sign – the sign of Jonah. It would be his own death and resurrection.

The Jews must have been amazed when Jesus said that he was greater than Jonah and Solomon. How could this teacher make such an outrageous claim – unless he was the promised Messiah. Strangely, the Jews didn't consider the obvious – that Jesus had fulfilled and was fulfilling all the prophecies of the prophesied Messiah. It's no wonder that Jesus said they would be condemned at the judgment by the men of Nineveh and the Queen of the South.

Evil Spirits Explained

Read Matthew 12:43-45

Jesus explained about evil spirits: "When an _____ spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking _____ and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the _____ I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it _____ other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the _____ condition of that man is _____ than the first. That is how it will be with this _____ generation."

Doubtless, the people were amazed and mystified when Jesus cast demons out of people. They must have had all sorts of unasked questions. Jesus explained what happens in the spirit world among demonic spirits.

Exorcists should be very cautious about exorcising demons from a person. If this person is not ready and willing to receive Jesus as Lord, commit to obey him, and receive the Holy Spirit, he will soon be in a worse condition – many more demons will come back to possess him. However, if the house is filled with the Holy Spirit, the demons will be prevented from coming back.

Deuteronomy 28:68

The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

Jesus concluded with a dreadful condemnation of his generation. Jesus' generation had the opportunity to receive their Messiah but they rejected him. Jesus said their final condition would get much worse. And so it did. In 70 A.D. God caused Rome to come against Jerusalem, burn down the temple, and scatter the Jews throughout the world in the great Diaspora, in which the prophecy was fulfilled that the Jews would glut the slave markets in Egypt (see Deuteronomy 28:68).

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

Matthew 12:46-50

When Jesus' mother and brothers wanted to speak to him, it provided the opportunity to teach us another lesson.

Jesus asked, "Who is my _____ and who are my _____?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "_____ are my mother and my _____. For whoever _____ the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

At John 15:14, Jesus linked another relationship to obedience to his commands: "You are my _____ if you do what _____ command."

Jesus established that to have true kinship with him is dependent on *doing* the will of God. Once again we see the importance of this study – to learn the teachings and commands of Jesus – so we can obey them. When we do that, our Lord Jesus is willing to call us his friends, his brother, or sister, or mother.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **A wicked generation asks for a sign.**
- **A person exorcised must be filled with the Spirit.**
- **Jesus' brother and mother and sister are those who do the will of God.**

John 15:14

You are my friends if you do what I command.

DAY 2

Parable of the Sower

Read Matthew 13:1-9 and 13:18-23

Jesus shows us God's insight into what happens to people who hear the Gospel. He sat in a boat, while the people stood on the shore, as he taught this parable: "A farmer went out to _____ his seed. As he was _____ the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on _____ places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was _____. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they _____ because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and _____ the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear."

This parable is explained by Jesus to his disciples at Matthew 13:18-23: "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone _____ the message about the _____ and does not understand it, the _____ one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the _____. The one who received the seed that fell on _____ places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with _____. But since he has no _____, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the _____, he quickly falls _____. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and _____ the plants. The one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who _____ the word and _____ it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was _____."

There is one seed, but it falls on four different types of soil. Birds quickly eat the seed that falls on the hard soil of the path so the hearer never understands the word. The seed that falls on the rocky ground is the person who hears and receives the word with joy, but then quickly falls away when adversity comes. Both these types of hearers are common today.

The third type is widely represented in the Western world. This man hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. Only the fourth type – the seed that fell on good soil produced a crop – describes the man who hears and understands the word.

John 15:1-2, 6

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit. . . ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."

The person likened to the seed on the path never did understand the message. He had no chance to be saved because the evil one snatched away the message.

The second type – the seed that fell on rocky ground – was the subject of a study done by several denominations to see how their evangelistic effort was working. They learned that 95 percent of the people who came forward to receive Jesus were nowhere to be found after a year – most did not return the next week. These were people who received the word with joy, but promptly fell away.

In America and the Western world, many allow the thorns of worries and the deceitfulness of wealth to choke their knowledge of the Lord and his word. They bear no fruit. Do you?

Only the fourth type – the man who hears the word and produces fruit – finds salvation. Sadly, all types, except the fourth, failed to produce fruit. Which type are you?

This interpretation is corroborated at John 15:1-2 and 6: branches that bear no fruit are cut off of the vine [Jesus]. Verse 6 proves that such branches are condemned: "If anyone does not _____ in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and _____; such branches are picked up, thrown into the _____ and _____."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- Many receive the word with joy, but fall away when trouble or persecution comes.
- Many receive the word but the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it.
- Only those who hear, understand the word, and bear fruit will be saved.

DAY 3

Romans 14:9

For this very reason Jesus died and rose from the dead, that he might be the Lord of both the living and the dead.

Why Did Jesus Speak in Parables?

Read Matthew 13:10 -17

The disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Why do you _____ to the people in parables?"

Jesus replied, "The knowledge of the _____ of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to _____. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

"This is why I speak to them in parables: Though _____, they do not see; though _____, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the _____ of Isaiah: 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never _____. for this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly _____ with their ears, and they have _____ their eyes. Otherwise they might _____ with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their _____ and turn, and I would heal them.'

"But blessed are _____ eyes, because they see, and _____ ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many _____ and righteous _____ longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to _____ what you hear but did not hear it."

To understand this passage, we must remember the primary purpose for which Jesus came: He came to die for our sins and to rise again for our salvation. (See Romans 14:9.) For centuries the Jews had looked forward to the coming of their Messiah. They searched the scriptures to find clues about his coming. But Jesus came at a time when the Jews were more interested in their own position than in the coming of the Messiah. They wanted to kill Jesus because he wouldn't accept – nor obey – their regulations about the Sabbath.

If Jesus had openly been revealed as the Messiah, the common people would have undoubtedly accepted him, and the religious Jews wouldn't have been able to crucify him. Jesus had to speak in parables so that the people wouldn't understand. How many people are like those people today? They eagerly attend every retreat (as the people who eagerly gathered to hear Jesus), and go to hear every new speaker, but there is no evidence to show that the word is bearing fruit.

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven was given to the disciples when Jesus explained the parables to them. Then Jesus states a kingdom principle: "Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." This statement doesn't seem politically correct, does it? Isn't this a fulfillment of the scripture that says, "God's ways are not man's ways."

The disciples must have been encouraged when Jesus said, "Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." Our prayer to the Lord must be, "Lord, let our eyes see, let our ears hear!"

Consider the prophets and writers of the Old Testament who wrote about the coming Messiah, but didn't understand what they were writing. What an advantage God has given us! We can see the old and the new – the prophecies about the coming Messiah and the fulfillment of those prophecies in our Lord Jesus. We are without excuse because we are blessed with such knowledge. May the Lord open our ears to hear and obey his word.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus did not give the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven to everyone.**
- **Jesus gave the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven to his disciples.**
- **Jesus came to an exceedingly wicked generation.**
- **Some people are seeing, but they do not see; they are hearing, but do not hear.**
- **Blessed are the eyes of those who see and the ears of those who hear.**
- **Jesus came to die for our sins and rise again for our salvation.**

DAY 4

The Parable of the Weeds

Read Matthew 13:24-30 and 13:36-43

Jesus told them another _____: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good _____ in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and _____ weeds among the _____, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the _____ also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow _____ seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

"An _____ did this, he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and _____ them up?'

"No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the _____, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow _____ until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the _____ and tie them in bundles to be _____; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

At Matthew 13:36, we're privileged to have Jesus' explanation of the parable:

Jesus' disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the _____ in the field."

Jesus answered, "The one who sowed the _____ seed is the Son of Man. The _____ is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the _____. The _____ are the sons of the evil one, and the _____ who sows them is the devil. The _____ is the end of the age, and the harvesters are _____.

"As the weeds are pulled up and _____ in the fire, so it will be at the _____ of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will _____ out of his kingdom everything that _____ sin and _____ who do _____.

"They will throw them into the _____ furnace, where there will be _____ and gnashing of teeth. Then the _____ will shine like the _____ in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

This powerful parable is all about good and evil, the wicked and the righteous. The first thing we notice is that the owner knew that weeds had been planted, but he ordered nothing to be done with them until the time of the harvest.

He said there was danger of rooting up the wheat. The Lord Jesus is saying that he is not immediately taking the wicked out of this world because doing so could harm the believers. Instead, he will deal with them at the end of the age.

Not only does Jesus speak about weeds being pulled up and burned in the fire, he is also speaking about his angels weeding out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. Just as the weeds were burned in the fire, these people will be thrown into the fiery furnace – hell – where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But the wheat that will be gathered and brought into the barn represents the righteous who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Let us hear and understand.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Read Matthew 13:31-32

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of _____ is like a mustard _____, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the _____ of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden _____ and becomes a tree, so that the _____ of the air come and perch in its branches."

Jesus is describing the kingdom of heaven by comparing it to one of the smallest seeds that grows into a tree.

This analogy demonstrates how the kingdom of heaven is birthed in each of us. The word is planted in us like a mustard seed. As the word of God takes root in our lives, it grows and becomes more and more meaningful. Finally, when we are mature in the Lord Jesus Christ, the seed becomes a tree – our faith in the Lord Jesus is now a help and refuge for others.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- Satan has planted evil people in Jesus' kingdom.
- Jesus allows both good and evil to grow together.
- At the end of the age, the angels will weed out Jesus' kingdom all who do evil and they will be thrown into the fiery furnace
- The righteous will shine like the sun.
- The kingdom of heaven begins very small in a person but grows into the dominant force in his life.

DAY 5

The Parable of the Yeast

Matthew 13:33: He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

"The kingdom of heaven is like _____ that a woman took and _____ into a large amount of flour until it worked all _____ the dough."

This is one of the rare occasions where yeast is used to represent good. Just like the mustard seed in the prior parable, the yeast represents the beginning of saving faith in our lives.

This time Jesus does not tell us how large or important the yeast will become – as with the mustard seed, but rather how it will permeate every area of our lives – "it worked all through the dough."

Some people compartmentalize their religion. They practice it on Sunday, but the remainder of the week they live secular lives. Or they are very dedicated, but in certain areas they lack evidence of a saving faith. In such cases, there is reason to doubt that there is any saving faith at all. A true saving faith will permeate every nook and cranny of our lives.

We must remember that it takes time for yeast to work through the dough, and time for a mustard seed to grow into a tree. Likewise, it also takes time for God to do his work in us to conform us to the likeness of our Lord Jesus.

On the other hand, if you've been in the same condition for months and years, do you really have a saving faith? Is God working in you? Or are you part of that large movement of feel-good "Churchianity" that enjoys the habitual activity of going to church, singing praise songs and fellowshiping, but continues to live a dead and fruitless spiritual life?

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

"The kingdom of _____ is like _____ hidden in a field. When a man _____, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and _____ all he had and _____ that field."

In this parable and the next, Jesus emphasizes the value of the kingdom of heaven to the person who can see and appreciate its value.

At Matthew 13:44, the man recognized the value of the treasure in the field. In his joy, he sold all he had and bought the field so he could have the right to the treasure.

At Luke 14:33, Jesus said each of us must give up _____ we have in order to be his disciple. We must recognize that the gift of salvation through our Lord Jesus is of inestimable value. It is a great bargain to give up everything we have to gain this salvation.

The Parable of the Pearl

Matthew 13:45-46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

Luke 14:33

In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

Ephesians 4:22-24

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

The point of this parable is the same as that of the treasure in the field. In this parable, however, the person who found the pearl was an expert merchant. He knew good pearls and recognized the great value of the pearl he had found.

Just like the parable of the hidden treasure, the merchant went away and sold everything he had in order to buy the pearl – the kingdom of heaven. There are many who search for the way to God and experiment with many different religions. When they learn of the Lord Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins, that they can be set free from slavery to sin, and be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus as their Lord, they understand the great value and happily give up everything they have to gain it.

The point of the last two parables should be evident in each of us. We should certainly recognize the infinite value of the gift of salvation offered to us by God’s grace which is obtained through a saving faith in our Lord Jesus. A saving faith requires giving up everything we have to become Jesus’ disciple. Read Luke 14:25-33. At Ephesians 4:22 we learn that we are to put off the corrupted old self and gain a new self, _____ to be like God in true _____ and holiness.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **The kingdom of heaven permeates every area of our lives.**
- **The kingdom of heaven is like a very valuable treasure for which we must give up everything we have.**
- **The kingdom of heaven is like a very valuable pearl for which a man sold everything in order to buy it.**
- **Jesus said any of us who does not give up everything he has cannot be his disciple.**

Week 11

Memory Verse:

In your hearts set apart
Christ as Lord
(1 Peter 3:15).

Revelation 20:13, 15

The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. . . .¹⁵ If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

1 John 2:6

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

The Parable of the Net

Read Matthew 13:47-51

Jesus told another parable: "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a _____ that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of _____. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the _____. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the _____ away.

"This is how it will be at the _____ of the age. The _____ will come and separate the _____ from the righteous and throw them into the _____ furnace, where there will be _____ and gnashing of teeth."

"Have you _____ all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied.

This time Jesus switches from a view of the kingdom of heaven to the end of the age – the time of judgment – the same view we're shown at Revelation 20:12-15: "The _____ gave up the _____ that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had _____. If anyone's _____ was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of _____."

There is no distinction in this parable about whether we believe or don't believe. The only contrast is between the wicked and the righteous. How can this be? Aren't we told we are saved by faith, not by works? There is no contradiction. The wicked are those who refuse to receive Jesus as their Lord. Their wicked actions reflect the fact that their master is Satan. For those who have received Jesus as their Lord, their righteous actions reflect that relationship with their Lord.

At Revelation 20:13, we find that each person was judged according to what he had done. God knows that we act according to what we believe. It doesn't matter what we claim to believe with our mouth because our actions shout what we truly believe.

When Jesus asked the disciples if they understood this parable, they answered "Yes." Do you? This parable, and the parable of the weeds, shows that the wicked are condemned to hell – condemned because of their deeds. Let's be sure our actions reflect our relationship with Jesus. As 1 John 2:6 says, "We must walk as _____ did."

A Prophet Without Honor

Read Matthew 13:53-58

At Matthew 13:53-57, Matthew recounts the actions of the people in his hometown. The people refused to see Jesus as the Son of God; instead, they could only relate to him as the carpenter's son. They name his mother and brothers and refer to his sisters. Surely, they reason, he must be just like we are. We saw him grow up. They recognized that he had great wisdom and miraculous power, but took offense at him.

Jesus said to them, "Only in his _____ and in his own _____ is a prophet without honor." And he did not do many _____ there because of their lack of _____.

Likely, this teaching of Jesus has proven true in our own lives innumerable times. Oftentimes people are least likely to speak effectively about Jesus to their family members, or neighbors who knew them growing up because they are too familiar. Their past over-shadows the message about Jesus Christ.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **We act according to what we believe.**
- **At the end of the age, the wicked will be separated from the righteous; the wicked will be thrown into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**
- **We will all be judged according to what we have done.**
- **A prophet is without honor in his hometown and family.**

DAY 2

John 6:35

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

Matthew 6:11

"Give us today our daily bread."

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Read Matthew 14:13-21

As evening approached, the _____ came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting _____. send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and _____ themselves some food."

Jesus replied, "They do not _____ to go away. You _____ them something to eat."

"We have here only _____ loaves of bread and _____ fish," they answered.

"Bring _____ here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five _____ and the two _____ and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he _____ them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples _____ up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The _____ of those who ate was about _____ thousand men, besides women and children.

God demonstrated Jesus' power of provision in a supernatural manner. Jesus fed thousands with five loaves of bread and two fish. It was utterly impossible unless it was from God. The scraps picked up afterward far exceeded the small amount they started with.

At John 6:35, Jesus later said, "I am the _____ of life. He who comes to me will never go _____, and he who _____ in me will never be thirsty."

Jesus' miracle of feeding thousands with a small amount of food shows his claim and promise to be true: He is the bread of life. He promises that those who come to him will never go hungry, and those who believe in him will never be thirsty.

Bread is a staple food. At Matthew 6:11, Jesus told us to pray for our *daily* bread. Jesus says he is the bread of life – the staple food necessary for life in many cultures. Just as we need to eat every day, we need the spiritual bread of life from Jesus on a daily basis.

True or False

- T F Jesus says we are literally to eat his body.
- T F The Lord Jesus is our spiritual bread of life.
- T F We need daily bread of life from Jesus.
- T F Those who believe in Jesus will never thirst.

Jesus Walks on the Water

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the _____ and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the _____. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by _____ to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from _____, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, _____ on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were _____. It's a _____," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take _____! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to _____ to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, _____ on the water and came _____ Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little _____," he said, "why did you _____?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the _____ died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying "Truly you are the Son of God."

Obviously this was an event planned by God to teach the disciples another lesson about the power and authority of Jesus. They had seen many miracles, but none like this. Jesus defied the laws of nature by walking on the water. The disciples cried out in fear because they thought they'd seen a ghost – after all, no one could walk on water! However, impetuous Peter wanted more proof. He asked Jesus to command him to walk on water – Jesus encouraged him to do so, and he did.

But Peter did what many of us do – he lost courage and focus after only a few steps and began to sin. When we begin to follow Jesus we are full of zeal and determination. But when the storms of life come, or simply when the stares of others confront us, we lose heart and begin to sink back into the world. Like Peter, our cry should be, "Lord, save me!" And Jesus will save us if our request is sincere.

Hebrews 12:2

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What should Peter have done to walk successfully on the water? As Hebrews 12:2 exhorts, he (and we) should fix our eyes on Jesus, not the storm.

The lesson God intended to teach the disciples was learned. When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the disciples worshiped Jesus saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." They had seen a new dimension of the power and authority of the Son of God.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus supernaturally fed thousands with very little. He showed his ability to provide.**
- **Jesus himself is the bread of life.**
- **Jesus showed supernatural power by walking on water.**
- **Peter demonstrated that we, too, can do the impossible as long as we fix our eyes on Jesus.**
- **Jesus truly is the Son of God.**

DAY

3

Clean and Unclean

Read Matthew 15:1-9

Some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from _____ and asked, "Why do your disciples break the _____ of the elders? They don't _____ their hands before they eat!" Jesus replied, "And why do you break the _____ of God for the sake of your _____? For God said, '_____ your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to _____.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have _____ from me is a _____ devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your _____. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he _____

about you: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their _____ are far from me. They worship me in _____; their teachings are but _____ taught by men.'"

Jesus applied the same method used by the Jewish rabbis – rather than given an answer, he answered a question with a question. They brought up the subject of traditions, so Jesus used that as a springboard to show them that they place traditions before obedience to God's commands.

The purpose of this teaching is not to focus on the problems of the Pharisees, but to alert us to the possibility that we may be putting our traditions ahead of the teachings and commands of Jesus. We should frequently ask, "Why do we do things this way?" And, "Does this conform to what Jesus taught and commanded?" If it is not, we must put aside the traditions and fully submit to the teachings and commands of our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What Makes a Man Unclean?

Read Matthew 15:10-20

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, " _____ and _____. What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes _____ of his mouth, _____ is what makes him 'unclean.'"

When his disciples came to him and said the Pharisees were offended, Jesus said, "Every _____ that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the _____. Leave them; they are blind _____. If a blind man leads a blind man, _____ will fall into a pit."

When Peter asked Jesus to explain the parable, he said, "Don't you see that whatever _____ the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come _____ of the mouth come from the _____, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come _____ thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. _____ are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with _____ hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Jesus called the people to him and told them a very important truth – that it is not what goes into the mouth that makes one unclean, but what comes out

Matthew 12:37

For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

James 3:10-11

Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you— unless, of course, you fail the test?

of the mouth that makes one unclean.

Likely, we’ve all been around a “gutter-mouth” – a person who speaks with profanity and filth. We know instinctively that such a person is unclean.

At Matthew 12:37, Jesus made this a salvation issue: “For by your _____ you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be _____.”

At James 3:10-11, we learn: “Out of the same _____ come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both _____ water and _____ water flow from the same spring?”

Do you think you can be a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ if cursing or profanity or crude language is coming out of your mouth? At 2 Corinthians 13:5 we learn: “Examine yourselves to _____ whether you are in the _____; test yourselves.” Is Christ Jesus in you if filth that is coming out of your mouth? Wouldn’t you fail the test if what comes out of your mouth is not pure? Jesus didn’t curse. He wasn’t profane. He never used crude or suggestive language. We must be like Jesus if we would be saved.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **The tradition of the Jews demanded washing hands before eating.**
- **The Jewish leaders placed tradition before obedience to God’s commands.**
- **Jesus said the Jews honored him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him.**
- **What comes out of a man’s mouth is what makes him unclean.**
- **Jesus was never profane nor did he use foul language or cursing. We are to be like Jesus.**

DAY

4

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman

Read Matthew 15:21-27

In the region of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have _____ on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from _____-possession."

When Jesus didn't answer his disciples came and urged him to send her away.

Jesus answered, "I was sent only to the lost _____ of Israel."

The woman came and knelt before him.

"_____, help me!" she said.

He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their _____."

"Yes, Lord," she said, but even the _____ eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your _____ is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

The more Jesus ignored the woman, the more he saw her faith. She correctly identified him as Lord, and the Son of David. It is interesting to note that in Jesus' time people knew that demon possession was the cause of many problems.

Doubtless, Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. Had it been any other way, the Jews would have argued that he didn't come to them and couldn't have been their Messiah.

This woman undoubtedly knew that Jesus could deliver her daughter from demon-possession. Even after being called a dog, she tenaciously kept asking in the face of rejection. The Gentiles were called "dogs" by the Jews. She did not argue that she was not a "dog," but rather asked for the crumbs from her master's table. This was pleasing to God and he told Jesus to grant her request.

Jesus taught that we must be persistent in prayer. Read Luke 11:5-10. We are like the Canaanite woman – dogs that don't deserve anything. But if we approach God's throne of grace with humility, as she did, we can receive mercy and answers to our prayers.

True or False

T F Jesus was sent to bring the Gentiles to faith.

T F Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

T F The Canaanite woman lacked faith in Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

Read Matthew 15:29-39

Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee and sat down on a mountainside. Great crowds brought their sick and Jesus healed them all. The people were amazed and praised God.

At Matthew 15:32, we read that Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have _____ for these people; they have already been with me for _____ days and have nothing to _____. I do not want to send away hungry or they may collapse on the way."

His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough _____ in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

"How many _____ do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied, "and a few small _____."

He told the _____ to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he _____ them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. They all ate and were _____. Afterward the disciples _____ up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was four _____, besides women and children.

God wants us to know that we can trust Jesus to be our provider. He can feed thousands with seven loaves and a few small fish, and even have seven basketfuls of broken pieces left over. The miracle might have taken place as the disciples were passing the baskets to the people. The food had to have multiplied in the baskets so that all the people would believe there would be plenty for everyone.

At Matthew 6:31-33, Jesus told us not to worry about what we shall _____ or _____. He said the pagans run after all these things. Jesus said, "But seek first his _____ and his _____, and all these things will be given to you as well.

This miracle as well and the feeding of the five thousand should assure us that our Lord Jesus has power and authority to care for us in every way.

When we received Jesus as our Lord, we became his servants and bond-slaves. Then he takes care of us and provides for our needs if his kingdom is first in our lives.

Matthew 6:31-33

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²

For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **The Canaanite woman teaches us to be determined and to persist in our prayers when the need is great.**
- **Jesus responds to humble, persistent prayer.**
- **Jesus healed all of the people brought to him.**
- **Jesus fed well over four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fish.**
- **Jesus can and will provide for his own servants who seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.**

DAY 5

The Demand for a Sign

Read Matthew 16:1-4

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and _____ him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

He replied, "When _____ comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today is will be _____, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the _____, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A _____ and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but _____ will be given it except the sign of Jonah."

What were the signs of the times that Jesus said the Pharisees and Sadducees couldn't interpret? Jesus did miracles as no one had ever done and taught as no one had ever taught. Shouldn't they have concluded

Daniel 9:25

The angel told Daniel:
 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.'

Matthew 12:40

as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

John 17:3

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

that their longed-for Messiah was in their midst? Daniel had prophesied the time of the coming of the Anointed One exactly to the day. (See Daniel 9:25.)

Jesus had done truly astonishing miracles in the midst of the people – perhaps many in the presence of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Yet, amazingly, they asked him for a miraculous sign. It's no wonder that Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign.

At Matthew 12:40, we learned that the only sign Jesus would give them is the sign of Jonah. Jesus told them, "As Jonah was _____ days and _____ nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be _____ days and _____ nights in the heart of the earth."

Jesus' burial for three days and three nights was the sign of Jonah he promised the Pharisees. Just as the great fish vomited Jonah alive after three days, so Jesus was resurrected from the dead after three days.

You and I have the benefit of hindsight. We are able to read in Scripture what Jesus did and why. Christianity is twenty centuries old. Much has been written in the New Testament for all of us to read if we choose to do so. Do we need a miraculous sign? I surely hope not. We have read of innumerable signs done by our Lord Jesus. We simply need to have the faith to believe that what is written about our Lord Jesus is all true and intended for us to know him better. At John 17:3 we learn Jesus said, "This is eternal life: that they may _____ you, the only _____ God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." May each teaching and command and miracle of Jesus cause us to come to know him better.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

Read Matthew 16:5-12

When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread.

"Be _____," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the _____ of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

Jesus explained, "You of _____ faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no _____? Do you still not _____? Don't you

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

remember the five loaves for the five _____, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many _____ you gathered? How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about _____? But be on your guard against the _____ of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the _____ of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

It is almost amusing to see how defensive the disciples became when they heard the word "yeast." They immediately assumed that Jesus was rebuking them for not bringing bread. How like us that is! When we don't understand what we hear, we quickly become defensive.

Jesus reminded the disciples of how he had just provided bread for thousands with only a few loaves of bread. Likewise, we need to be reminded that our Lord Jesus can provide anything we need. In fact, he promised to provide our necessities if we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

Jesus was warning his disciples about the false teachings and hypocrisy of the religious leaders of his day. Likewise, we need to be reminded to listen carefully to the preaching and teaching of those who claim to represent God. Are those teachings consistent with the teachings of Jesus? If not, they are not valid and must not be followed. Instead, they should be exposed as being false.

At 1 Corinthians 5:6, Paul uses yeast as an example of wrongdoing and evil. He points out that a little evil works through our entire lives. He warns us to get rid of that evil so that we can be pure and holy. In the Jewish Passover Feast, and in our observation of Communion, we are to eat bread without yeast. The Passover looked forward to Christ and Communion looks back as the bread represents the body of Christ. He was pure, without sin, and the bread that represents his body should be without yeast.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Week 12

Memory Verses:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Summary Statements

- Jesus healed all who came to him, made the blind to see, the deaf to speak, and cast out demons.
- Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign."
- Just as Jonah was in the whale 3 days and 3 nights, then vomited on shore, so Jesus was 3 days and 3 nights in the earth and then resurrected from the dead.
- Watch out for the false teaching and hypocrisy of religious leaders.
- Bread without yeast represents the sinless body of our Lord Jesus.

Peter's Confession of Christ

Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus tested his disciples by asking, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the _____; others say _____; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do _____ say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the _____, the Son of the living _____."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not _____ to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this _____ I will build my church, and the _____ of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the _____ of heaven; whatever you _____ on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on _____ will be loosed in heaven."

Then he warned his disciples not to tell _____ that he was the Christ.

Don't you think Jesus already knew what people were saying about him? Of course he did. But it was now time for the disciples to tell Jesus what *they* said about him. Peter was picked by God to be the one to proclaim that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Then Jesus said something that has caused great differences of opinion among many, and even false claims among major religious groups:

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

1 Peter 2:6-8

Peter wrote: For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," ⁸ and, "A stone that makes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

Psalms 2:4,7

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. . . He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."

Ephesians 2:20

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Psalms 92:15

"The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him." (See also Psalm 31:3, 62:2,6.)

Let's look at several interpretations:

First: In the Greek, the name "Peter" is "*petros*," whereas "rock" is "*petra*." One possible interpretation is that Jesus was referring to Peter as the rock on which he would build his church – the claim of the Roman Catholic Church.

But at 1 Peter 2:6-8, Peter himself refers to Jesus as the rock, the chosen and precious cornerstone, the stone that makes men stumble and a rock that makes them fall. Peter didn't refer to himself as the rock, but rather to the Lord Jesus as the rock.

Second: The confession of Peter – "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" – could be the rock upon which Jesus will build his church: There is much to be said for this interpretation. The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies about the coming of the Christ. Nothing would seem more significant than Jesus being the prophesied Christ.

At 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, Paul shows the importance of the fulfillment of prophecy by the Christ. He said, "For what I received I passed on to you as of _____ importance: that _____ died for our sins according to the _____, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the _____, . . ."

Paul said this information was of first importance in two respects: (1) it was the Christ who fulfilled the prophecies; and (2) the prophecies were fulfilled according to the Scriptures. Peter's confession was the same – that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. (See Psalm 2:4,7.)

Third: In keeping with Peter's description of Jesus as the rock and cornerstone (see 1 Peter 2:6-8), Jesus could have been pointing at himself when he said, "On this rock I will build my church." Surely that would be consistent with the rest of Scripture. See Psalm 92:15, 62:2, 6.

Fourth: Jesus could have referred to Peter as the representative of the apostles. At Ephesians 2:20, Paul referred to the church as built on the _____ of the _____ and prophets. But even here, Paul refers to Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

1 Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:24-25

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

Romans 9:33

As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

At 1 Peter 2:4-5, Peter himself gave convincing evidence that Jesus is that rock. He calls believers “living stones.” But he calls Jesus the living Stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him. Later in verse 7, referring to Jesus as the “chosen and precious cornerstone” and the “capstone”. The reference to Jesus as the “cornerstone” is especially significant because the cornerstone was laid first. All dimensions of the building were taken from the cornerstone – Jesus. Jesus said, “On this rock I will build my church.”

Jesus himself gives more convincing evidence at Matthew 7:24-25. Here Jesus compares his words to the rock on which a man builds his house: “The rains came, the streams rose, and the winds blew, they beat against that house, yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock” – these are Jesus’ words. A person’s words are associated with that person. Thus, Jesus could have been referring to both himself and his words as the rock.

Finally, at Romans 9:33, Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16: So this is what the Sovereign Lord says, “See, I lay in Zion a _____ that causes men to stumble and a _____ that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in _____ will never be put to shame.”

Jesus is the rock, the cornerstone, and the capstone. All who trust in him will never be put to shame.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Jesus is the capstone.**
- **Jesus is the chosen and precious cornerstone.**
- **Jesus is a stone that makes men stumble and a rock that makes them fall.**
- **Jesus said, “On this rock I will build my church.”**

DAY 2

Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. ⁹"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Jesus Predicts His Death

Read Matthew 16:21-23

From that time on Jesus began to _____ to his disciples that he must go to _____ and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the _____, and that he must be _____ and on the third day be raised to _____. Peter took him _____ and began to rebuke him. "_____, Lord!" he said. "This shall _____ happen to you!"

Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, _____! You are a _____ block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of _____."

What a difference! Jesus had just complimented Peter for recognizing him as the Christ, saying the Father had revealed that to Peter. The next moment Jesus calls Peter "Satan," and says he does not have in mind the things of God.

This is one of several passages where we read about Jesus preparing his disciples for his impending persecution, death, and resurrection. Jesus knew full well that his disciples had other thoughts. They expected Jesus to become a ruler of the nation of Israel and that he would release the nation from the yoke of Rome. They argued with each other over who would be greatest in this coming kingdom where Jesus would be king. They each expected to have power and authority.

Who could have thought that God would redeem mankind by the sacrificial death of his own son? No one would ordinarily think such thoughts. But God did say, "For my _____ are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the _____ are higher than the _____, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (See Isaiah 55:8-9.)

Cost of the Kingdom

Matthew 16:24-25: Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."

Romans 6:6-7

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Luke 9:26

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

At Matthew 16:24-25, Jesus said to his disciples, "If _____ would come after me, he _____ deny himself and take up his _____ and follow me. For whoever wants to _____ his _____ will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will _____ it."

To whom does Jesus' statement apply? It is to "anyone." That is, everyone who would come after Jesus. How emphatic is his statement? Very! It says anyone who would go after him "must" deny himself and take up his cross and follow Jesus.

What were the uses of a cross in Jesus' day? It was a horrific instrument of death, used by the Romans to publicly kill people. When Jesus took up his cross, he took it to Golgatha to die on it. When we take up our cross, we are to die to self and to sin.

At Romans 6:6-7, we read, "For we know that our old _____ was _____ with him so that the body of _____ might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to _____, because anyone who has died has been freed from _____."

In what situations might one seek to save his life? Those captured by radical Muslim terrorists experience a life or death situation. The terrorists sometimes publicly cut off the person's head or kill the person in some other method. Devout Muslims sometimes kill family members who convert to Christianity. Often, they offer the family member the opportunity to live if he (or she) will once again embrace Islam. If that person refuses, he (or she) will likely be killed.

According to what Jesus said at Matthew 16:25, what happens to the person who denies Jesus and embraces Islam in order to save his life? _____

Jesus appears to be referring to spiritual death. Sadly, while he might temporarily save himself from physical death, he will have lost his eternal life. On the other hand, the person who says, "Take my life, I will not deny my Lord!" could have his physical life taken, but he will find eternal life.

At Luke 9:26, Jesus says, "if anyone is _____ of _____ and my words, the Son of Man will be _____ of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God: _____

Summary Statements

- **Seek to have the mind of God in all things.**
- **Anyone who would come after Jesus must:**
 - **deny himself;**
 - **take up his cross; and**
 - **follow him.**
- **If anyone seeks to save his life, he will lose it.**
- **If anyone loses his life for Jesus' sake, he will find it.**

DAY 3

What is the Value of One's Soul?

Read Matthew 16:26-28

Jesus asked, "What _____ will it be for a man if he _____ the whole world, yet _____ his soul? Or what can a man _____ in exchange for his soul?"

Then, in verses 27-28, Jesus explained what would happen: "For the Son of Man is going to _____ in his Father's glory with his _____, and then he will reward each person according to what he has _____. I tell you the truth, some who are standing _____ will not taste _____ before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The world seems to place great value on those who have accumulated vast wealth. Sports heroes and media and entertainment figures are idolized. Yet Scripture says men are like _____ that _____ (see 1 Peter 1:24). It seems difficult to gain an eternal perspective on that which will last forever. Instead, many place a high value on that which is transient and fleeting. The citizens of God's

1 Peter 1:24-25

"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever."

Matthew 24:30-31

“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.
³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Revelation 20:12

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

James 2:17

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Revelation 1:14-16

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.
¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

kingdom look beyond the here and now, and the pleasures of this world, to the eternal glories that they will gain if they are faithful in following their Master and King.

Jesus told us how and when we would be judged for what we have done while in the flesh. He said this will happen when he comes in his Father’s glory with his angels. See Matthew 24:30-31. How will we be judged? Will it be for what we say we believe? Will it be because of the church we attended?

Revelation 20:12 tells of the judgment. “The _____ were _____ according to what they had _____ as recorded in the _____.”

Scripture repeatedly teaches us that we will be judged **according to what we have done**. God does not look at what we say or claim to believe. He looks at our actions, because our actions reveal what we believe. See James 2:17.

At Matthew 24:30-31, we see Jesus coming for his saints. That is why he said at Matthew 16:27 that he will _____ each person according to what he had done. There is no punishment for his saints, only rewards.

At Matthew 16:28, Jesus said, “some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” Some could easily interpret this scripture to mean that Jesus would have an earthly kingdom. But this is not what Jesus meant. The fulfillment of that statement follows in the next section.

Jesus Transfigured

Read Matthew 17:1-8

At Matthew 17:1-3, we read, “After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James and led them up a high _____ by themselves. There he was _____ before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as _____ as the light. Just then there _____ before them _____ and _____, talking with Jesus.”

Note the similarity of description of Jesus at Revelation 1:16, where Jesus’ “face was like the _____ shining in all its _____.”

Mark 12:27

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Matthew 11:14

And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.

Why would God include this event in his Scripture? There may be several reasons.

Recall Matthew 16:28 where Jesus said that some of his disciples would see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. This event taught them that the kingdom would not necessarily be of this world. It showed Jesus to them in an entirely new light, with a supernatural power and glory they had never seen nor imagined. Then at Matthew 17:5 a bright cloud enveloped them, and a _____ from the cloud said, "This is my _____, whom I _____; with him I am well pleased. _____ to him." The disciples fell to the ground, terrified.

This incident must have totally changed the disciples' view of Jesus and his Kingdom.

This incident taught us something about the reality of the afterlife. Moses and Elijah were alive and talking with Jesus. They were not dead in a grave. At Mark 12:27, Jesus said of God, "He is not the God of the _____, but of the _____." Lest there be any doubt about what happens after the death of the body, Jesus showed that his saints will be alive after the death of their bodies.

Elijah Must Come First

Read Matthew 17:9-13

At Matthew 17:10, the disciples asked Jesus, "Why then do the _____ of the _____ say that Elijah must come first?"

Jesus replied, "To be sure, _____ comes and will _____ all things. But I tell you, _____ has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have _____ to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to _____ at their hands." Then the _____ understood that he was talking to them about _____ the _____.

All three Gospels point to John the Baptist as fulfilling Isaiah 40:3: "A voice of one calling: 'In the _____ prepare the way for the _____, make straight in the wilderness a _____ for our _____.'" See also Jesus' agreement at Matthew 11:14.

Is the Bible teaching reincarnation? Was John the Baptist really Elijah come back to life in another generation? Not at all.

Revelation 11:3-4

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Malachi 4:5-6

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

The Bible often refers to “types” – similarities between people or events. Jesus is like manna (literal bread) in the desert. He is the living bread. The rock in the desert from which came water for the people was a type of Jesus who is the living water. Joseph who was sold into slavery in Egypt was a type of Jesus. Jesus and Joseph were given all power and authority – in Joseph’s case under Pharaoh, in Jesus’ case under God the Father. The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham was a type of the sacrifice of Jesus by God the Father. Isaac was spared – a ram was substituted by God – but Jesus was not. He became the lamb who was slain.

In like manner, John the Baptist was like Elijah – he had the same fearless spirit to announce the purposes of God – the coming of the Messiah Jesus. Another type of Elijah will arise in the end times. At Revelation 11:3-12, John writes about two witnesses. We know they are types of Moses and Elijah because of miracles they were enabled to do. Likely, this Elijah will fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:5: “See, I will send you the prophet _____ before that great and _____ day of the _____ comes.” The dreadful “day of the LORD” comes in the very end times.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **The world has no value comparable to the value of the human soul.**
- **We will be rewarded according to what we have done.**
- **A saving faith is accompanied by action.**
- **Jesus was transfigured to be as he is today in heaven.**
- **Moses and Elijah prove to us there is life after death of the body.**
- **John the Baptist is a “type” of Elijah.**

DAY

4

Necessity of Strong Faith

Read Matthew 17:14-23

When they came to the crowd, a man _____ Jesus and knelt before him. "Lord, have mercy on my _____," he said. "He has seizures and is _____ greatly. He often _____ into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your _____, but they could not heal him."

"O unbelieving and perverse _____," Jesus replied, "how _____ shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the _____ here to me." Jesus _____ the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was _____ from that moment. Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't _____ drive it out?"

He replied, "Because you have so little _____. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a _____ seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. _____ will be impossible for you."

When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be _____ into the hands of men. They will _____ him, and on the _____ day he will be raised to _____." And the disciples were filled with grief.

The disciples could not heal the boy. Jesus said it was because of their lack of faith. How much faith do you and I have? Jesus told his disciples that if they had faith as small as a mustard seed, nothing would be impossible for them. Is that true of you and me? Are we also lacking in faith?

Again Jesus clearly forewarns his disciples about what would happen to him shortly. These were men who believed Jesus was going to be King of Israel and rid the country of Roman domination. It must have been shocking for them to see how hated Jesus was by the religious leaders of the Jews and then to hear Jesus say he would be betrayed and killed. Indeed, this was dreadful news for them to hear. They yet did not understand what he meant about being raised from the dead on the third day.

Why does God reveal this to us? He is showing us that Jesus was not surprised when he was arrested and condemned to death. He also wants us to know that Jesus knew the details of his betrayal – yet willingly went to his death.

Jesus is showing us by example that we are to obey him and the Father in all things – even to give up our lives if God requires it of us.

The Temple Tax

Read Matthew 17:24-27

After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the _____ of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the _____ tax?"

"_____, he does," he replied.

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the _____ to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From _____ do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes – from their own _____ or from others?"

"From _____," Peter answered.

"Then the sons are _____," Jesus said to him. "But so that we may not offend them, go to the _____ and throw out your _____. Take the _____ fish you catch; open its _____ and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my _____ and yours."

Peter must not have wanted Jesus to get in trouble with the tax collectors. He quickly responded that Jesus did pay the temple tax. Who spoke first when Peter entered the house? _____. Why do you suppose this is recorded in Scripture? _____

God is making sure we understand that Jesus supernaturally knew the conversation Peter had with the tax collectors.

Why did Jesus ask Peter about who should pay the tax – the sons or others? _____

Doubtless, it was because the temple was for God – the great King and Jesus is his son. He should not have had to pay the tax. But he did so anyway to set an example for us. Jesus showed us that we should pay without argument if payment is demanded of us.

Finally, Jesus told Peter where to get the money for the tax. Again, this whole event was set up so that

Peter's faith could be strengthened. He was to take the first fish he caught, not the second, nor to keep fishing until he finally got the four-drachma coin. The coin would be in the mouth of the **first** fish he caught.

Repeatedly Jesus showed his disciples (and us) his incredible power in order to build faith in them and in us in our Lord Jesus.

Be Humble as a Child

Read Matthew 18:1-9

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the _____ in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little _____ and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you _____ and become like _____ children, you will _____ enter the kingdom of _____." Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the _____ in the kingdom of heaven. "And whoever welcomes a little _____ like this in my _____ welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who _____ in me to sin, it would be better for _____ to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be _____ in the depths of the sea. "Woe to the world because of the things that _____ people to _____! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they _____! If your hand or your foot causes you to _____ cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter _____ maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal _____. And if your _____ causes you to sin, _____ it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of _____."

The disciples were asking who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They might have been arguing again about who was the greatest among them. Jesus must have surprised them when he had a little child come to him.

Jesus made their question a salvation issue when he said, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

If you are as humble as a little child, you won't ask questions about who will be the greatest. Jesus said the person who is like a little child is greatest in the

Matthew 25:40

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said that to welcome a little child like the one he held was to welcome him. The same principle is seen in the parable of the sheep and the goats. At Matthew 25:40, Jesus said, "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, _____ you did for one of the _____ of these brothers of mine, you did for _____.'"

Jesus looked at the little children and saw what would happen to them. He saw the effect of sin and warned those who would cause them to sin that it would be better to die than to cause one of the little ones to sin.

Jesus said "Woe to the man through whom things come that cause people to sin." Think of the immorality that is seen in our culture's entertainment media. It's saturated with violence and explicit sex. It all seems designed to cause people to sin. I'm told the internet is used more for pornography than any other use. Pornography, nudity, and sex scenes are all calculated to cause lust. Jesus said lust is equivalent to adultery. No adulterer will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus used graphic examples to show the danger of sin: Cut off your hand if it causes you to sin; gouge out your eye if it causes you to sin. In both cases, Jesus said it was better to enter life crippled or with one eye than to be thrown into the fire of hell.

Jesus made a significant point here – that sinning can cause a person to go to hell. Paul understood that well. At 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 he wrote that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God. He warned, "Do not be _____. Neither the sexually _____ nor _____ nor _____ nor male prostitutes nor _____ offenders nor _____ nor the _____ nor _____ nor _____ nor _____ will _____ the kingdom of God." Jesus made the point that we can lose the opportunity of salvation because of our sin again at Revelation 21:8. Paul said the same thing again at Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-7, and Colossians 3:5.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **Nothing will be impossible for us if we ask according to the will of God.**
- **We are to be obedient to our Lord Jesus even to the point of death.**
- **Rather than offend, do what is asked.**
- **We must become like little children if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven.**
- **Jesus warned against causing others to sin.**
- **Sinning can deprive us of salvation.**
- **Sin is awful in God's eyes; we should cut off a hand or gouge out an eye if either causes us to sin.**

DAY 5

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Read Matthew 18:10-14

Jesus said, "See that you do not look down on one of these _____ ones. For I tell you that their _____ in heaven always see the _____ of my Father in heaven.

"What do you think? If a man _____ a hundred sheep, and _____ of them wanders away, will he not _____ the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that _____ off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one _____ than about the ninety-nine that did _____ wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not _____ that _____ of these little ones should be lost."

Jesus continued to express his concern for the little children. He taught us things we could not know. He told us that children have angels and that those angels are in the presence of God.

Then Jesus changed subjects to deal with the value of each person in God's eyes. He uses the subject his listeners knew very well – tending and owning sheep. He repeats that if one of his sheep wanders off, the owner will leave the others to look for that sheep.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

When he finds it, he'll rejoice. Jesus concluded with his concern about the children: "In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost."

The lesson for us is that God is concerned about each person's salvation. He doesn't want anyone to wander off and be lost. Peter said the same thing, at 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is _____ with you, not wanting _____ to perish, but _____ to come to repentance."

A Brother Who Sins Against You

Read Matthew 18:15-17

Jesus said, "If your brother _____ against you, go and show him his _____, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not _____, take one or two _____ along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three _____.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he _____ to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a _____ or a tax collector."

Here, Jesus teaches us that we are not to allow a person to sin against us without confronting him. He tells us that we are to do this in a loving, but firm way. We are not to give up simply because the person objects or refuses to listen. If the person refuses to listen, the confrontation becomes more serious each time. Finally, if he fails to listen, even to the church, he must be treated as an outsider – not as part of your fellowship.

God has always wanted his followers to be pure. When someone engages in sin, God wants it dealt with, not condoned or swept under a rug. We are not to look the other way. On the other hand, we must know without a doubt that our claims are correct. The first confrontation is private, just between the offending party and the offended party. No one else is to be involved.

When a true believer is confronted, he will likely recognize that he has offended a brother. He'll apologize and repent. It should never go beyond this. But if the person disagrees, and does not see that he has offended his brother, then others must be

1 Corinthians 5:11

But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Matthew 18:18

Truly, I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be improper on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be already permitted in heaven (Amplified Bible).

apprised of the facts of the dispute. But if there’s still no solution, the next step must be taken – he must be confronted by the whole church and understand the likelihood of losing fellowship with those in the church if he didn’t repent.

If such a person professes to be a believer, but persists in his sin, Paul commanded that those in the church “must not associate with _____ who calls himself a _____ but is sexually immoral, or _____, an idolater or a _____, a drunkard or a _____. With such a man do not even _____.”

Binding and Loosing on Earth

Matthew 18:18: “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

At first glance, this passage might seem contrary to many scriptures. It seems as if whatever the disciples did on earth was done in heaven, whether it was appropriate or not.

Part of our lack of understanding may be the result of a low standard of obedience. We expect others to act the same way we do. I suspect the level of obedience among the disciples was far higher than we could imagine. Having been disciplined directly by Jesus, it is likely that they were learning to have the mind of Christ. This is a critical concept in understanding this passage.

At 1 John 5:14-15, John explained, “This is the confidence we have in _____ God: that if we ask anything according to his _____, he hears us. And if we _____ that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we _____ what we asked of him.” The key in receiving from God and having answered prayer is to ask according to his will.

The Amplified Bible interprets this Scripture as doing and forbidding according to God’s will – with the mind of Christ. Jesus said, “Truly, I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be _____ on earth must be what is _____ forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and _____ on earth must be already _____ in heaven.”

James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Corinthians 2:16

"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

It is this interpretation that is consistent with the rest of Scripture – doing all according to the will of God.

Agree About Anything You Ask For

Read Matthew 18:19-20

Jesus said, "Again, I tell you that if _____ of you on earth _____ about anything you ask for, it will be _____ for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my _____, there am I with them."

This is a powerful promise, but there are caveats. First, Jesus is talking about multiple people – at least two in the first sentence. He seems to be rewarding fellowship. Doubtless the reason for two is that it is an added assurance that what is asked for will be according to the will of the Father.

James 5:16 speaks about a righteous man whose prayer is powerful and effective. A righteous man will pray according to the will of God. And Paul assures us at 1 Corinthians 2:16 that Christians have the mind of Christ. Jesus was perfect – without sin – and had a perfect understanding of the will of God. If we have the mind of Christ, we should also know the will of God.

Forgiveness and the Unmerciful Servant

Read Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I _____ my brother when he sins against me? Up to _____ times?"

²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but _____ times."

Although Peter thought he was being magnanimous when he suggested forgiving seven times, Jesus said that was insufficient. Although there is disagreement whether Jesus said seventy-seven or seventy times seven, the amount is unimportant. The point Jesus was making was that we are to forgive limitlessly.

Then Jesus told a very important parable, one that has salvation implications. The parable is about a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

Matthew 6:12

Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven
our debtors.

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men
when they sin against
you, your heavenly Father
will also forgive you.

¹⁵ But if you do not
forgive men their sins,
your Father will not
forgive your sins.

Colossians 1:21-23

Once you were alienated
from God and were
enemies in your minds
because of your evil
behavior. ²² But now he
has reconciled you by
Christ's physical body
through death to present
you holy in his sight,
without blemish and free
from accusation— ²³ if you
continue in your faith,
established and firm, not
moved from the hope
held out in the gospel.

One servant owed a vast sum that he couldn't pay, so the king ordered him, his family, and all he had to be sold to partially repay the debt. The servant begged for time to repay. The king didn't give him more time; instead he forgave the entire debt.

Unbelievably, the servant forgiven so much went to another servant who owed him a very small debt. He grabbed him and demanded payment. His fellow servant begged him for time to repay but he refused and had him thrown into prison until he should repay the debt.

The other servants told the king what had happened. The king called the servant in. "You _____ servant," he said, "I _____ all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had _____ on your fellow servant just as I had on you? In anger his master turned him over to the _____ to be _____, until he should pay back all he owed."

Jesus concluded, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of _____ unless you _____ your brother from your _____."

Note that even though the king had forgiven all the servant's debts, he reinstated the debts when the servant refused to forgive his fellow servant. That is just what we pray (at Matthew 6:12) in the "Lord's Prayer": "Forgive us our debts, _____ we also have _____ our debtors." We are praying for conditional forgiveness – conditional upon our forgiveness of others. When that condition is violated by our failure or refusal to forgive, it is proper that all the sins previously forgiven be reinstated upon us.

At Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus stated this principle again: "For if you _____ men when they _____ against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive _____. But if you do _____ forgive men their _____, your Father will _____ forgive _____ sins."

Can we gain salvation if our sins are not forgiven? Of course not! It is only because the shed blood of our Lord Jesus permits our sins to be forgiven that we can be reconciled to God. If our sins are not forgiven, we cannot be reconciled to our holy God. Colossians 1:21-22 states the principle that God "has _____ you by Christ's physical _____ through death to present you _____ in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation." If our sins are not forgiven, we are neither without blemish nor free from accusation.

Every once in a while, I hear people say they “can’t forgive” a person for some fault or injury. I wonder if they know what they are saying. I doubt it.

When living in Southern California years ago, there was wide publicity about a Highway Patrolman who stopped a college girl and caused her to drive down a deserted off ramp where he accosted her. When she resisted, he killed her, dumping her body over an embankment.

It was an awful crime made even worse by the girl’s mother who claimed to be a Christian, but that she could never forgive the patrolman. I wondered if she had any inkling that she was foreclosing her own salvation by refusing to forgive.

It is not an option to forgive. It is a command. Refusal to forgive will cost salvation. This is not negotiable or unclear. It is an unambiguous teaching of Jesus that we must obey if we would be saved.

Have you forgiven everybody of everything they may have done to you? _____ List all the instances in which you have not forgiven: _____

Please immediately pray to God, forgiving all of them.

What is the most important statement or scripture you read today? _____

Reword that statement into a prayer to God:

Summary Statements

- **God will look for us when we go astray. He is not willing that any should be lost.**
- **If a brother sins against us, we must confront it. Jesus tells us how.**
- **We must bind and loose according to the will of God.**
- **If two agree on anything they ask, it will be given to them.**
- **We cannot be saved unless we forgive our brother from our hearts.**
- **God will only forgive us as we forgive others.**

The next section will start with Matthew 19. There are many important commands coming up. This is the time to remember Jesus' great commission to all of us: "teach them to obey all that I commanded you."

Perhaps you've already noticed a difference in your life as you've examined many of Jesus' commands and tried to apply them to your life. This life change will continue as we study more and more of Jesus' commands. Soon, I pray, you will notice that you are being conformed to the likeness of Jesus.