

Preaching
the Whole
Counsel of God
Volume 7

Sermon Outlines
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The Biblical Doctrine of Repentance

Acts 17:30-31

Thesis: To impress on Christians, erring Christians and non-Christians the nature and spiritual significance of biblical repentance.

Introduction:

1. Man's repentance is necessary to remove the barrier of sin that stands between man and God, Isa. 59:1-2; Acts 17:30-31.
2. Therefore, it is necessary to biblically define repentance.

Body:

I. How shall we define biblical repentance?

- A. Usually an English dictionary is a poor resource to define biblical words, and one must turn instead to Greek dictionaries or lexicons for the proper definition of New Testament words.
 1. However, an English, dictionary definition for repentance is: "to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life; to feel regret or contrition; to change one's mind; to feel sorrow" (Merriam).
 2. Similarly, the primary Greek word for repentance, which is *metanoeo*, "signifies 'to change one's mind or purpose,' always, in the NT, involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3,4, of 'repentance' from sin" (*Vine's*).
 3. Another Greek lexicon adds, "**to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness**" (Lowe and Nida). [emphasis added]
 4. In addition, the biblical definition of the word "repent" can be stressed through observing how it is used in Scripture.
- B. Repentance is first and foremost a **mental decision** to cease committing sin, which ultimately manifests itself by outwardly conforming to the Gospel.
 1. Repentance is when one bows his otherwise obstinate will submissively before God and consequently practices righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

2. Reformation of life is not repentance, but repentance manifests itself in reformation of life.
 3. This aspect of repentance appears in John the Baptist's rebuke of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. 3:7-8.
 4. Both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ preached the same kind of repentance, Matt. 3:1-2; 4:17.
 5. The apostle Paul also preached this type of repentance, which the English translation also shows, Acts 26:19-20.
- C. Repentance is ultimately toward God, Acts 20:21.
1. Even sins toward oneself and others are ultimately against God, 2 Sam. 12:9-10, 13; Psa. 51:4.
 2. Sin is the violation of God's law, regardless who may be directly affected by the sin, 1 John 3:4.
 3. In addition to repenting before God, penitent souls need to repent toward any fellow men against whom one may have sinned, Luke 17:3-4.
- D. Repentance is a direct challenge to man's obstinate will power.
1. Consequently, repentance is not easy.
 2. Man is reluctant to bend his will to coincide with God's will.
 3. First, mankind has great difficulty admitting culpability or responsibility for his actions and sin.
 4. Nevertheless, we must adopt the attitude of Nehemiah when he said, "we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned," 1:6.
- E. Repentance is a universal command to which all souls are amenable.
1. Both during his ministry and in the Great Commission, Jesus Christ taught the essentiality of repentance, Luke 13:3; 24:46-47.
 2. The apostle Peter included repentance in the first recorded Gospel sermon, Acts 2:38.
 3. The apostle Paul challenged those who heard his preaching to repent, Acts 17:30-31.

II. What will not pass for biblical repentance?

- A. Repentance is not fear.
1. Fear aroused by deathbed tales cannot substitute for true repentance.

2. Repentance involves determination to turn from sin, which results in conformity to the Gospel.
- B. Repentance is not merely regret.
1. Regret may only reflect the disappointment of being caught.
 2. Regret or sorrow because one has sinned is a part of repentance, but alone it cannot substitute for repentance, 2 Cor. 7:10.
 3. Judas exhibited worldly sorrow and killed himself, Matt. 27:3-5.
- C. Repentance is not prayer.
1. Prayers by people who continue to commit sin are an abomination to God, Prov. 28:9; Psa. 66:18.
 2. Prayer alone did not save Saul of Tarsus from his sins, Acts 9:9, 11.
 3. However, an *erring child* of God has his sins removed through *repentance and prayer*, Acts 8:22.
- D. Repentance is not reformation of life alone.
1. It is true, though, that true repentance brings about reformation of life.
 2. However, one may live a reformed life based on motives other than repentance, e.g. convenience, expectation of others.
 3. Cornelius was a good, moral person, and yet he was lost before he was baptized into Jesus Christ, Acts 10:1-2, 48.
- E. Repentance is not achieved by the passing of time.
1. True repentance may be instantaneous, though complete reformation of life may take a little longer.
 2. However, simply slipping back into worship and the passing of enough time until one's fellows forget about his sins does not equate to biblical repentance.
- F. Repentance is not simply doing good deeds.
1. Penitent persons are supposed to be zealous of good works, Titus 2:14.
 2. Yet, good works cannot substitute for biblical repentance, Acts 10:1-2.
- G. Repentance is not shifting responsibility.
1. Repentance acknowledges one's sins and their consequences, Rom. 3:23; 6:23.

2. Repentance takes responsibility for one's sins, Neh. 1:6.
- H. Repentance is not changing congregations.
- I. Repentance is not quitting the church.
- J. Repentance is not even walking down a meetinghouse aisle with mental reservation or without seeking to correct any wrongs we have done.
- K. Repentance is not the same as a guilty conscience.

III. Who are penitent souls?

- A. Penitent souls are never reluctant to obey God.
1. For instance, penitent souls about whom we read in the New Testament immediately obeyed the command to be baptized, Acts 2:38, 41.
 2. As soon as the Ethiopian treasurer had heard the Gospel, he interrupted his long journey to be baptized, Acts 8:35-39.
 3. After the Philippian jailer was taught the Gospel, he was baptized immediately, in the wee hours of the night, Acts 16:22-33.
- B. The New Testament is full to references to repentance.
1. From the first Gospel sermon onward, repentance was a primary part of preaching and teaching, Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20.
 2. Repentance was demonstrated by reformation of life, even sometimes at great expense, Acts 19:19.
 3. The New Testament builds on repentance in the Old Testament, Matt. 12:41; Jonah 3:10.
- C. Favorable consequences attend repentance.
1. Those who repent avoid perishing eternally, Luke 13:3.
 2. True repentance leads to salvation, 2 Cor. 7:10.
 3. Repentance leads to reformation of life.
 4. Repentance prepares one for an eternal home.

IV. Who are not penitent souls?

- A. The impenitent are disobedient souls, for which they provoke God to anger, Rom. 2:4-11.
- B. The Bible is filled with examples of impenitent souls.
1. King Agrippa is a classic example of a soul who did not repent, Acts 26:28.
 2. The impenitent world of Noah's day perished in the

universal flood, 2 Pet. 2:5.

- C. There are consequences for impenitence.
 1. The impenitent perish eternally, Luke 13:3; 16:19-31.
 2. Jesus Christ essentially challenged five of the seven churches of Asia to **repent or else**, Rev. 2-3.
 3. God will not rescue the impenitent from earthly calamity or eternal torment, Prov. 1:24-28.

Conclusion:

1. Repentance is a universal, individual responsibility in response to divine command, 2 Pet. 3:9.
2. The man or woman who will genuinely repent will not obstinately balk at any of God's will for Christians or his church, Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
3. Repentance stands between man and God, and repentance will make the difference between spending eternity in heaven or hell.

Invitation:

1. Essentially, God calls upon every mentally responsible soul to **turn or burn**, Luke 13:3.
2. Both non-Christians and erring Christians must repent, Acts 2:38; 8:22.

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God Knew What He Was Doing!

Jeremiah 10:23

Thesis: To emphasize and demonstrate that God knew what he was doing when he authored the Bible.

Introduction:

1. Mankind is neither permitted nor able to prepare himself for an eternal home in heaven **aside from divine revelation**, Jer. 10:23.
2. The Bible is essentially God's operator's and service manual for human creation, without which mankind cannot know how to prepare for an eternal home in heaven, Prov. 20:24.
3. God will guide any soul in its preparation for an eternal home in heaven through man's appeal exclusively to the Bible, Prov. 3:5-7.
4. A brief sampling of Scripture will readily demonstrate that God knew what he was doing when he authored the Bible.

Body:

I. God knew what he was doing when he determined that mankind would be in need of salvation.

- A. God knew what he was doing when he made provisions for human redemption before mankind needed redemption.
 1. Upon glancing into the future and seeing that mankind would need redemption, our loving God devised a plan of salvation before he created either the universe or mankind, Titus 1:2 "promised before time began" NKJV.
 2. Consequently, the church and our Savior Jesus Christ were a part of God's "eternal purpose," Eph. 3:10-11.
- B. God knew what he was doing when he provided for redemption for both non-Christians and erring Christians.
 1. Humanity under each of the three, God-given religious dispensations has committed sin, Gen. 3; 6:5; Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 3:23.
 2. In our day, God has provided the Gospel, which saves non-Christians when it is obeyed, Rom. 1:16; 6:17-18; Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 10:9-10; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.
 3. Our loving God also has provided what we might call the *second law of pardon* for erring Christians, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-9.

- C. God knew what he was doing when bolstered the plan of salvation with passages precisely in the area where his redemptive plan would meet the most resistance.
1. No one is saved by anything **only**, including baptism.
 2. However, the New Testament clearly teaches that baptism (immersion in water) is the point at which one's sins are forgiven, Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20-21.
 3. Presumably, God mustered so many more passages in the New Testament for baptism than the other steps of salvation because it is the step in the redemptive plan at which the world bulks the most, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16.
 4. Baptism saturates the New Testament: Acts 2:41; 8:12-13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:3-5; 1 Cor. 1:13-16; 12:13; 15:29; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5.
 5. God only has to say something through the Bible once for it to be so, yet he has devoted many passages to the problem areas characteristically experienced by humans everywhere and throughout the ages, e.g. earthly wealth.

II. God knew what he was doing when he gave instructions to mankind for the home and the church.

- A. God knew what he was doing when he gave instructions for the home.
1. God knew what he was doing when he created Adam and Eve, instead of Adam and Steve, so that humanity could continue through procreation, Gen. 2:21-25; 3:20; 1 Cor. 6:9 NKJV.
 2. God knew what he was doing when he created man to head the home and woman to complement man as they begat and reared children, Gen. 2:18, 20; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 2:12-15; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24.
 3. God knew what he was doing when he determined that his divine instructions would be taught to each successive generation in the home by parents, Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:7; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15.
- B. God knew what he was doing when he established and gave instructions for the church.
1. God knew what he was doing when he established the

church as the body of the saved over which our Saviour Jesus Christ would be the Head, Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18.

2. God knew what he was doing when he determined that each congregation would be ruled by a plurality of elders who meet divinely given qualifications, Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:17, 28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
3. God knew what he was doing when he gave man inspired revelation (the Bible) whereby children of God could know how to worship God acceptably, exercise Christian living and perform Christian service, John 4:23-24; Rom. 12:1-2; Titus 2:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:58.

Conclusion:

1. Man fails in every case when he opts for his own preferences instead of faithfully following God's instructions found in the Bible, Col. 2:23.
2. The home will never be what it could be as long as mankind disregards divine instruction, e.g. one parent and no parent homes of today.
3. The church (or congregation) will never be what it could be as long as Christians disregard divine instruction, e.g. Corinth.
4. The majority of mankind, including perhaps most Christians as well, will be lost eternally for disregarding divine instruction, Matt. 7:13-14; 13:3-23; Rev. 7:9.

Invitation:

1. God knew what he was doing when he sent his Son into the world to die for you so that your sins could be forgiven, Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:19.
2. Dear sinner, you do not know what you are doing if you do not respond to the generous offer of God to have your sins removed, Matt. 11:28.
3. Dear child of God whose soul is blackened with the damning darkness of sin, you do not know what you are doing if you fail to repent and seek forgiveness, 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 1:9.

The Church for which Jesus Died Is Divine

Ephesians 3:3-11

Thesis: To identify and exalt the church of the Bible; secondly, to distinguish the church of the Bible from imitations.

Song: *The Church's One Foundation*

Introduction:

1. Only the church for which Jesus died deserves exaltation.
 - a. It is his church, Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16.
 - b. His church is the body, 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30.
 - c. Jesus is the Head of the church and the body, Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.
 - d. Further, this church is the bride of Christ, 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:2; 22:17.
2. Churches of human origin do not deserve praise and exaltation that rightfully belongs to the Lord's church alone.
 - a. A denominational church is not correctly styled his church, the body of Christ or the bride of Christ.
 - b. Jesus Christ did not die for a denominational church, Matt. 15:13.
 - c. Denominational churches are not divine, but divisive, 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

Body:

I. The church for which Jesus died is divine in origin.

- A. The church originated in the mind of God, Eph. 3:3-11 (10-11).
 1. The church was not an afterthought.
 2. Therefore, the church of the Bible is divine in origin.
- B. Denominational churches were never in the mind of God.
 1. Some of the most popular denominations are outgrowths of the human minds of Martin Luther, Henry the VIII, John Calvin, Robert Browne, John Smythe, John Wesley, Joseph Smith, William Miller, Mary Baker Eddy and Charles T. Russell.
 2. Therefore, denominational churches are not divine in origin.

II. The church for which Jesus died is divine in establishment.

- A. Jesus built his church, Matt. 16:18.

1. Our Lord built the foundation of the church upon himself, 1 Cor. 3:11.
2. Jesus purchased the church with his blood, Acts 20:28.
- B. The Lord's church began in Jerusalem in about A.D. 33.
 1. Old Testament prophecies named Jerusalem as the place where the church was to be established, Isa. 2:2-3; Joel 2:28-32.
 2. The apostle Peter said Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled on the Pentecost following the Ascension of Jesus, Acts 2:16-21.
 3. Old Testament prophecy declared that the Lord's kingdom was to be established in the fourth kingdom from and including the Babylonian kingdom (which it was, Roman Empire in A.D. 33), Dan. 2:31-46.
- C. Denominational churches were built by men, in the wrong cities, at the wrong times.
 1. The foundations of denominational churches are men, not Christ.
 2. Denominations were established in 606, 1520, 1534, 1536, 1550, 1607, 1739, 1830, 1859, 1866 and 1872 through the present.
 3. The most popular denominations were established in Italy, Germany, England, Switzerland, Holland and America.

III. The church for which Jesus died is divine in name.

- A. The designations that identify the church of the Bible typically glorify deity:
 1. Temple of God, 1 Cor. 3:16.
 2. Bride of Christ, Rev. 22:17.
 3. Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:27.
 4. Kingdom of God's Son, Col. 1:13.
 5. House of God, 1 Tim. 3:15.
 6. The church, Acts 2:47; Eph. 3:10.
 7. Church of God, 1 Cor. 1:2.
 8. Church of the First Born, Heb. 12:23.
 9. Church of Christ, Rom. 16:16.
- B. The designations that identify the members of the church either refer to holy things or a heavenly relationship:
 1. Simply members, 1 Cor. 12:27.
 2. Disciples, Acts 6:1.

3. Believers, Acts 5:14.
 4. Saints, Acts 9:13.
 5. Priests, 1 Pet. 2:9.
 6. Children, 1 John 3:1-2.
 7. Christians, Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16 (the new name, Isa. 62:2).
- C. Denominational churches are not divine in name.
1. Denominational names do not appear in the Bible!
 2. Denominational names often glorify men or human doctrine instead of God.
 3. Whom or what do these names praise: Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Christian Church, Russelites, Catholics, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Adventists, Christian Scientists, Congregational Churches, Church of the Brethren, Apostolic, etc.?
 4. Denominational names are divisive!

IV. The church for which Jesus died is divine in membership.

- A. Jesus adds the saved to his church, Acts 2:47.
1. Immersion for the remission of sins is the point at which one's sins are taken away (hence, saved) and added to the church by Jesus Christ, Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 Cor. 12:13.
 2. Immersion of an accountable person is preceded by hearing and faith in the Word of God, Rom. 10:17; repenting, Acts 17:30; and confessing before men that Jesus is the Christ, Rom. 10:9-10.
- B. Denominational churches encourage people to **join** them or **vote** their members into fellowship.
1. Manmade churches devise human rules of membership, but human rules of church membership lack the power to save.
 2. Denominations are comprised of souls who refuse to be baptized, Acts 10:48; teach faith only, Jam. 2:20, 24, 26; and generally refuse to obey, Heb. 5:8-9.

V. The church for which Jesus died is divine in organization.

- A. The New Testament prescribes a certain organizational pattern for the church.
1. Each congregation is autonomous or independent (the Bible does not describe any unity binding congregations beside the Word of God).

2. A plurality of elders are ordained in each congregation, Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
 3. Deacons are also appointed to serve, 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
 4. Preachers are charged to preach the Gospel, 2 Tim. 4:1-2.
 5. Jesus Christ rules the church from heaven, Mark 16:19; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; the Lord's church has no earthly headquarters.
- B. Denominations do not follow the divine pattern for church organization.
1. Denominations often belong to synods, conferences or some other humanly devised federation.
 2. Denominational leaders are appointed according to human design instead of biblical instruction and given religious titles foreign to the Bible.
 3. Denominations are usually ruled from earthly headquarters.

VI. The church for which Jesus died is divine in worship.

- A. The New Testament church must worship according to the New Testament.
1. Worship must be in spirit and truth, John 4:24.
 2. The Lord's church sings rather than plays instruments in worship, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.
 3. The church observes the communion weekly, Acts 20:7.
 4. Worship includes praying, Acts 2:42.
 5. The church also practices giving, 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7.
 6. Worship also includes preaching, Acts 20:7.
- B. Denominations do not restrict worship to divine instruction.
1. They do more than sing by adding instruments of music to Christian worship.
 2. The communion is observed infrequently and on other days than the Lord's Day.
 3. Denominations encourage "tithing" instead of giving according to one's prosperity and as one purposes in his heart.
 4. Churches made by men fail to fully preach the Gospel given by God, 1 John 4:1.
 5. Denominational prayers are sometimes no more than

recitations of hand-me-down creeds or are repetitious, Matt. 6:7.

VII. The church for which Jesus died is divine in doctrine.

- A. The church must follow divine law only, Jam. 1:25.
 - 1. The Gospel alone has the power to save souls, Rom. 1:16.
 - 2. Only the Truth can sanctify, John 17:17.
 - 3. The Words of Christ alone can lead to eternal life, John 6:68.
- B. Denominations do not follow divine law only.
 - 1. These churches are guided by manmade creeds, catechisms, missals, disciplines, manuals, by-laws, doctrines and confessions, Matt. 15:9.
 - 2. They are additions to or subtractions from the Bible, Rev. 22:18-19.

VIII. The church for which Jesus died is divine in mission.

- A. Only the Lord's church has a Divine Mission.
 - 1. The New Testament church alone is charged with evangelizing the world, Mark 16:15-16; 1 Thess. 1:8.
 - 2. Only the Lord's church can edify itself, 1 Cor. 14:12.
 - 3. The church is also obligated to practice benevolence toward its members and others, too, 2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 6:10.
- B. Denominations do not have a divine mission.
 - 1. **The churches of men have not been charged to preach anything to anyone!**
 - 2. Denominations are ill-equipped to edify anyone.
 - 3. While denominations do not have a divine mission to practice benevolence, all men should treat others as they wish to be treated, Matt. 7:12; Gal. 5:14.

Conclusion:

- 1. Everything about the church for which Jesus died is divine because it exists by divine implementation.
 - a. The New Testament church was in the mind of God from eternity.
 - b. Further, it was built by Jesus the Christ.
 - c. The church also was established in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
 - d. The church for which Jesus died is guided solely by God's Word.

- e. The basis of unity in the Lord's church is adoption of God's Word alone.
2. Every other church is at best only a futile imitation of the church of the Bible.
 - a. Denominations were never in the mind of God.
 - b. They also were built by mere men.
 - c. Further, manmade churches do not exist as a fulfillment of prophecy.
 - d. Then too, denominations are guided by the words of men.
 - e. The adoption of human creeds and divisive party names undermines any possibility of biblical unity between denominations and the Lord's church.

Invitation:

1. The church of the Bible is the real thing; obedience to the Gospel will make one a real Christian!
2. Why would any clear thinking person settle for anything less than membership in the divine institution for which Jesus died, Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9?

What the Home Owes Its Children

1 Timothy 3:4, 12

Thesis: To note some good and bad influences the home may have on its youth, and to encourage Christians to provide a Christian home environment for its children.

Introduction:

1. The home is the basic unit of any society.
 - a. Truly, societies, nations and the church depend on the home for their survival.
 - b. As goes the home, so go society, the nation and the church.
 - c. Lamentably, the home is in **crisis!**
2. The home is one of two divine institutions (the church is the other).
 - a. The Bible is God's handbook for the home; nothing else can improve upon it or dare be supposed could replace it.
 - b. The Bible is the divine handbook for the successful operation of the home and the rearing of children.
 - c. The operation of the home and childrearing includes instilling God's Word in the hearts of the home's occupants.
3. Among other things, the Bible teaches what the home owes its children.
 - a. The qualifications for elders and deacons include the highest ideals toward which every Christian should strive to include in his or her lives as well.
 - b. Both qualifications for elders and deacons include high ideals regarding the home and childrearing that are noble goals for godly parents to acquire, 1 Tim. 3:4, 12.

Body:

- I. **The home owes its children the stability and security afforded through a loving mother and father.**
 - A. Irresponsibly contracted marriages bring hardship on parents and children, meaning that they are less likely to result in a happy, productive and functional homes.
 1. Immaturity among grooms and brides contribute to failure in the home.
 2. Irresponsibility with finances ruin marriages and homes.
 3. Weddings of necessity begin on the wrong basis for

- producing a happy marriage and home life.
 - 4. Marrying purely because of physical attraction lacks the basis for a permanent, happy marriage and home into which children may be born.
 - 5. Marrying to get away from home or for some other defective reason hobbles the marriage and the home.
- B. Divorce destroys the divine ideal of the home, and it hurts its members, especially children.
 - 1. God instituted marriage *for keeps*, Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6.
 - 2. When Jesus reestablished God's original marriage law, he provided a single reason for which the innocent spouse of a marriage ruined by adultery could divorce and remarry, Matt. 19:9.
 - 3. God intended marriage to last a lifetime, Rom. 7:1-3.
- C. Rampant divorce, unwed mothers *and fathers*, and fornication evidence human disdain for God's divine plan for marriage and the home.

II. The home owes its children the assumption of divinely appointed parental roles.

- A. God assigned fathers and husbands to rule (i.e. take responsibility for) the home, Eph. 5:23; 6:1-4.
 - 1. Fathers and husbands have the responsibility to satisfy the physical **needs** of the family, 1 Tim. 5:8.
 - 2. Fathers have the primary responsibility for discipline and spiritual instruction in the home, Eph. 6:4.
 - 3. Husbands have a responsibility to love their wives, which has a material affect on children in the home, Eph. 5:25.
- B. God assigned mothers and wives to guide the home, 1 Tim. 5:14.
 - 1. She is supposed to make the house into a home, Titus 2:3-5.
 - 2. Under ordinary circumstances, it is not the primary responsibility of wives and mothers to support the family, though she may **work out of the home** as long as she does not neglect her divinely appointed **work in the home**, Prov. 31:10-31.
 - 3. Note: Fairness demands that if a wife helps support the home that the husband helps the wife in her domestic

duties as well.

4. Sadly, half of all mothers work outside the home and half of those working mothers have children six or under.
- C. Role reversals in the home are not supported by biblical references and confuse \god's scheme for the home and its children.

III. The home owes its children love and discipline.

- A. Love and obedience (or discipline) are inseparably linked, John 14:15 ASV.
1. God decreed that children need nurture and admonition, Eph. 6:4.
 2. The parent who claims that he or she loves his or her child too much to discipline does not really love that child, Prov. 13:24 NKJV; Heb. 12:5-11.
- B. Discipline may be providing the proper example, instruction, correction or punishment (including spanking).

IV. The home owes its children OJT in godliness and faithfulness.

- A. Parents should teach their children proper priorities.
1. The children should have no doubt that mom and dad seek spiritual things first, Matt. 6:24, 33.
 2. Children early should come to know the true purpose for living one's life, Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10-11.
- B. Parents should exhibit and teach Christian living.
1. Can your children see the Christian virtues in their parents, 2 Pet. 1:5-9?
 2. Have your children learned to wear the Gospel armor from your example, Eph. 6:11-17?
 3. Have your children learned to pursue the fruit of the Spirit because they see the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of their parents, Gal. 5:22-23?
- C. Parents should exhibit steadfastness in the faith.
1. Have you showed your children that you intend to acquire a crown of life even if it kills you, literally, Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8?
 2. Do your children have good role models in their parents for stability in the Christian faith, 1 Cor. 15:58?

Conclusion:

1. Parents have an immense responsibility toward their children's

acquisition of the Christian faith in their lives.

2. The home is a divine institution with a divine operator's manual.
3. The home contributes to either the success or failure of its product—its children.
4. As goes the home, so goes society, the nation and the Lord's church.
5. Whatever else a father or a mother does, if he or she fails his or her divinely appointed roles in the home, that father or mother miserably fails.

Invitation:

1. Each mother and each father must strive to be the best parents they can possibly be, which includes leading their children to true salvation.
2. God pardons penitent sinners and penitent saints, Acts 2:38; 8:22.

The Remarkable Parables

Matthew 13:10

Thesis: To examine the value of parabolic teaching to see why our Lord used them extensively in his teaching.

Introduction:

1. What is a parable?
 - a. A parable is a short story that teaches a moral lesson.
 - b. Strictly, the word for “parable” in Greek means “to throw along side of something else.”
 - c. Hence, a biblical parable parallels something with which man is intimately familiar to illustrate a spiritual truth about which man knows little or nothing.
 - d. One might say that a parable is “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”
2. Our Lord’s parables, then, illustrate divine truth.
 - a. Parables paint mental pictures.
 - b. References to literal things in parables help us better understand spiritual things.
 - c. The storytelling of parables is more effective than lecturing alone.

Body:

I. Parables appeal to simple aspects of daily life to illustrate heavenly truth.

- A. Several parables refer to agriculture:
 1. The Parable of the Sower examines the relationship between the Gospel and men’s hearts respecting growth of the kingdom, Matt. 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-18.
 2. The Parable of the Seed is about the Word of God, Mark 4:26-29.
 3. The Parable of the Tares warns about false teachers and their false teaching, urging watchfulness, Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.
 4. The Parable of the Mustard Seed emphasizes faith, Matt. 13:31-32.
 5. The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree warns about deception, Luke 13:6-9.

6. The Parable of the Laborers is one of the several kingdom parables, Matt. 20:1-16.
 7. The Parable of the Vineyard and the Wicked Tenant Farmers teaches about faithfulness, Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18.
 8. The Parable of the Budding Fig Tree refers to the signs of the times, Matt. 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33.
 9. The Parable of the Vine and the Branches teaches about serving our Lord, John 15:1-8.
 10. The Parable of the Lost Sheep teaches about zeal in rescuing the perishing, Matt. 18:12-14; Luke 15:1-7.
 11. The Parable of the Sheepfold teaches about entrance into the kingdom, John 10:1-18.
- B. Several parables pertain to stewardship and riches.
1. The Parable of the Two Debtors teaches about forgiveness, Luke 7:36-50.
 2. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure emphasizes the immense value of the church or the kingdom, Matt. 13:44.
 3. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price also emphasizes the immense value of the church or the kingdom, Matt. 13:45-46.
 4. The Parable of the Rich Fool illustrates the uncertainty of temporal riches, Luke 12:13-21.
 5. The Parable of Counting the Cost focuses on discipleship, Luke 14:25-33.
 6. The Parable of the Lost Coin emphasizes the necessary and joyous zeal in rescuing the perishing, Luke 15:8-10.
 7. The Parable of the Unrighteous Steward encourages faithfulness, Luke 16:1-13.
 8. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is about judgment, Luke 16:19-31.
 9. The Parable of the Unprofitable Servant is about faithful discipleship, Luke 17:5-10.
 10. The Parables of the Pounds and the Talents deal with reward and punishment in the Judgment, Luke 19:11-27; Matt. 25:14-30.
 11. The Parable of Treasure in Heaven encourages

- followers of Jesus to seek heaven instead of material wealth on earth, Matt. 6:19-21.
12. The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant teaches about forgiveness, Matt. 18:21-35.
 13. The Parable of the Prodigal Son teaches about apostasy and repentance, Luke 15:11-32.
- C. Several parables refer to weddings or marriage.
1. The Parable of the Ten Virgins teach faithfulness, Matt. 25:1-13.
 2. A Parable of Watchfulness in Luke 12:35-41 illustrates faithfulness in anticipation of our Lord's return.
 3. The Parable of the Marriage Feast is about accepting God's invitation, Matt. 22:1-14.
 4. The Parable of the Chief Seats teaches about humility, Luke 14:7-11.
- D. Other parables refer to miscellaneous circumstances in everyday life.
1. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight teaches persistency in prayer, Luke 11:5-13.
 2. The Parable of the Leaven shows how the kingdom grows, Matt. 13:33.
 3. The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches responsibility toward one's fellow man, Luke 10:25-37.
 4. The Parable of the Net is about Judgment, Matt. 13:47-50.
 5. The Parable of Excuses is about accepting God's invitation, Luke 14:15-24.
 6. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican taught humility, Luke 18:9-14.
 7. The Parable of the Two Sons teaches repentance, Matt. 21:28-32.
 8. A Parable of Judgment (goats and sheep) is about Judgment, Matt. 25:31-46.
 9. The Parable of Gates and Ways also is about Judgment, Matt. 7:13-14.
 10. The Parable of Salt concerns discipleship, Matt. 5:13.
 11. The Parable of Light concerns discipleship, Matt. 5:14-16.
 12. The Parable of the Offending Eye teaches self-

discipline, Matt. 5:29-30.

13. The Parable of the Defiled Man and the Blind Leading the Blind is about corruption, Matt. 15:10-20.
14. The Parable of New Patches on Old Clothes and New Wine in Old Wine Skins teaches about the covenants of God, Matt. 9:16-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:36-39.

II. Parables teach in a variety of ways.

- A. Jesus used parables to answer questions: The Parable of the Good Samaritan was our Lord's response to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Luke 10:25-37.
- B. Jesus used parables to teach divine truth to honest hearts while concealing the same truth from corrupt hearts who would misuse it, Matt. 13:10-17.
- C. Parables were used to cause people to acknowledge truth before they realized that it applied to them.
 1. Jesus used the Parable of the Good Samaritan in that way.
 2. The classic example of a parable teaching someone the truth before they realized it applied to him was the Parable of the Little Ewe Lamb, 2 Sam. 12:1-14.
- D. Parables were used to as simply as possible teach divine truth.
 1. Jesus resorted to stories about daily life that could have been actual accounts.
 2. Jesus illustrated divine truth about which man knows little or nothing by referring to things with which man is familiar.
 3. The Word of God does not need to be dressed up with big words and complicated explanations.
 4. The Word of God must be presented as simply as possible for it to be as effective as it can be in the lives of those who hear it.

Conclusion:

1. Parables teach truth to those who will receive it.
2. Parables embalm truth and cause truth to be more easily remembered.
3. Parables appear in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
4. Nearly all of Jesus' teaching was parabolic.
5. The parables of Jesus touch on subjects that are still vital to Christians respecting salvation, Christian living, Christian duty and

Judgment.

Invitation:

1. The simple teachings of the New Testament unfold the mystery of salvation in such plain language that every accountable soul may understand it.
2. The human side of salvation requires faith, repentance, profession of Jesus as the Son of God and immersion in water for the remission of sins, Rom. 10:17; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

The Parable of the Unjust Judge

Luke 18:1-8

Thesis: To urge persistency in prayer.

Introduction:

1. The message or lesson of the Parable of the Unjust Judge is clearly stated in the first verse of its context, Luke 18:1.
2. Students of this parable are uplifted by the realization that God is not indifferent toward the prayers of his children.
3. The primary characters in the parable are a judge, a widow and her adversary.
 - a. Anciently, Israel was instructed by God to appoint judges to determine disputes among people, and these judges were supposed to be careful not to accept bribes, Deut. 16:18-20; Exod. 23:6-9; 2 Chron. 19:5-7.
 - b. Especially, judges were supposed to make sure that they dealt honestly and justly with the poor, Deut. 1:16-17.
 - c. Among the poor, judges were particularly required to make sure that they dealt righteously with widows, Exod. 22:22-24; Deut. 24:17.

Body:

I. Let's consider the judge in the parable.

- A. The judge in the parable "feared not God," Luke 18:2, 4.
 1. Fear or reverence for God is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, Prov. 1:7; 15:33; Psa. 119:98.
 2. The judge in the parable had forsaken the integrity of his office and was unwilling to judge according to divine wisdom.
- B. The judge in the parable also regarded not his fellow man, Luke 18:2, 4.
 1. It is no surprise that since he had no regard for God that, likewise, he had no regard for man either.
 2. This judge in Israel had abandoned his civil responsibilities before both God and man.
 3. This judge was perverse and blameworthy.
- C. The judge reluctantly exercised just judgment for the wrong reason.
 1. He was not moved by either divine or civil

- responsibility.
- 2. He was not moved by compassion.
- 3. However, he was prompted to act because of the widow's incessant, bothersome pleading.
- D. The unjust judge in the parable represents God.
 - 1. Obviously, the unjust judge does not represent the character of God.
 - 2. The unjust judge typifies God who hears and answers prayerful petitions of his children, Luke 18:7-8.
 - 3. Incidentally, this parable is a prime example of how careful one must be not to apply Scripture beyond its intended application, i.e. here God would be construed as unjust were the parable applied beyond its intended application.

II. Let's consider the widow in the parable.

- A. The widow in the parable had been wronged.
 - 1. She needed a judicial benefactor.
 - 2. The widow sought justice from the appropriate officer of the law.
 - 3. She lacked other legal recourse, and there was no one else to whom she could appeal.
 - 4. Likely, the widow was too poor to offer a bribe, which may have aroused the interest of the unjust judge.
- B. The widow pleaded continually.
 - 1. Continual pleading moved the judge to do what he should have done.
 - 2. Reoccurring petitions effected what individual petitions failed to accomplish.
- C. The widow typifies the children of God whose constant prayers move God.
 - 1. Prayers are not supposed to be vain repetitions, i.e. rote prayers, Matt. 6:7-8.
 - 2. Yet, the Christian's prayers should be frequent, 1 Thess. 5:17; Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18; Rom. 12:12.

III. Now, let's consider the conclusion of the parable, Luke 18:8.

- A. The Bible identifies a number of different types of faith mankind may possess:
 - 1. Weak faith, Rom. 14:1.
 - 2. Dead faith, Jam. 2:17, 20, 26.
 - 3. Enduring faith, Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10.

4. No faith, 2 Thess. 3:2.
 5. Trembling faith, Jam. 2:19.
 6. Little faith, Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 17:17-21.
 7. Unfeigned faith, 2 Tim. 1:5.
 8. Great faith, Luke 7:9.
 9. Working faith, 2 Thess. 1:11; Jam. 2:18.
 10. Fighting faith, 1 Tim. 6:12.
 11. Shielding faith, Eph. 6:16.
 12. Unwavering faith, Jam. 1:6.
- B. Godly faith is a prerequisite factor underlying persistent, patient prayer.
1. Satisfactory prayers are prayers of faith, which save the penitent child of God from his sins, Jam. 1:5-8; 5:15.
 2. The prayers of the righteous are fervent and effectual, resulting in much good, Jam. 5:16.
- C. Faith comes from the written Word of God.
1. This faith has been delivered already once and for all, Jude 3 ASV.
 2. Faith rests on the evidence of God's Word, Rom. 10:17.

Conclusion:

1. God hears prayers conditionally.
 - a. He hears those who hear him, Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46-49.
 - b. God hears those who pray with the proper spirit, John 4:24.
 - c. God hears those who pray in faith, Jam. 1:5-8.
 - d. God hears those who pray according to his will, 1 John 5:14.
 - e. God hears the prayers of the righteous, 1 Pet. 3:12.
 - f. God hears the prayers of those who forgive others, Matt. 6:9-15.
 - g. God refuses to hear a willful sinner's prayer, John 9:31; Psa. 66:18; 1 Pet. 3:12.
 - h. God will not hear in substitution for other commands, i.e. in lieu of obedience, Heb. 5:8-9.
2. God is not unaware or indifferent toward the needs of his children.
 - a. God is aware of even a fallen sparrow, Matt. 10:29; Luke 12:6.
 - b. God is mindful of the grass of the field, Matt. 6:28-34.
 - c. God is aware of what we need before we ask in prayer, Matt. 6:8.
3. Patience and persistence should characterize our prayers.

- a. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight also emphasizes persistency in prayer, Luke 11:5-13.
- b. We should be longsuffering in prayer since God is longsuffering toward mankind, 2 Pet. 3:9.
- c. Sometimes God answers prayers, and we do not recognize the answers: no, yes, maybe, later or conditional.

Invitation:

- 1. The apostle Paul had a prayer relative to salvation for his countrymen, which prayer we share for humanity today, Rom. 10:1.
- 2. Such prayers are answered when non-Christians are immersed into Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins, Acts 2:38.
- 3. Such prayers are answered when erring Christians repent of their sins and ask God for forgiveness, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

The Parable of the Sheepfold

John 10:1-18, 26-27

Thesis: Exposition of the parable.

Introduction:

1. The Parable of the Sheepfold refers to farm life.
 - a. Several of Jesus' parables also pertain to agriculture: The Sower, The Seed, The Tares, The Mustard Seed, The Barren and Budding Fig Trees, The Laborers in the Vineyard, The Lost Sheep, etc.
 - b. The purpose of The Parable of the Sheepfold was not to lecture on how to correctly raise sheep.
 - c. Rather, Jesus referred to a common circumstance with which his audience was familiar to teach and illustrate divine truth.
2. The Parable of the Sheepfold evidences some unique characteristics of raising sheep in Palestine.
 - a. At night, sheep were kept in an enclosure called a sheepfold, and the shepherd slept in the doorway of the sheepfold so he would be aware of either sheep trying to leave or thieves trying to enter the sheepfold.
 - b. Each sheep had a name and was known by its shepherd.
 - c. The sheep recognized the voice of its shepherd.
 - d. The shepherd led his sheep in pastures during the day.
3. The apostles Paul and Peter also used illustrations about shepherds and sheep to teach spiritual truths.
 - a. Paul taught that elders are shepherds to the congregational flock over which they serve, Acts 20:28.
 - b. Peter taught the same thing and referred to Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd and elders as under-shepherds, 1 Pet. 5:1-4.

Body:

I. Verses 1-6.

A. Verse 1.

1. Every attempted entrance to the sheepfold other than through the door and past the shepherd was illicit.
2. Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and the door through which one must go to be added to his flock, John 10:7, 9; cf. John 14:6.
3. Any attempt to become a member of the Lord's

sheepfold other than through our Shepherd is illicit, e.g. unbiblical plans of salvation, manmade churches, etc.

B. Verse 2.

1. Since Jesus Christ as the Shepherd is the true prophet and leader, he is pictured as entering through the door.
2. All other contrary prophets are styled as robbers, 1 John 4:1.

C. Verses 3-4.

1. The “porter” is “a watcher” or “gatewarden” (*Strong’s*).
2. John the Baptist essentially was the “porter” who identified Jesus Christ as the Shepherd, Matt. 3:3; John 1:29-34.
3. Just as sheep know the true shepherd, the children of God are not fooled by false shepherds or prophets.
4. Our Shepherd has named his sheep, Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26—and no goats are allowed, Matt. 25:31-46.
5. As the shepherd leads rather than drives his sheep, Jesus Christ does not force Christians to follow him, but he invites humanity to follow him, Matt. 11:28-30.

D. Verse 5.

1. It is as important to not follow the voice of the counterfeit shepherd as it is to follow the voice of the shepherd.
2. **Illustration:** On one occasion when I was in boot camp, my drill instructor was marching his troops to the sound of his voice commands, when another drill instructor came by and began issuing contradictory voice commands. The result was utter chaos as the columns of troops disintegrated and soldiers crashed into each other. We were being taught to learn the voice of our drill instructor and to ignore all others.
3. True Christians will not be fooled by either false messiahs or false teachers, Matt. 24:23-27; Rev. 1:7.

E. Verse 6.

1. Parables are supposed to enhance understanding of spiritual lessons.
2. Those who heard the parable did not understand the spiritual truth upon hearing the parable, but they did

acknowledge the truthfulness of the illustration in the parable.

3. Therefore, when Jesus Christ explained the application of the parable, those who heard the parable understood the spiritual teaching also.

II. Verses 7-10.

A. Verse 7.

1. As the shepherd is the one past which sheep must enter the sheepfold, Jesus Christ is the Shepherd past which one must enter the church.
2. First century Jews were required to pass from Judaism into Christianity through Jesus Christ.
3. Everyone now living who knows the difference between right and wrong must pass from the sinful world past Jesus Christ into the church to be saved.

B. Verse 8.

1. Other doors, prophets, messiahs and religious leaders are false, Acts 4:12.
2. Alert sheep know the difference between the Shepherd and imposters.
3. For the first 10 years of the church's existence, it was comprised exclusively of righteous Jews who recognized the Shepherd from the prophetic portrait in the Old Testament.

C. Verse 9.

1. Jesus Christ is the key to salvation, which is not attainable by any other means or persons.
2. Salvation involves baptism "into" Jesus Christ, Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 2 Tim. 2:10.
3. "Pasture" pertains to the blessings of the kingdom or church found exclusively "in Christ," Eph. 1:3.

D. Verse 10.

1. In first century Palestine, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Jewish high council (Sanhedrin) were the corrupt religious leaders.
2. Anyone religious leader of any age who defects from primitive Christianity is a dangerous false teacher, Rom. 16:17-18.
3. Jesus Christ is the only source of eternal life, John 6:68; 1 Cor. 11:1.

III. Verses 11-18.

- A. Verse 11.
 - 1. Like the shepherd willing to die for his sheep, Jesus Christ willingly laid down his life for humanity on the cruel Calvary cross, 1 Tim. 2:6.
 - 2. Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, is loyal to his sheep.
- B. Verses 12-13.
 - 1. We can rely on Jesus Christ to be our Savior.
 - 2. Jesus will not allow his flock (the church) to be prey for any adversary.
- C. Verse 14.
 - 1. Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and we his flock intimately know each other.
 - 2. The names of our Lord's sheep appear in the Book of Life, Rev. 20:12-15.
- D. Verse 15.
 - 1. Jesus our Shepherd is our connection to the heavenly Father.
 - 2. The ultimate test of loyalty is for the Shepherd to die for his sheep, as Jesus did.
- E. Verse 16.
 - 1. This is not a reference to denominations as sometimes sectarians and misguided brethren want to believe.
 - 2. Instead, Jesus informed the Jews that Gentiles also would be added to the sheepfold, which prophecy predicted and which occurred about 10 years after the beginning of the church, Isa. 62:2; Acts 10-11.
 - 3. Jesus Christ made both Jews and Gentiles one in himself in the church, Eph. 2:11-22.
 - 4. The church of Christ is one fold or one body, Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.
- F. Verses 17-18.
 - 1. Jesus' statement implies his deity.
 - 2. Deity personally came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to become our vicarious sacrifice, John 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:21.

Conclusion:

- 1. There is one Shepherd and one fold now.
 - a. That one fold includes all classes of humanity, i.e. Jews and Gentiles, Rom. 1:16.

- b. That one fold does not include manmade churches and their members, Matt. 15:13.
2. Jesus Christ is the one Shepherd over the one flock.
 - a. Jesus adds the saved to the church (flock), Acts 2:47.
 - b. Only those in Jesus Christ are saved, Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27.
 - c. Everyone outside of Jesus Christ is lost!

Invitation:

1. Each person who knows the difference between right and wrong needs to ask himself, “Is Jesus Christ the Shepherd of my life?”
2. Jesus is not the Shepherd of those who have not obeyed his instructions, Mark 16:16.
3. Jesus is not the Shepherd of erring Christians who have not acknowledged their sins, 1 John 1:9.

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The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

Thesis: Exposition of the parable.

Introduction:

1. The larger context of this parable includes Matthew 24:36-51—the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - a. The Parable of the Ten Virgins is one of three parables in Matthew 25 following the latter half of Matthew 24.
 - b. The other two parables in Matthew 25 are the Parable of the Talents and the Parable of the Great Judgment.
2. The Parable of the Ten Virgins employs the beautiful portrait of an oriental marriage.
 - a. This happy portrait of life is used to warn against a tragic eternity.
 - b. Picture 10 virgins accompanying the bridal party—a nearly universal marriage custom comparable to our brides maids.
 - c. Imagine a bridegroom proceeding to the bride’s home to escort her to his home where the marriage feast would occur.
 - d. Friends accompany the groom, other friends accompany the bride and additional friends join in along the way or wait at the groom’s home.
 - e. The wedding of the bride and groom in this parable may have been arranged while they were children; several months to a year earlier they were likely betrothed, from which they could only be released by divorce or death, Matt. 1:18-19.
 - f. The marriage feast typically was held at night and continued for sometime (cf., Jacob and Leah, Gen. 29:21-25).
3. The apostles were the original audience Jesus’ Parable of the Ten Virgins.
 - a. The parable applied first to them.
 - b. By implication, the parable applies to all disciples of our Lord in every generation.
 - c. The Parable of the Ten Virgins **does not** apply to non-Christians.
4. The purpose of the parable is found in verse 13, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

- a. The keyword of the parable is “watch.”
 - b. This parable hints at the delayed return of the Lord from the time of the discourse, but had Jesus plainly said he would not return for several centuries such would have been counterproductive to the purpose of the parable—watch, and strive always to be ready.
5. The Second Coming has always been certain, though the time of his return is ever uncertain (among humans), Matt. 24:36.
- a. Date setters, then, are hopelessly wrong.
 - b. Therefore, Christians must constantly **watch!**

Body:

I. Exposition.

- A. Verse 1.
 1. The word “Then” links this parable to the preceding chapter.
 2. The “kingdom of heaven” equates to the church/kingdom at the end of time and the commencement of eternity.
 3. Ten was considered by the Jews as a number representing completeness (e.g. 10 Jewish men were obligated to establish a synagogue; Elkanah told his barren wife, Hannah, that he was better to her than 10 sons, 1 Sam. 1:8).
 4. Virgins are pure, chaste and morally clean, which virtue should characterize the children of God, 2 Cor. 11:2.
 5. The ten virgins represent all who obey the Gospel.
 6. Lamps were typically small pottery covered bowls, possibly mounted on poles
 7. The bridegroom in the parable represents Jesus Christ.
- B. Verses 2-4.
 1. The only difference noted between the virgins was that some of them were wise and some were foolish; none of them was accused of being immoral, hypocritical, etc.
 2. The wisdom among some and the lack of wisdom among others was demonstrated by the preparation made by the former and the lack of preparation made by the latter.
 3. All of the virgins made initial preparation by taking oil

in their lamps, but the foolish virgins did not prepare for the possibility of a delay and took no additional oil with them.

4. So, the “oil” equates to preparation made or not made, representing preparation or the lack thereof for the end of the world and the Second Coming.

C. Verse 5.

1. The time of the bridegroom’s arrival was unknown, so they waited; waiting equates to waiting for the Second Coming.
2. All ten virgins slumbered and slept; unaware of when the bridegroom would come, becoming tired, they naturally slept—even as Christians today will continue to function as they normally do while not aware of when the Lord shall return, Matt. 24:36-39.

D. Verse 6.

1. The “midnight” hour equates to the unexpected time of the bridegroom’s coming and the reason for the slumber.
2. The announcement that the bridegroom was coming was not made by any of the virgins, even as the church is unable to ascertain when the Lord shall return.
3. There was no further opportunity for additional preparation; the event for which they had been waiting was occurring.

E. Verses 7-9.

1. Insufficient oil was only discovered upon waking from the slumber.
2. Though making initial preparation, five of the virgins did not make adequate preparation—especially in light of the delay involved.
3. The wise had no oil to spare.
4. Doubtless, the foolish virgins had good intentions, but good intentions without sufficient preparation were useless.

F. Verses 10-13.

1. The key word of verse 10 is “ready”; only the ready were permitted entrance to the marriage feast.
2. The door was shut, by which those on the inside were **included** in the marriage feast and all on the outside

were **excluded** from the marriage feast, cf. when God shut the door of Noah's ark, Gen. 7:16.

3. The Lord refused to acknowledge the late-coming, foolish virgins, though it is implied he knew who they were and previously acknowledged them, cf. Matt. 7:21-23.
4. The foolish virgins were **close—but outside!**
5. The purpose of the parable is discerned from verse 13: watch, patiently wait and make ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

II. Lessons.

- A. Initial and continued personal preparation for the Second Coming of Christ must be first priority of every soul aspiring to spend eternity in heaven.
- B. One cannot recall lost opportunities.
- C. The anguish of the lost will not sway God in the Judgment.
- D. Faith plus works are required in order to arrive on heavenly shores, Jam. 2:17, 20, 24, 26.
- E. No one can rescue the unprepared when time runs out; salvation is an individual responsibility.
- F. Living good moral lives alone will not provide passage at time's end into heaven.
- G. The possibility of apostasy is a very real danger, 1 Cor. 10:12.
- H. When Jesus returns the door will be shut; only the saved will be inside heaven, while all others will be excluded from heaven.
- I. Professing membership among the saved by itself does not guarantee inclusion in the kingdom of heaven, Acts 5:1-10.
- J. The children of God must ascertain whether they have made sufficient preparation to enter in the last day, 2 Cor. 13:5.

Conclusion:

1. Sadly, some Christians will be lost when Jesus returns, 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Luke 8:6-7, 13-14.
2. Worldliness detracts from Christianity and will cause some children of God to be eternally lost, Jam. 4:4.
3. Every child of God must continually seek the kingdom of God first, Matt. 6:33.
4. Therefore, even Christians must examine themselves in light of Scripture, 1 Cor. 11:31.

Invitation:

1. Close is **not close enough** if one spends eternity outside of heaven's gate.
3. Erring Christians must repent or else suffer eternal loss, Rev. 2-3.
4. The message has not changed from the time of the first recorded Gospel sermon; non-Christians must repent and be immersed for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16

Thesis: To learn a lesson from the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard that we can use.

Song: *I Want to be a Worker*

Introduction:

1. This parable was spoken directly to the apostles respecting two preceding events.
 - a. First, the rich, young ruler had just sorrowfully left Jesus, after which our Lord announced that it would be difficult for a rich man to enter heaven, Matt. 19:16-26; Luke 18:18-27.
 - b. Second, the apostle Peter had just contrasted the other apostles and himself with the rich man and others like him, Matt. 19:27-30.
2. This parable especially explains Matthew 19:30 and 20:16, plus it teaches that incidental circumstances are not the criteria by which God saves souls, Rom. 2:11.
 - a. The earliest hired laborers in the parable were not entitled to special consideration just because they had labored longer.
 - b. Similarly, the Jewish people were not entitled to special consideration simply because they had been the custodians of God's revelation to man.
 - c. In addition, the apostles themselves were not entitled to special consideration because they were among the first followers of Jesus.
3. There are several additional parallels and lessons to be drawn from this parable.
 - a. The householder represents Jesus Christ.
 - b. The marketplace represents the world, i.e. people.
 - c. The laborers before they are hired represent the lost.
 - d. The vineyard represents the church.
 - e. The reward represents eternal salvation.
 - f. This is one of the kingdom parables.

Body:

III. Consider Matthew 20:1-7.

- A. The householder went to the marketplace and hired all the laborers he found there.

1. The marketplace was a public area into which the unemployed, among others, would go to wait someone to hire them.
 2. The Jews divided the daylight hours into 12 segments from about 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 3. Therefore, the parable refers to different hours of the day, i.e. the 6th hour = noon and the 11th hour = 5:00 p.m.
- B. The first laborers hired agreed upon specific wages with the householder and were sent to the vineyard.
1. The only way in which the householder could have cheated them was if he failed to pay them what he agreed to pay them for a day's labor.
 2. The other laborers who were hired throughout the balance of the day did not enter into an agreement with the householder for a specific wage, but they trusted the employer to pay them fairly.

IV. Consider Matthew 20:8-16.

- A. All of the laborers were paid at the end of the day.
1. Judaism required employers to pay their employees at the end of each workday, Deut. 24:15; Lev. 19:13.
 2. The first laborers received exactly what they had agreed with the householder to receive for a day's labor.
 3. The rest of the laborers relied upon the word of the householder to pay them "whatsoever is right."
 4. However, the first laborers murmured against the householder because he was gracious and merciful to the other laborers.
- B. The householder defended his actions variously.
1. First, he noted that he had honored the contract between himself and the complaining laborers.
 2. Second, the householder declared that he was at liberty to dispose of his own material wealth as he saw fit.
 3. Third, he affirmed that reward is not always determined solely by length of time in service.

V. Consider some parallels and applications from the parable.

- A. Jesus Christ invites all men in the marketplace of humanity to labor in his vineyard—the church.
1. Jesus personally invited humanity, Matt. 11:28-30;

- Rev. 22:17.
2. Jesus through the Great Commission invites the world to obey the Gospel, Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 3. Jesus does not hire the idle and the lazy; anyone **not** in the marketplace looking for work to do in the vineyard of God will not be sent to the vineyard.
- B. Furthermore, Jesus Christ calls his laborers to work in a specific vineyard.
1. In the parable, the householder would have been under no obligation to pay workers who had labored in another householder's vineyard.
 2. Likewise, Jesus Christ does not call people to work outside his church in some manmade church, Matt. 15:13; 16:18.
 3. Therefore, Jesus will not reward anyone, even though they may be sincere, who labors in denominations instead of the church for which he died and over which he is head, Eph. 3:21; Matt. 7:13-14; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:18; 1 John 4:1.
- C. Like the householder in the parable, our Lord calls people (through the Gospel) at different times in history or in their lives.
1. The Gospel call always sounds forth from the revealed and written Word of God—the Bible.
 2. However, the young, middle-aged and old hear and obey the Gospel at different times in their lives.
 3. Just as the laborers in the parable went to the vineyard as soon as they were hired regardless of the time of the day, souls today need to begin serving Jesus in the church immediately regardless of when in life they hear and obey the Gospel.
- D. As the householder settled with his laborers at the day's end, Jesus Christ will settle with his servants at the end of time.
1. The settlement or reward will not be exclusively according to *seniority* or time in service, though God does want us to serve him all the days of our lives.
 2. Eternal reward, good or bad, will depend upon the way in which one serves God, Rom. 6:23; Ecc. 12:13-14; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15.

3. There will come a time beyond which it is impossible to serve the Lord, so one must serve the Lord **now**, Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 6:2.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord calls laborers into his vineyard—the church—today, but they must be qualified.
 - a. They must be able and willing to **hear** the Lord’s instructions, Rom. 10:17.
 - b. They must **believe** or obey Jesus, Mark 16:16; Num. 20:7-12.
 - c. They must **repent** of their sins, Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:9.
 - d. They must **acknowledge** that Jesus is the Son of God, Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37.
 - e. They must be **buried** in water for the remission of sins, Acts 22:16; 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12.
2. After entering the vineyard—the church, one must prove himself a useful servant, John 15:1-6.
3. If the apostles needed this type of exhortation from Jesus, we also need similar exhortation today.

Invitation:

1. With whom do you more nearly compare, the lost, young, rich ruler or the apostles who faithfully followed Jesus?
2. Both unbaptized believers and erring Christians can be fruitful laborers in the Lord’s vineyard, Mark 16:16; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

The Parable of the Tares

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Thesis: To exhort faithful Christians to be watchful respecting enemies of the Lord's church.

Introduction:

1. The phrase "while men slept" appears in the kingdom parable, The Parable of the Tares, Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.
 - a. The kingdom or church becomes polluted through the efforts of Satan.
 - b. The infamous tares were sown while no defense was made, i.e. "while men slept."
 - c. No one resisted the devil, Jam. 4:7!
2. Throughout history, our Lord's church has suffered much harm because not enough Christians watched to ensure the devil was not attacking and corrupting the church.
 - a. Especially the New Testament is filled with statements calling upon God's people to defend the Gospel and the church of the Gospel.
 - b. Similarly, the Old Testament called upon the people of God to be watchful against spiritual harm.

Body:

I. Elders are charged with the defense of the church.

- A. Elders are to be leaders in the defense of the Gospel and the church of the Gospel.
 1. The apostle Paul so warned and charged the elders of Ephesus, Acts 20:28-31.
 2. At least one of the qualifications of elders calls upon elders to protect the church from spiritual harm, Titus 1:9-11.
- B. Churches of Christ have been ruined repeatedly because elders have slept when they should have watched.
 1. False teachers are plentiful and must be identified, 1 John 4:1.
 2. False teachers never announce themselves as false teachers, but they pretend to be righteous when they are not, 2 Cor. 11:13-15.
 3. Often false teachers come from within a congregation,

Acts 20:29-30.

- C. The New Testament guides the church and its leaders respecting how to deal with evil in the church.
 - 1. First, the true Gospel must be recognized and every subtle variation from the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be rejected, Gal. 1:6-9.
 - 2. Like cowbells to herald the whereabouts of livestock or buoys in the sea to warn of treacherous reefs, false teachers must be identified, Rom. 16:17-18.
 - 3. Impenitent factious brethren and the spiritually disorderly must be forbidden a platform from which to continually affect the Lord's church adversely, Titus 3:10 ASV; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14.

II. Yet, all Christians are charged with the defense of the church.

- A. Preachers are charged to defend the Gospel and the church of the Gospel, Phil. 1:17.
 - 1. Preachers must preach "the whole counsel of God," Acts 20:27.
 - 2. Preachers must preach the Gospel with a sense of urgency continually, 2 Tim. 4:2.
 - 3. Unfortunately, many preachers in the Lord's church are asleep!
- B. All Christians must defend the Gospel and the church of the Gospel.
 - 1. Christians can contribute to the defense of the Gospel and the church of the Gospel by holding up the arms of others who defend the Gospel.
 - 2. Christians can contribute to the defense of the Gospel and the church of the Gospel by diligently studying God's Word and applying it to their lives, 2 Tim. 2:15.

III. Finally, for what will God hold the church accountable respecting tares among the wheat in the church?

- A. God expects the church to police itself when it can discern between right and wrong.
 - 1. This is the *fruit inspection* principle, Matt. 7:20.
 - 2. Christians are not permitted to allow fellow Christians to continue in their sins unchallenged, and become guilty of sin themselves for tolerating sin, 1 Cor. 5:6.
 - 3. Christians are obligated to discipline themselves when they can clearly see the difference between right and

wrong, 1 Cor. 5:12-13.

- B. However, like the Parable of the Tares, there are sins among Christians for which faithful Christians are not responsible for policing.
1. The church could hardly be expected to discipline sinful members respecting sins of which it is not aware, 1 Cor. 4:5.
 2. Secret things will be judged by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel, Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 3:13.
 3. Nothing will escape the notice of God in Judgment, Luke 12:2; Heb. 4:13.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord's church can prevail despite attacks by the devil, if we resist the devil, Jam. 4:7.
2. The Lord's church can prevail despite attacks by Satan if Christians wear the whole armor of God, Eph. 6:10-17.
3. The Lord's church can avoid much heartache brought on by the devil if it will like watchmen of old watch for the devil's devices, Ezek. 3:17.

Invitation:

1. Otherwise faithful Christians are often asleep and liable to become the prey of Satan.
2. Non-Christians are asleep in sin from which they need to be awakened with the Gospel of Christ, Mark 16:16.
3. Erring Christians, likewise, are asleep in sin from which if they are not awakened, they will perish, Rom. 6:23; 1 John 1:9.

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

Thesis: To identify every soul who hears the Gospel.

Introduction:

1. If this parable fairly represents percentages respecting people's response to the Gospel (and the numbers appear to correspond to reality), then:
 - a. 25% of people who hear the Gospel reject it outright.
 - b. 25% of people who hear the Gospel initially accept it but quickly fall away.
 - c. 25% of people who hear the Gospel accept the Gospel but never mature or profit by it.
 - d. 25% accept the Gospel and mature to become profitable servants of God.
 - e. 75% or $\frac{3}{4}$ of people who hear the Gospel will still be lost.
 - f. $\frac{1}{3}$ of those saved by the Gospel abandon the church.
 - g. 50% or $\frac{1}{2}$ of those who continue to profess faithfulness are also lost.
 - h. Only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the people who hear the Gospel will be saved.
2. Each of us is represented by one of these soils in the parable.
 - a. The wayside soil is not here because it would not come.
 - b. The stony soil is here but will not be for long (some has already left).
 - c. The thorny soil is here, but it is unprofitable and will not be harvested (some have already left).
 - d. The good soil is here, and it is this kind that will remain and produce fruit.
3. Sadly, few, comparatively speaking, will be saved eternally, yet there will be an innumerable host in heaven, Matt. 7:13-14; Rev. 7:9.
4. The parable represents the same seed being planted in each soil, with the same potential except for the varying soils, Luke 8:11.
 - a. Hence, the preaching of Peter on Pentecost prompted about 3,000 souls to become Christians, while about 997,000 souls did not become Christians, Acts 2:37, 41.

- b. Stephen's audience had wayside hearts and so the hearers of the Gospel on that occasion murdered God's preacher, Acts 7:54, 58-60.
 - c. The seed—the Word of God—was the same in both instances, but the soils were different.
5. Remember as we briefly examine the Parable of the Sower that the ultimate Teacher is Jesus Christ, and the seed is the Word of God.
- a. Each child of God needs to be a sower also, Heb. 5:12-14; Acts 8:4.
 - b. Seed contains the germ of life and produces after its own kind, Gen. 1:11; Gal. 6:7.

Body:

I. Consider the wayside soil or the heart that Satan keeps, Luke 8:5, 12.

- A. In this case, though the seed is sown, there is absolutely neither germination nor any development.
- B. The heart did not believe the Word of God and was not saved.
- C. Satan substitutes lies in place of the Word of God, Gen. 3:4-5; John 8:44.
- D. Some of Satan's lies today are:
 - 1. Worship at the church of your choice, instead of worshipping at the church of Christ's choice, Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16.
 - 2. One church is as good as another, despite that Jesus purchased his church with his own blood, Acts 20:28.
 - 3. One can be saved apart from the Lord's church and worship under a shade tree in a meadow, etc., Heb. 10:25-31.
- E. The devil never misses an evangelistic study, Bible class, an assembly or any other opportunity to snatch the Word of God from the hearts of men, women, boys and girls, 1 Pet. 5:8.
- F. Satan always has a better idea, or so he claims, Heb. 11:25.

II. Consider the rocky soil or the heart that temptations overpower, Luke 8:6, 13.

- A. The seed is sown and begins to grow immediately, but it dies because there is no root.
- B. This type of heart did believe and was saved, but fell away through temptation (affliction or persecution or tribulation,

cf. Matt. and Mark).

- C. Satan participates in apostasy, 1 Pet. 5:8.
- D. The result of apostasy is said to be worse than being lost, 2 Pet. 2:20-22.
- E. To avoid apostasy, the child of God must avoid every category of evil and present his life as a living sacrifice, 1 Thess. 5:22; Rom. 12:1-2.
- F. The child of God must be rooted and established in the Christian faith, Col. 2:6-7.
- G. Satan drew away the first pair and Judas; he sought Job and he seeks you and me.
- H. The devil never misses an assembly, but many of his converts do.
- I. Remember, withered branches of the True Vine are gathered and burned, John 15:6.

III. Consider the thorny soil or the heart that is overcome with cares, pleasures and riches, Luke 8:7, 14.

- A. The seed is sown and grows, but it never matures.
- B. This type of heart did believe and was saved, but is the heart of an unprofitable servant.
- C. Unprofitable servants will be cast out, Matt. 25:30.
- D. Unfruitful branches of the True Vine will be cut off, John 15:2.
- E. However, the Word of God can perfect Christianity in our lives if we let it, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Luke 8:11.
- F. Christians must be careful to seek spiritual pursuits first and not develop a preference for the world, lest cares for the world displace our Christianity, Matt. 6:33; Jam. 4:4.
- G. A concern for monetary matters over spiritual values ruins Christians, 1 Tim. 6:6-12; Matt. 6:24.

IV. Consider the good soil or the heart that is secure in the faith, Luke 8:8, 15.

- A. The seed is sown and grows to maturity.
- B. This type of heart believed, was saved and continues to grow, producing much spiritual fruit.
- C. Only this comparatively small group of hearts will make it to heaven, Matt. 7:21-23.
- D. The first recorded Gospel sermon netted about 3,000 conversions out of a potential audience of 1,000,000 souls.
- E. Jesus called this type of heart-soil alone the “honest and

good heart,” Luke 8:15.

Conclusion:

1. Luke’s account of the Parable of the Sower is the shortest of the three accounts in Gospel records.
2. Matthew and Mark’s accounts of this parable provide some additional information.
3. It is important to remember that each of us is represented by one of the soils, but **which one?**
4. Satan has or will covert three of four souls to whom the Gospel message is presented.
5. Though the good soil-heart endures unto salvation, it is hampered by thorny soil-hearts—and others outside the faith.

Invitation:

1. We must come to grips with the reality that we are lost if we are the wayside soil, the rocky soil or the thorny soil.
2. An unbaptized believer can prove that he has an “honest and good heart” by obeying the words of Jesus, Mark 16:16.
3. An erring child of God can prove that he has “honest and good heart” by repenting and seeking forgiveness, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

Thesis: To see that the children of God must exhibit faithfulness and work for the Lord, without which one cannot enter the eternal kingdom of heaven.

Introduction:

1. The Parable of the Talents illustrates divine truth relative to preparation for heaven with references to a first century businessman who entrusts his business to his servants or employees.
2. This parable is about entrance into the eternal kingdom of heaven.
 - a. The man going into a far country represents Jesus Christ, John 14:1-3.
 - b. The servants or stewards represent the children of God.
 - c. The talents in the parable were quantities of silver or gold and represent abilities or opportunities of Christians in serving Jesus Christ.
 - d. Each first century silver talent was worth about \$1,642.50, and each talent of gold was worth about \$26,280.

Body:

I. The talents were distributed variously among the stewards.

- A. Each steward received something from his master.
 1. No servant was left without something and some responsibility.
 2. There were not any no-talent servants.
- B. Each steward received talents according to his ability.
 1. The master expected no more of his servants than they were capable of doing.
 2. However, the master did expect each of his servants to do what they were capable of doing.

II. The talents were variously used by the stewards.

- A. Two of the stewards invested the money that was entrusted to them.
 1. Each of these two earned a 100% profit through their respective efforts.
 2. 100% of the stewards who acted as stewards ought to act made a profit.

- B. One steward used his master's money to fill a hole in the ground!
 - 1. He did not invest it.
 - 2. He earned nothing for his master and was an example of failed stewardship.

III. The Lord of the stewards returned and compensated his stewards according to their faithfulness.

- A. "Well done" and the good pleasure of the master was the reward for the faithful stewards.
 - 1. They had proven themselves loyal and faithful stewards.
 - 2. They acted as stewards were obligated to conduct themselves.
- B. The unfaithful steward was condemned.
 - 1. The master had a right to expect that his stewards faithfully serve him.
 - 2. The unfaithful steward had refused to practice stewardship.
 - 3. Instead of "well done," he was greeted with the words "wicked and slothful [lazy] servant."
 - 4. This man had not performed even any minimal duty as a steward.

IV. How can we apply the Parable of the Talents to us?

- A. No unprofitable servant of Jesus Christ will enter heaven, Matt. 25:29-30.
 - 1. Unprofitable or unfruitful Christians will not be allowed to enter heaven, John 15:1-6; Matt. 7:19.
 - 2. Only faithful or fruitful Christians will be permitted entrance into heaven.
- B. Each Christian has potential, has capacity and has opportunities that are represented by "talents" in the parable.
 - 1. Jesus Christ expects Christians to develop potential, exercise capacity and seize opportunities.
 - 2. Only then will Jesus say "well done" to us.
 - 3. No one who tries to serve Jesus Christ will be a failure as far as God is concerned, 1 Cor. 3:6.
- C. Christians rob Jesus Christ of service rightfully owed to him when they do not actively serve him.
 - 1. True Christianity is not a passive religion!
 - 2. Just as an employer would fire employees who never

did any work, Jesus Christ will commit to eternal fire even Christians who never do any work for him.

3. The Christian's faith must be alive and active to profit anything, Jam. 2:14-26.
- D. What are the talents that we are obligated to use as good stewards of Jesus Christ?
 1. First, not everyone can do the same things, but everybody can do something, 1 Cor. 12:12-27.
 2. Prosperous Christians have a responsibility to use some of their prosperity in the service of our Lord.
 3. Healthy Christians have an obligation to use their healthy bodies to serve Jesus Christ in some way.
 4. Christians possessing abilities that especially enable them to tell others about the Gospel, publicly or privately, need to do so.
 5. Every Christian who has some opportunity or an ability of some kind needs to serve Jesus Christ accordingly.
 6. There are not any "no-talent" Christians!

Conclusion:

1. This parable pertains primarily to the children of God.
2. The talents in the parable increased or decreased according to their use or non-use; the stewards had to **use it or lose it!**
3. Like the stewards in the parable, every soul must give an account of himself before the Judgment Seat of Christ, 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27.
4. Some will be rewarded, 2 Tim. 4:8.
5. Some will receive punitive compensation, Rev. 20:15.

Invitation:

1. Each soul is personally responsible for the type of eternity he will experience, based on what kind of a steward he is with the Gospel in this life.
2. Before one can become a good steward, he must become a child of God first, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians must also repent and pray before they can become good stewards, Acts 8:22.

The Parable of the Marriage Feast

Matthew 22:1-14

Thesis: To illustrate the preparation with which the children of God must prepare themselves to enter the eternal kingdom heaven.

Introduction:

1. The Parable of the Marriage Feast is transparent so that it is not difficult to see the spiritual lesson that Jesus taught.
 - a. The marriage feast represents the kingdom of heaven.
 - b. The king in the parable represents God the Father.
 - c. The son in the parable represents Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 - d. The guests who were invited first represent the Jews who as the custodians of God's Word under Judaism had enjoyed an intimate relationship with God over the centuries.
 - e. The abused and slain servants represent the prophets of God throughout the centuries who were abused and murdered by God's rebellious people, including John the Baptist.
 - f. The second invitation represents the Great Commission, which included a group of people not included in the former invitation—Gentiles.
 - g. The casting out of an unprepared wedding guest represents the removal of unprepared children of God from the church at Judgment.
 - h. The remaining guests represent those who are invited to the marriage of the Lamb of God, and at the same time represent the bride of Christ.
2. The Parable of the Marriage Feast and the Parable of the Great Supper teach the same spiritual lesson, Luke 14:15-24.
 - a. The Parable of the Great Supper is sometimes called the Parable of Excuses.
 - b. The *first excuse* was that a man bought a piece of land and needed to travel some distance to evaluate it, but typically people evaluate land **before** they buy it.
 - c. The *second excuse* was that a man bought five oxen and needed to examine them, but typically people do not buy livestock unseen.

- d. The *third excuse* was that a man married a wife and he had no power or authority to come, but especially men anciently and even today often do what they want to do.
 - e. It would have made as much sense for someone to have said he could not come because he had *a bone in his leg!*
 - f. There is a difference between a legitimate reason and an excuse.
 - g. This parable illustrates that the Gospel invitation is commonly spurned by humanity.
 - h. In both parables, the second invitation represented God's invitation to Gentiles to become the children of God.
3. Directing our attention back to the Parable of the Marriage Feast, a marriage feast was a tradition of Mideastern people anciently.
- a. Guests were usually invited well in advance of the marriage feast and reminded to come at the time of the feast.
 - b. The Jews, though spiritually invited and further bidden as if to a marriage feast, refused God's invitation.
 - c. The purpose of the parable was to correct the Jewish mistaken notion that they were already charter members in the kingdom of heaven through natural birth, Matt. 21:42-46; 3:7-10.
 - d. The Jews also anticipated an earthly kingdom comparable to the kingdom of Solomon instead of a spiritual kingdom of heaven.
 - e. The parable was meaningless to hard-hearted Jews, but it was meaningful to Jews and Gentiles whose hearts were honest.

Body:

- I. Matthew 22:2-3 introduce a king making a marriage feast for his son.**
- A. The marriage feast represents the kingdom of heaven, Verse 2.
 - 1. The kingdom of heaven was the subject of Old Testament prophecies and the preaching of John the Baptist, Matt. 3:1-3.
 - 2. Specifically, the marriage feast represents the spiritual marriage of the Son of God, the Lamb, and the church, the spotless bride of Christ, Rev. 21:2; 22:17.
 - 3. The church is the "heavenly Jerusalem," Heb. 12:22-23.
 - B. Those first invited represent the Jews, Verse 3.
 - 1. As custodians of the Old Testament, the Jews received

God's first invitation to become members of the church and entertain the prospect of someday entering the eternal kingdom of heaven, Rom. 1:16; Acts 13:46.

2. Especially the Pharisees, Sadducees and many of the priests would not accept the Gospel invitation.
3. For the most part, the Jews **refused** to enter into the kingdom of heaven in the first century, and comparatively few Jews obey the Gospel today as well, Rom. 10:1-3.

II. **Matthew 22:4-7 portray the guests first invited not only despising the invitation, but abusing and killing the king's messengers.**

- A. The Jews were repeatedly invited into the kingdom of heaven, Verse 4.
 1. Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, the twelve apostles, the 70 disciples and Jesus Christ invited the Jews into the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 10:5-7; Luke 10:1-9; Matt. 4:17.
 2. God, through his servants, made ample preparation for the feast, and all was ready.
 3. God has done his part respecting man's entrance into the kingdom of heaven!
 4. It is now time for mankind to do his part respecting entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
- B. The Jews were disinterested, but more than simply disinterested in God's invitation, Verses 5-6.
 1. The Jews would not heed the invitation of God.
 2. The Jews emphasized their rejection of God's invitation into the kingdom by harming or murdering the messengers of God.
 3. Likewise, the world today often is more than merely disinterested in the invitation of God and seeks to harm God's servants.
- C. God is not helpless and will not recompense lightly those who either reject his invitation or maim and kill his messengers, Verse 7.
 1. God knows the hearts of every soul, Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5.
 2. God will discern between the unrighteous and the righteous in Judgment, Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Rev. 20:12.

3. All unrighteous souls will be dispatched to a devil's hell, Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15; 21:8.

III. The king in the parable expanded the invitation to the wedding to include everyone, Verses 8-10.

- A. A second guest list was made that permitted anyone to attend the wedding feast.
 1. This is comparable to the Great Commission, Mark 16:15-16.
 2. The apostles of Christ were the primary heralds of this invitation, Acts 1:8.
 3. Because the Jews demonstrated that they were unworthy, the invitation was taken to the Gentiles, Acts 13:46; 2:39.
- B. The second invitation was gladly accepted.
 1. Overall, Gentiles have always been more receptive to the Gospel of Christ than have the Jews, Acts 13:46-49.
 2. Consequently, Gentiles were grafted into the kingdom of heaven, Rom. 11:17-24.
 3. Now, Jews and Gentiles alike or all of humanity is subject to God's invitation, Rom. 1:16.
 4. "Whosoever will" may enter the kingdom of heaven, irrespective of one's ethnicity, skin color or national origin, Rev. 22:17.

IV. Matthew 22:11-14 represent the removal from the church at the Judgment anyone who is spiritually unprepared to enter the eternal kingdom of heaven.

- A. The kingdom of heaven cannot be attained without preparation on man's part, Luke 1:17.
 1. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people, John 14:1-3.
 2. Those who never obey or do not continue to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be greeted with fiery Judgment and eternity, 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 3. "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" represents the misery of hell into which disobedient souls will be cast for eternity, Verse 13; Matt. 8:12; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.
 4. Comparatively few souls will enter the eternal

kingdom of heaven, Verse 14; Matt. 7:13-14; 20:16; Luke 13:23-24.

- B. God will not always strive with sinful mankind.
 - 1. At some future time the patience of God will be exhausted, 2 Pet. 3:9-10.
 - 2. Formerly, God's patience with mankind was exhausted prior to the universal flood of Noah's day, Gen. 6:3.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Jews who rejected God's invitation and murdered the Son of God received a double condemnation.
 - a. Of course, they were guilty of the death of Jesus, Acts 2:36-38.
 - b. In addition, through his providence, God caused the city of Jerusalem to be destroyed, Matt. 23:37-38; 24:1-35.
- 2. All humanity is amenable to the Gospel and availed of its blessings through obedience, Heb. 5:8-9.
- 3. All of the unprepared or lost will be without excuse in the Judgment.
 - a. All mankind will bow (happily or reluctantly) before the throne of God, Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11.
 - b. Some will argue in vain trying to alter their eternal destiny, Matt. 7:21-23.
 - c. Others will attempt to hide from God, Rev. 6:16.
 - d. The Parable of the Ten Virgins illustrates the tragedy of being unprepared to meet God in Judgment, Matt. 25:1-13; Amos 4:12.

Invitation:

- 1. Becoming a member of the church today provides a valid hope of entering the eternal kingdom of heaven someday.
- 2. Anyone who can understand elementary math can easily understand how to become a child of God and be added to the church by Jesus, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
- 3. Every reader can understand the simple instructions that the apostle Peter gave to an erring Christian how to receive forgiveness of sins, Acts 8:22.

The Parable of the Vine and the Branches

John 15:1-8

Thesis: Exposition.

Introduction:

1. John 15:1-8 is one of several New Testament contexts that compare the faithful pursuit of Christianity to bearing fruit.
2. The vineyard was familiar to people living in first century Palestine, and it is easy enough for people today to understand as well.
3. Contrary to popular thought, we will see that John 15:1-8 applies to individuals rather than to denominational groups.

Body:

I. Verses 1-2 provide the introduction to the illustration and the spiritual truth.

- A. In verse 1, Jesus declares, "I am the true vine."
 1. He compares himself to a vine as would be found in a vineyard, which vine is the source of life to the branches, John 14:6.
 2. Jesus compares himself to a true vine as opposed to a false vine, 1 John 4:1.
 3. The existence of the true vine suggests the existence of counterfeit or false vines, Matt. 24:23-24.
 4. Anyone, no matter how sincerely, who follows a false vine will miss the eternal goal he or she cherishes, Matt. 7:21-23.
 5. False vines, etc. will be rooted up, Matt. 15:13.
- B. In verse 1, Jesus declares that the heavenly Father is the Husbandman.
 1. Jesus portrays the Father as a farmer tending a vineyard.
 2. The farmer or husbandman is responsible for the care of the vine and the branches.
 3. The farmer has the power and the authority to nurture or plow under his crop.
 4. It would be ludicrous for the crop to deny the existence of or defy the authority of the farmer to till it.
- C. Verse 2 introduces the phrase, "every branch in me."

1. “In me” amounts to being in Jesus Christ, Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27.
 2. The denominational world supposes that the branches are denominational churches, but the context identifies the branches as individual persons, John 15:5-6.
- D. Verse 2 also contains the phrase, “that beareth not fruit he taketh away.”
1. Obviously, Christianity is a **doing** religion, Jam. 4:17; Matt. 7:21!
 2. In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus Christ called the unfruitful servant wicked, slothful and unprofitable, Matt. 25:26, 30.
 3. Earlier, John the Baptist represented the Pharisees and Sadducees as unfruitful, Matt. 3:7-8.
 4. Dead, fruitless branches will not be found in the vineyard of a good husbandman, and unfruitful Christians will not be in the kingdom of heaven either.
- E. Verse 2 has the phrase, “and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”
1. The farmer or husbandman prunes fruitful branches to produce more fruit.
 2. The farmer, or in this case God, has a right to exercise himself over fruitful branches, too.
 3. Therefore, Christians should not resent God’s continued interest in and direction of their lives.
 4. It is not enough to have been fruitful, but a child of God must continue to be fruitful for God to be pleased with him.
 5. When one quits striving to be fruitful, he becomes unfruitful and subject to destruction.
 6. Several New Testament passages emphasize the necessity of continued faithfulness, Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14.

II. Verse 3 portrays the Word as the key factor in being a branch of the true vine.

- A. Verse 3 contains the phrase, “now ye are clean.”
1. “Clean” here carries the meaning of saved, not defiled, not spiritually unclean or filthy.
 2. Christians are clean because they have been washed, 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5; Titus 3:5.

- B. Notice the phrase in verse 3, “through the word which I have spoken to you.”
 - 1. The Word of Jesus Christ has the power to bring about spiritual cleanliness, John 8:32; 17:17; Eph. 5:26.
 - 2. The Word of God is the sole weaponry of the child of God with which he resists sinful temptations, Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:10-17; Matt. 4:1-11.
 - 3. The Word of our Lord is spoken to us today through the Gospel, John 12:48; Rom. 1:16.

III. Verses 4-6 announces that fruitfulness is the conditional basis by which a child of God can continue to receive God’s approval.

- A. In verse 4, Jesus said, “abide in me.”
 - 1. Fruitfulness is the condition by which a branch can remain attached to the vine.
 - 2. Remember, unfruitful branches are severed from the vine.
 - 3. The Word of our Lord when obeyed places one as a branch on the vine, and continued obedience of the Word keeps one attached to the vine.
- B. Verse 4 also reads, “and I in you.”
 - 1. The branch and the vine enjoy a reciprocal or mutual relationship.
 - 2. Christians enjoy a mutual indwelling based on the Word of Jesus Christ and the Christian’s fruitfulness.
 - 3. Other verses also teach about a mutual indwelling of Jesus Christ and the children of God, John 17:21-23.
- C. Verse 4 also reads, “as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”
 - 1. The verb “abide” is in the present tense, teaching that the abiding and fruitfulness must be ongoing.
 - 2. As long as a Christian is fruitful, he enjoys the continual habitation of Jesus Christ in him.
 - 3. The abiding and indwelling occurs through the Word, John 15:3; 1 John 2:6.
 - 4. Abiding in Jesus Christ is comparable to a Christian continuing to walk in the light, 1 John 1:7; Eph. 5:8.
 - 5. Jesus Christ is the only access one has to the Father, John 14:6.

6. Any religion that does not recognize Jesus Christ as the true vine is not Christianity.
- D. Verse 5 is essentially a repetition of verse 4 for the purpose of emphasis.
 1. Also, the personal, singular pronoun “he” indicates that a branch is a person, not a church.
 2. There is no fruit possible outside of being in Jesus Christ, Eph.1:3.
 - E. Verse 6 adds, “if a man abide not in me.”
 1. The appearance of the word “man” in this verse is conclusive evidence that a branch equals an individual Christian.
 2. The word “if” indicates the conditional basis of salvation and the possibility of apostasy leading to eternal loss.
 - F. Verse 6 also reads, “he is cast forth as a branch and is withered: and men gather them, and they are burned.”
 1. Fruitless Christians are compared to worthless brush that is only fit for burning.
 2. The illustration typifies the eternal destruction of hell fire for unprofitable Christians.
 3. On another occasion, Jesus also used the same illustration, Matt. 7:19.

IV. Verses 7-8 provide the conclusion of the illustration about faithfulness or fruitfulness.

- A. Verse 7 reads, “if ye abide in me,” suggesting the conditional basis by which the fruitful will be rewarded.
- B. Verse 7 also reads, “and my words abide in you.”
 1. The Word of Jesus Christ formerly cleansed the branch.
 2. The Word of God maintains and directs the child of God, 2 Cor. 5:7.
 3. Being filled with the Word of God fits one for a spiritual reward.
- C. Verse 7 further reads, “ye shall ask what ye will, and it will be done unto you.”
 1. The apostles alone were the audience in John 14-16, and this applies to them in their apostolic mission, John 14:14; 16:23.
 2. However, God does promise to answer the prayers of

faithful children of God if the prayers accord with his will, 1 John 3:22; Acts 21:14.

3. Unfaithful Christians and non-Christians are not afforded the avenue of prayer with God, John 9:31; Prov. 15:29.
- D. Verse 8 reads, “herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”
1. A little dab will not do!
 2. Faithful Christians will utilize all of their potential and abilities every opportunity they have to serve God.
 3. If Christians do not glorify God by their fruits, then no one will glorify God.
- E. Verse 8 concludes with, “so shall ye be my disciples.”
1. Fruitfulness is a primary characteristic of the child of God.
 2. A collection of Christians in an area, a congregation, should be characterized by the combined fruitfulness of each faithful Christian.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is the center and lifeblood of Christianity, as is the vine the source of life to the branches.
2. Without the Word of God, souls are not cleansed.
3. All dead wood will be burned!
4. All fruitful branches will be pruned to produce more fruit.

Invitation:

1. No one can be a branch attached to the true vine without being in Jesus Christ.
2. Two verses tell how to get into Jesus Christ, Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27.
3. Erring Christians must be restored to again be fruitful branches attached to the true vine, Gal. 6:1; Matt. 3:8.

The Promise of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

John 14:26

Thesis: To briefly analyze passages that predict the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles of Christ.

Introduction:

1. The following is an overview of prophetic and predictive references about the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles of Christ.
 - a. References will include passages of Scripture that include but are not limited to the reception of miraculous power by the apostles of Christ.
 - b. As such, then, we will examine both general and specific predictive references to the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles.
 - c. The prophets whose messages we will consider include: Joel, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
2. These prophetic messages find their fulfillment, respectively, in part or wholly in the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles of Christ.
 - a. These biblical references appear in both testaments of the Bible.
 - b. The correlation between prophecy and fulfillment regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles justifies one's faith in God, his Word and his plan for man.
 - c. Prophecy and fulfillment do for the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles what they do for confirmation of other cardinal doctrines of Christianity, e.g. birth of Jesus Christ, ministry of Christ, death and resurrection of Christ; namely, they are true and were brought about by Divine foreknowledge, providence and intervention.
3. We expect to emphasize the specific promises by Jesus Christ to his apostles regarding their baptism with the Holy Spirit.
 - a. We will address how promises made **exclusively** to the apostles regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit can appear in the same context with other promises that are applicable to Christians in every generation.

- b. We also will enumerate the specified role of the Holy Spirit, working in conjunction with the apostles after their Spirit baptism.

Body:

I. Consider the following overview of prophetic and predictive references to the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles of Christ.

- A. Joel 2:28-32 is a general prophecy inclusive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. That Joel's prophecy is predictive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ is evident because the apostle Peter by inspiration says that it is, Acts 2:1-4, 16-21.
 - a) Acts 2:1-4 records the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the 12 apostles, Acts 1:26.
 - b) Acts 2:16 begins with "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."
 - 2. However, it is apparent that the Joel prophecy includes more than a reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles.
 - c) Recipients of miraculous power according to the prophecy as it is recorded in Joel and quoted by Peter (and recorded by Luke) include persons who were not the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, e.g. "all flesh," young and old, women.
 - d) Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles was a partial and the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32.
 - e) Joel 2:28-32 was completely fulfilled when others besides the apostles also received miraculous power, including women and Gentiles, Acts 8:14-17; 21:9; 10:45.
- B. Matthew 3:11 is a general prophecy inclusive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Three separate baptisms are addressed in Matthew 3:11:
 - a) John's baptism, which he was administering.
 - b) A then future baptism of the Holy Spirit to be administered by Jesus Christ.

- c) A then future baptism of punitive, destructive fire to be administered by Jesus Christ.
- 2. The audience to whom John the Baptist spoke in Matthew 3 was comprised of various individuals, to whom the baptisms of which John spoke also variously applied.
 - a) The general populace surrounding Jerusalem and in Judaea was there and was being baptized by John the Baptist, Matt. 3:5-6.
 - b) Wicked Pharisees and Sadducees were also present, Matt. 3:7-8.
 - c) Some of the future apostles of Christ were apparently present, then being disciples of John the Baptist, i.e. at least some of the disciples of John the Baptist subsequently became disciples of Jesus Christ, John 1:35-42.
- 3. Incidentally, the baptism of fire is as punitive and destructive as the references to fire in the verses on either side of Matthew 3:11.
 - a) In verse 10, fruitless trees by which John described the Pharisees and Sadducees were burned — destroyed with fire.
 - b) In verse 12, the waste products from the harvest were to be burned with fire after their separation from the grain.
 - c) Therefore, the reference to fire in verse 11 is also destructive and punitive; it is applied to impenitent souls, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - d) As such, then, the baptism of fire equates to the eternal fire of a devil's hell to which the ungodly will be consigned at the Great Judgment; this baptism is yet future.
- C. Mark 9:1 is a general prophecy inclusive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. This verse aptly describes the birthday of the church in Acts 2, inaugurated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles of Christ.

- a) The passage defines the timetable for the establishment of the church within the lifespans of those listening to Jesus speak.
 - b) The power with which the Lord's kingdom would be established was distinguished from the usual circumstances with which earthly kingdom's arise and sustain themselves.
 - 2. Other predictive passages and biblical references to their fulfillment clarify the power mentioned in Mark 9:1.
 - a) The recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are not herein identified.
 - b) The nature, purpose and manifestations of this "power" are not here enumerated.
- D. John 14-16 is a specific prophecy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
 - 1. At great length, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit **exclusively** to his apostles.
 - 2. Since the major thrust of this discourse pertains to these three chapters, we will address this context and more thoroughly after we notice some additional prophecies of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
- E. Luke 24:49 is a specific prophecy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
 - 1. Here, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit **exclusively** to his apostles.
 - a) This was an extension and a repetition of his promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, which we read in John 14-16.
 - b) This passage corresponds to Luke's continuation of the narrative that records this same discourse in Acts 1:8.
 - 2. Based on Luke 24:49, no student of the Bible would expect anyone besides the apostles alone to be recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) One, therefore, is not surprised that only the apostles in Acts 2:1-4 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- b) Though, one should be surprised were the event occurring in Acts 10-11 at the house of Cornelius to be dubbed the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”
 - c) Careful examination of predictive passages pertaining to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the event at the house of Cornelius would preclude saying that Cornelius, his family and friends received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- F. Acts 1:8 is a specific prophecy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
1. This verse records our Lord’s remarks to his apostles immediately preceding his Ascension.
 - a) Essentially, these words in Acts are a part of the overlap in the continuation of Luke’s narrative to Theophilus in the books of Luke and Acts.
 - b) Here, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit exclusively to his apostles.
 - c) This was an extension and a repetition of his promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, which we read in John 14-16.
 2. Based on Acts 1:8, no student of the Bible would expect anyone besides the apostles alone to be recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) One, therefore, is not surprised that only the apostles in Acts 2:1-4 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) Though, one should be surprised were the event occurring in Acts 10-11 at the house of Cornelius to be dubbed the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”
 - c) Careful examination of predictive passages pertaining to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the event at the house of Cornelius would preclude saying that Cornelius, his family and friends received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Acts 1:8 also alludes to the empowerment by the Holy Spirit whereby the apostles of Christ could effectively serve in that capacity.
 - a) The apostles were perfect witnesses because they had been so long with Jesus during his personal ministry.

- b) The apostles were the perfect heralds of the Gospel of the resurrected Christ because they were by the Holy Spirit caused to remember what Jesus had said to them, and they were guided into all truth.
- c) Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the apostles were to take the universal Gospel to the whole world, Mark 16:15-16.

II. John chapters 14-16 promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit exclusively to the apostles of Christ.

- A. Though the baptism of the Holy Spirit in this passage was promised only to the apostles, other promises in these three chapters are applicable to Christians in every generation — including today.
 - 1. Only the apostles of Christ were present when the discourse of John 14-16 was made, John 13:1ff.
 - 2. The **specific** promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is **exclusively** promised to the apostles.
 - a) No promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit where that baptism and the recipients are indicated includes anyone besides the apostles of Christ.
 - b) The exclusive application of this promise to the apostles is not modified by any passages outside the context of John 14-16.
 - c) Therefore, only the apostles were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - d) Accordingly, the only undisputed, recorded fulfillment of the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit involves the apostles of Christ alone, Acts 2:1-4.
 - 3. John 14:1-3 promises that Jesus is preparing heaven as an eternal habitation for the apostles of Christ.
 - a) The apostles are included in the provision of eternal heaven, but they are not the exclusive candidates for heaven.
 - b) It is true, of course, that the apostles alone comprised the audience to whom the promise of heaven was made **on this occasion**.

- c) However, the promise of heaven, in other passages, is not limited to the apostles, but includes all of God's faithful children, Col. 1:5; Phil. 3:20; 1 Pet. 1:3-4.
 - d) Therefore, it is clear how a portion of John 14-16 (namely the baptism of the Holy Spirit) can apply exclusively to the apostles while other portions of the same context also apply to Christians today.
- B. John 14:13-14 apply to only to the apostles.
1. This promise to fulfill miscellaneous requests pertains exclusively to the apostles and corresponds to the exclusive promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles.
 - a) The requests, which when made, that Jesus would fulfill pertained to and were limited to the execution of the work of the apostles.
 - b) In context, this promise does not pertain to other legitimate prayerful requests that the children of God might make today.
 - c) The scope of this promise was to enable the apostles to adequately fulfill the mission for which Jesus had selected them.
 - d) "This promise referred particularly to the apostles in their work of spreading the Gospel" (Barnes).
 2. This promise to the apostles is similar to the special apostolic enablement contained in Matthew 18:18-19.
 - a) In both passages, divine assistance is promised whereby the apostles could fulfill their apostolic duties.
 - b) In both passages, acknowledgment by the apostles of the divine origin of the special assistance was a prerequisite to its reception and use.
- C. John 14:16-17, 26 apply only to the apostles.
1. The "Comforter" is identified in verse 26 as the Holy Spirit.
 - a) The Greek word here translated "Comforter" appears five times in the Bible, all by the pen of the apostle John, John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1.

- b) The first four occurrences are applied in Holy Writ to the Holy Spirit, whereas the final appearance is applied to Jesus Christ.
 - c) The Greek word has a number of subtle variations in meaning whereby it could be rendered “helper” or “advocate,” too.
 - d) “The role of intercession has certain legal implications, and accordingly *parakletos* is justifiably related to legal procedures...The principal difficulty encountered in rendering *parakletos* is the fact that this term covers potentially such a wide area of meaning. The traditional rendering of ‘Comforter’ is especially misleading because it suggests only one very limited aspect of what the Holy Spirit does. A term such as ‘Helper’ is highly generic...A rendering based upon the concept of legal advocate seems in most instances to be too restrictive.” (Louw and Nida)
 - e) “The idea that the advocacy takes place both in heaven and on earth is also common to the OT and Judaism. On balance it seems that the NT usage is more closely linked to the ‘advocate’ concept of the OT than to the ‘helper’ concept of the Mandaeen world.” (Kittel and Friedrich)
 - f) *Paraclete* literally means “a call to one’s side.”
 - g) From John’s usage of this term, it is apparent that the Holy Spirit is an advocate or legal counsel for the sinner at the bar of God, as Romans 8:26 also teaches.
2. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit share the same role as the verse reads “another Comforter.”
- a) The Greek word for another is *allon*, which means ‘another of the same kind.’
 - b) Therefore, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are both *paracletes* or advocates for the faithful children of God.
 - c) The apostle John precisely taught this in 1 John 2:1 when he used *paraclete* there (translated “Advocate”) regarding Christ as the Christian’s

legal counsel before the bar of God because of man's sin.

- d) As the word indicates, Jesus in 1 John 2:1 and the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John and Romans 8:26 plead our case before the Father.
 - e) As such, the Holy Spirit is as much a person and not a mere influence as Jesus Christ is a person and a member of the Godhead.
3. The teaching all things and causing them to remember the sayings of Jesus pertains to the ministry of the apostles.
- a) This was to furnish the apostles for their unique ministry.
 - b) This activity of the Holy Spirit applied **only** to the apostles and does not pertain to any Christians today.
 - c) The "all things" is limited by whatever pertained to the apostolic mission and did not extend to other matters or make the apostles omniscient.
 - d) The Holy Spirit is eminently qualified to reveal the mind of God because he knows the "deep things of God," 1 Cor. 2:10.
 - e) This verse amounts to the declaration of divine inspiration for the apostles, as Jesus earlier promised in Matthew 10:19-20.
- D. John 15:16 applies only to the apostles.
- 1. Reference to those specially chosen by Jesus and set apart or appointed to certain duties clearly indicates that the verses and the immediate context apply exclusively to the apostles.
 - 2. Their fruit would remain in the sense that their labors would permanently affect the Christian religion.
 - a) Once more, the authority of the apostles comes to mind as it is expressed in Matthew 18:18.
 - b) The words of Jesus in Matthew 19:28 indicated that the role of the apostles was permanent, even surviving them after their deaths.
 - c) The apostles possess as much authority in religion today as they ever did, and we are thereby

obligated to abide in the “apostles’ doctrine,” Acts 2:42.

3. As we have already stated regarding John 14:13-14, these petitions and subsequent fulfillment, in this context, apply exclusively to the apostles and their special ministry in the early church.
- E. John 15:26-27 apply only to the apostles.
1. Jesus in verse 26 affirms that he would send the Holy Spirit (baptism) to the apostles.
 - a) Formerly in John 14:16 and 26, Jesus stated that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to the apostles.
 - b) Rather than a contradiction, the verses indicate the unity and oneness of the Godhead, as well as the Godhead’s oneness in purpose.
 2. The Holy Spirit is designated as the “Spirit of Truth” since the Spirit’s mission toward man and namely the apostles was to reveal the truth of God.
 - a) The vehicle of transmission of the mind of God to mortal man that Jesus promised would unfold through the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles was absolutely necessary to equip the church.
 - b) Without this divine mechanism for the revelation of the mind of God to man, fallible, mortal human beings could not possibly have presented a flawless and complete revelation from God.
 - c) Without divine inspiration that is implied in these verses, one could not know either the blessings or the punishments God has reserved for mankind; one could not know how to correctly worship or serve God; one could not know definitively how to participate in his own redemption and otherwise prepare for death and judgment; one could not know how to practice Christian living.
 - d) The promises to the apostles in John 14-16 equate to the New Testament version of the Old Testament inspiration affirmed in 2 Peter 1:20.
 3. The words “proceedeth from the Father” literally mean that the Spirit was to come from ‘beside the Father,’ as

- opposed from any place or position that would relegate the Holy Spirit to anything less than equality with the other persons of the Godhead.
- a) The Bible teaches that there are three persons in one Godhead, Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-20.
 - b) The doctrine of the Trinity is not taught any more forcefully anywhere than it is in John 14-16.
 - c) That the Father, Son and Spirit are distinct persons and that each has a role in the redemption of man, but in unison with the other two persons of the Godhead, is clearly and undeniably taught in John 14-16.
4. The mission of the Holy Spirit toward the apostles is further unfolded.
 - a) The Holy Spirit was not to initiate a new ministry or system of religion or bring a different Gospel, Gal. 1:6-9.
 - b) The mission of the Holy Spirit toward the apostles was to confirm and augment the ministry of Jesus Christ.
 5. The phrase “ye have been with me from the beginning” further determines that the immediate context (relative to the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit) pertained exclusively to the apostles of Christ.
- F. John 16:7-8 apply only to the apostles.
1. There were several reasons for which it was “expedient” for Jesus to “go away.”
 - a) “The establishment of a world-wide religion with benefits of salvation from sin and eternal life for all humanity would have been impossible if the head of it had remained on earth, limited by earthly conditions, physically present at only one place at a time, inaccessible unless approached through other men...” (Coffman)
 - b) “That by his departure, his death, and ascension — by having these great facts before their eyes — they would be led by the Holy Spirit to see more fully the design of his coming than they would by his presence. ...It was an evident arrangement in the great plan of redemption that each of the

- persons of the Trinity should perform a part.” (Barnes)
- c) “With their false ideas of an earthly political kingdom with Jesus their King, nothing could have seemed harder to receive than this. They might submit to the inevitable, but that the departure of Jesus should be expedient — desirable — this was too hard to receive” (Lipscomb 252).
 - d) “What then seemed a crushing sorrow was a real blessing” (Johnson 241).
 - e) The original for “depart” is the idea of leaving for a **purpose** (Vincent).
2. In verse 8, the mission of the Holy Spirit to the apostles was through them to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”
 - a) “In the NT the use [of ‘reprove’ John 16:8] is restricted. With the accusative of person it means **‘to show people their sins and summon them to repentance’...**” (Kittel and Friedrich)
 - b) God’s prophets in all ages were divinely inspired to convict the world of sins, offer pardon and strongly affirm that the judgment of God is pending.
 - c) None of God’s servants were so bold based on mere human authority, but by divine authority — **condemned sin and demanded repentance!**
 - d) Acts 2:36-38 in the New Testament on the inaugural day of the Lord’s church demonstrates this pattern.
- G. John 16:13-14 apply only to the apostles.
1. The mission of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, as noted already, includes the declaration of the Gospel truth.
 - a) It is important to remember that the verse before us was addressed exclusively to the apostles and that the Holy Spirit does not guide Christians today into all truth, except through the New Testament.
 - b) “‘He shall guide...’ indicates a progressive revelation from one level to higher levels; and

- thus Revelation with its prophecies of the future exceeds what the apostles at first knew” (Coffman).
- c) “Enigmas would be solved, mysteries would be clear” (Johnson).
 - d) The words “all truth” certify the complete instructional sufficiency of the Word of God — namely here the New Testament.
 - e) Again, the emphasis appears that there is a system of faith ‘once and for all delivered to the saints’ to which the Holy Spirit was to limit his expression, Jude 3.
 - f) The Holy Spirit confirmed and elaborated on the ministry of Christ, but did not provide alternative or ‘other gospels,’ Gal. 1:6-9.
2. The phrase “things to come” is limited by the revelations pertinent to the Christian religion.
 - a) The apostles were not promised knowledge of future events not strictly related to the development of New Testament Christianity.
 - b) “That is, truth which pertained to the establishment of the Christian system...” (Barnes).
- H. John 16:23-24 apply only to the apostles.
1. The apostles would not ask questions of Jesus as they had before, for a number of reasons.
 - a) According to Vincent, the verb for “ask” that first appears in verse 23 is the idea of “continuous asking.”
 - b) The apostles would be unable physically to petition Jesus after his departure as they had while with him in his ministry.
 - c) Further, after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the apostles would have a more complete and infallible knowledge of God’s will so that they would not need to ask questions as before.
 2. After the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, petitions the apostle might have were to be directed to the Father.

- a) In this context, the reference applies to the apostles alone.
- b) By the authority of heaven, the apostles spoke and presented doctrine, Matt. 10:19-20; 18:18-19; Acts 2:42.
- c) “This also indicates that the apostles would soon understand the great spiritual verities and would not need to ask, ‘Where art thou going?’ (13:36), or ‘How can we know the way?’ (14:5), or ‘Show us the Father’ (14:8), or ‘Lord, what has happened that thou art about to manifest thyself to us and not to the world?’ (14:22), or ‘What is this that he saith, A little while?’ (16:18). All such uncertainties would disappear in the light of the events which would, in a matter of hours, be unfolded.” (Coffman)
- d) Vincent observes that the phrase “may be full” means “may be having been fulfilled.”

Conclusion:

1. Predictive prophecy regarding the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles appears in both testaments.
 - a. The fulfillment of any predictive prophecy corroborates the fact that the Bible is from God and that it is reliable.
 - b. Therefore, the predictive prophecies regarding the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, now long since fulfilled, contributes to the faith of the children of God in the Bible and to confidence in all of God’s promises including those not yet realized, e.g. eternal life in heaven.
 - c. A multitude of prophetic witnesses attest the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as the fulfillment of those prophecies.
2. General and specific prophecies include references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
 - a. General prophecies where the specific recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are not named include: Joel 2:28-32; Matt. 3:11; Mark 9:1.
 - b. Specific prophecies where the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are designated include: Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; John 14-16.
3. The apostles of Christ alone received the baptism of the Holy

Spirit.

- a. Prophetic references regarding the intended recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit were to the apostles of Christ only.
 - b. The sole undisputed, recorded occasion of the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of the prophecies, shows that only the apostles received the Spirit baptism.
 - c. No one should expect any others in the first century or since to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. In part, the event at the house of Cornelius should be evaluated based on the specific promises and the subsequent fulfillment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.
4. Some topics in John 14-16 do apply to Christians today.
 - a. Only those topics in John 14-16 that are applied also outside the context of John 14-16 to Christians apply today.
 - b. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in John 14-16 and the resulting powers and authority apply exclusively to the apostles of Christ.
 5. Both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit make intercessions before the bar of God for the faithful children of God.
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the Christian's "Advocate" or legal counsel, John 14-16; Rom. 8:26.
 - b. Jesus Christ is also the Christian's "Advocate" or legal counsel, 1 John 2:1.
 6. The Holy Spirit (baptism) was the divinely chosen mechanism for providing the inspiration of the New Covenant.
 - a. The apostles were largely charged with the flawless transmission of God's will for man to mankind.
 - b. Without the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit, we would not have a final, absolute standard of authority in religion; due to the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ and their special mission, we do have a **final, absolute standard of authority in religion** — the Bible (and namely for us, the New Testament), Matt. 19:28.
 7. Perfect harmony or unity exists between the three persons of the Godhead.
 - a. Consequently, they each and lastly the Holy Spirit brought the same divine message to mankind.
 - b. The doctrine of the Trinity is established in John 14-16.
 - c. Each person of the Godhead participated in the mission to redeem fallen man.

8. God's servants have the responsibility to condemn sin and demand repentance — based on the authority of God who sends those servants with his message.
 - a. The apostolic authority that animated the first century church is no less effective today, Matt. 19:28.
 - b. The “apostles’ doctrine” would have us today assume the same responsibilities toward convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
9. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was essential to the development of the early church and to biblical authority in every generation — including today.
 - a. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit necessarily preceded the actual event.
 - b. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a key faith-builder in the child of God.
 - c. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit harmoniously has its place in the will of God — much like the exact match of the right piece in the right place in a comprehensive jigsaw puzzle.

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Confess Your Sins

James 5:16

Thesis: Exposition and application today.

Song: *Just As I Am*

Introduction:

1. The New Testament addresses two different types of confessions.
 - a. First, the plan of salvation includes confessing Christ to the be Son of God, Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37.
 - b. Second, James 5:16 pertains to confessing one's sins.
 - c. People often demonstrate confusion about either of these two biblical references to confession, but earnest Bible study can eliminate confusion about either Bible topic.
2. Our current study pertains to confessing sins as that teaching appears in James 5:16.
 - a. The larger context in which James 5:16 appears is James 5:14-18.
 - b. Verses 14-15 concern miraculous cures for physical sickness and close with mention of a spiritual healing or forgiveness of sins.
 - c. Verse 16 speaks of confessing sins or faults, prayer and the forgiveness of sins.
 - d. Verses 17-18 illustrate the power of prayer by referring to Elijah of the Old Testament.
 - e. Verses 19-20 address the forgiveness of sins and reclaiming fallen brethren.
3. There are a few questions that should occur to us as we study these verses, for which at the conclusion of this study we should be able to furnish biblical answers.
 - a. Which sins must be confessed per the instruction of James 5:16?
 - b. To whom should these sins be confessed?
 - c. Why should sins be confessed "one to another"?
 - d. Does this passage support auricular confession as practiced in Catholicism or by prayer partners?
 - e. What relationship do the miracles of verses 14-15 have to verse 16?

Body:

I. First, let's discuss the relationship of healing miracles to verse 16, Jam. 5:14-15.

- A. The healing in these verses was obviously miraculous.
 - 1. We know this because instead of sick Christians calling for doctors, they were instructed to call upon men otherwise unqualified in the medical field—elders.
 - 2. Further, non-medical procedures were to be followed for a cure—prayer and anointing with olive oil.
 - 3. For instance, if olive oil has any medicinal qualities, it could not be expected to heal every malady, e.g. lameness.
- B. The primary purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God, Mark 16:20.
 - 1. Therefore, not even in the first century were all Christians healed miraculously of their illnesses, Acts 9:36-37; Phil. 2:25-26, 30.
 - 2. Trophimus was left at Miletus sick, 2 Tim. 4:20.
 - 3. Timothy had a stomach disorder, 1 Tim. 5:23.
 - 4. The apostle Paul had “a thorn in the flesh,” 2 Cor. 12:7-10.
- C. Miracles themselves were never intended to be a permanent accessory to the Lord's church.
 - 1. The Corinthian church abused miracles and was rebuked for it, 1 Cor. 12-14.
 - 2. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that miracles were temporary, 1 Cor. 13:8-13.
 - 3. Miracles were intended only to assist the infant or fledgling church, Eph. 4:11-14.
 - 4. Miracles ceased when the apostles who had received Holy Spirit baptism died as well as those upon whom the apostles had laid hands and prayed to enable others to perform miracles also died.
- D. The miraculous cures of James 5:14-15 depend upon the continuation of miracles and cannot be effective today if miracles do not continue today.
 - 1. The reference to miracles in James 5:14-15 is limited to miraculously enable elders of the first century.
 - 2. The sins to be forgiven that are mentioned in the last

statement of verse 15 are obviously sins for which one has repented, otherwise neither elders nor anyone else could expect sins to be forgiven, Luke 17:3-4.

3. The sins mentioned were likely sins of which the sick brother or sister was particularly aware at the time of sickness, perhaps even public sins since the elders were to be involved in the prayer for their forgiveness.
4. The sins mentioned were not tied to the miraculous cure but pertained then as now to special concern for one's sins in times of great sickness (especially if one fears he or she may die).

II. Let's discuss the first part of James 5:16 that reads, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

- A. "Faults" is the same word as "sins" in the previous verse, and it is so rendered in several translations, e.g. ASV.
- B. The Greek word for "confess" here is *exomologeō* (ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o).
 1. Its definition is "to acknowledge or (by implication of assent) agree fully" (*Strong's*).
 2. The prefix *ex* means "out" and indicates with the rest of the word to confess forth or freely and openly.
 3. The same word for "confess" appears in Matthew 3:6 and Mark 1:5 where people confessed their sins before receiving John's baptism in the Jordan River.
 4. The same word for "confess" appears in Acts 19:18-20 respecting the confessing of sins by those who formerly used "curious arts."
- C. Consider the wording, "one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."
 1. Confession in this verse is to be reciprocal or something in which Christians mutually participate.
 2. That rules out the one-way confessions of Catholic auricular confessions and prayer partners.
 3. The confession of sins is as public as the prayers for them.
 4. The primary reason why public sins should be acknowledged publicly is so faithful brethren may know that erring Christians are penitent and thus pray for them.

5. Faithful Christians have an obligation to help restore erring brethren, Gal. 6:1; Jam. 5:19-20.

III. Let's discuss the latter part of James 5:16 through verse 18, especially including, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

- A. The earnest, heartfelt prayer of a child of God prompts God to act in keeping with the welfare of his saints.
 1. The Parable of the Unrighteous Judge prompts the children of God to be persistent in prayer and illustrates the mention of prayer in James 5:16, Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thess. 5:17.
 2. Albert Barnes, the Presbyterian commentator, wrote: "It has been said that 'prayer moves the arm that moves the world'; and if there is anything that can prevail with God, it is prayer—humble, fervent, earnest petitioning."
- B. Note verses 17-18.
 1. These two verses refer to the great Old Testament prophet Elijah to illustrate the power of prayer.
 2. The same fervor with which Elijah prayed to stop and later start the rain is the same intensity with which Christians should pray for each other regarding public sins that have been confessed.
 3. The fervent prayers of the church for the forgiveness of sins will be no less effective than the prayers of Elijah.

Conclusion:

1. Sins should be confessed or acknowledged as publicly as they were committed.
2. All sins must be acknowledged before those who know about them.
3. When public sins are acknowledged publicly, fellow Christians are aware of one's penitence and may pray for the penitent.
4. James 5:16 does not authorize either auricular confession or prayer partners.
5. The miracles appearing in James 5:14-15 pertain to the period of miracles in the first century and are not intended to accompany prayer today.

Invitation:

1. Acknowledging of one's sins is an essential aspect of receiving the forgiveness of sins, Neh. 1:6.

2. Acknowledging one's sins leads the non-Christian to repent, Luke 13:3.
3. The erring child of God can be forgiven after acknowledging his sins, 1 John 1:9.

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Let the Bible Be Your Guide to Faith

Romans 10:17

Thesis: To define God-approved faith and to identify its source.

Introduction:

1. The word “faith” may apply to one’s confidence in national leaders, one brand of automobile over others, bridges we cross, airplanes we ride, religious leaders and virtually anything or anybody.
2. “Bible faith,” though, is a special, unique and unparalleled faith that exceeds in importance any other type of faith.

Body:

I. The Bible defines the faith that pertains both to our redemption and eternal salvation.

- A. No other faith deserves as much attention because no other faith can do so much for us.
- B. The verb form of “faith” is “believe.”
- C. “Faith” is confidence in, reliance upon, complete trust in and persuasion or conviction based on testimony.
- D. Hence, “faith” does not exist independently.
- E. The “Bible faith” in which we are interested today relies on the testimony of the Word of God—the Bible, Rom. 10:17.
 1. The word “faith” does appear in Romans 14:23 where it refers to one’s conscience, but that is not the “Bible faith” in which we are interested today.
 2. In addition, Jude 3 uses the word “faith” where it refers to the system of faith—the Bible.

II. We cannot over emphasize the importance of “Bible faith.”

- A. We must have Bible faith to please God, Heb. 11:6.
- B. We are justified or saved by faith, Rom. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:9.
- C. Grace and faith cooperate for one’s salvation, Eph. 2:8.
- D. Faith and baptism cooperate for one’s salvation, Mark 16:16.
- E. Faith and baptism cooperate to make one a child of God and to put Christ on, Gal. 3:26-27.

III. “Bible faith” has great character.

- A. First, “Bible faith” is obedient, Rom. 1:5; 16:26.
 1. The Greek word translated “believeth not” or “unbelieving” is also translated “disobedient,” John

3:36; Acts 14:12; Rom. 10:21.

2. God accused Moses of disbelief when he disobeyed God, Num. 20:7-12.
 3. Scripture links Abraham's faith with his obedience, Heb. 11:8.
- B. "Bible faith" is active.
1. It is not "Bible faith," but dead faith if it does not actively do something in service to God, Jam. 2:14-26.
 2. The servants of God whose names appear in the Bible's Hall of Fame of Faith all did something for God as a consequence of their faith, Heb. 11:4, 7-9, 17, 20-21, 24-25.
- C. "Bible faith" operates through love.
1. Faith works by love, Gal. 5:6.
 2. The Thessalonians were known for their growing faith and abounding love, 2 Thess. 1:3.

IV. "Bible faith" has an object.

- A. Jesus told his audiences to "believe the gospel," Mark 1:15.
- B. Jesus told the apostles to "have faith in God," Mark 11:22.
- C. Mankind must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, John 8:24.

V. "Bible faith" has a purpose.

- A. "Bible faith" provides the only defense against Satan, Eph. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:8.
- B. "Bible faith" is one's offensive weapon in spiritual battles, 1 Tim. 6:12; 1:18-19.

VI. It is imperative that one knows the true source of "Bible faith," Rom. 10:17.

- A. The source of faith is stated or implied in the Book of Acts—preaching the Word of God, 2:4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 22, 29, 37-38; 4:4; 8:12-13; 9:6; 16:14-15, 32-33; 17:11-12; 18:8; 19:5.
- B. Paul wrote about "the word of faith, which we preach," Rom. 10:8.

VII. There are degrees of faith, not all of which are "Bible faith."

- A. There is **little faith**, Matt. 6:30; 8:26.
- B. There is **trembling faith**, Jam. 2:19.
- C. There is **weak faith**, Rom. 14:1.
- D. There is **great faith**, Luke 7:9.
- E. There is **working faith**, 2 Thess. 1:11.

- F. There is **dead faith**, Jam. 2:26.
- G. There is **unfeigned faith**, 2 Tim. 1:5.

VIII. There are numerous examples in Scripture of “Bible faith”:

- A. Noah, Gen. 6:14-22; Heb. 11:7.
- B. Abraham, Gen. 12:14; 22:1-10; Rom. 4:18-21; Heb. 11:8-19.
- C. David, 1 Sam. 17:37, 46-47.
- D. Elijah, 1 Kings 18:32-38.
- E. Daniel, Dan. 6.
- F. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Dan. 3:13-27.
- G. Joseph, Gen. 50:20; Heb. 11:22.
- H. Ezra, Ezra 8:22.
- I. Mordecai, Esth. 4:14.
- J. Paul, Acts 27:25.

IX. “Bible faith” triumphs under trial.

- A. The successful trying of one’s “Bible faith” will result in praise and honor when Jesus returns, 1 Pet. 1:7.
- B. The trial of one’s faith results in patience, Jam. 1:3.
- C. There is no comparison between the trials of one’s faith on earth and the glory to come.
 - 1. The heavenly hereafter more than compensates for suffering now, if one has “Bible faith,” Rom. 8:18.
 - 2. The trial of “Bible faith” now is light affliction compared to heavenly glory, 2 Cor. 4:8-18.
 - 3. One’s “Bible faith” is as strong as one’s trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. 1:12.

Conclusion:

- 1. He who has “Bible faith” can through the eye of faith see heaven to come, 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:1.
- 2. Humanity is commanded to have this faith, 1 John 3:23.
- 3. “Bible faith” is derived from the **system of faith**—the Bible, 2 Cor. 5:7.
- 4. Faith toward God is the building block on which Christians grow, Heb. 6:1.

Invitation:

- 1. The essentiality of “Bible faith” is apparent in Hebrews 11:6.
- 2. Non-Christians must develop a “Bible faith,” for no other type of faith leads to salvation, Mark 16:16.
- 3. Erring Christians need to be reconverted so their “Bible faith” can contribute to their eternal salvation, Jam. 5:19-20.

The Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:20-34

Thesis: To make a thorough study of the Lord's Supper.

Introduction:

1. God instituted Old Testament memorial feasts so his people would remember him and his law, e.g. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Sabbath.
2. God instituted a New Testament memorial feast so his people would remember his Son and his law, i.e. the Lord's Supper.

Body:

I. How did the Lord's Supper originate?

- A. There is no record in the Old Testament of the Lord's Supper ever being observed.
 1. No Old Testament patriarch, judge, king, prophet or priest ever observed the Lord's Supper because it had not been instituted yet.
 2. Such Old Testament noteworthies such as Abraham, Moses or David never observed the Lord's Supper because it was not instituted until thousands of years after they lived.
 3. Therefore, the Old Testament cannot be a source of information about the Lord's Supper.
- B. The Lord's Supper began in an upper room in Palestine nearly 2,000 years ago.
 1. The last God-authorized Passover and the first Lord's Supper were both observed in that order on the same evening.
 2. The Passover had been observed annually for 15 centuries.
 3. On that evening in the upper room 2,000 years ago, Jesus distinguished between the Passover and the Lord's Supper.
- C. Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul wrote about the institution of the Lord's Supper.
 1. Read Matthew 26:26-29.
 2. Mark 14:22-25 reads the same as Matthew 26:26-29.
 3. Compare Luke 22:16-20.

4. First Corinthians 11:20-34 records the instructions of the apostle Paul on how to restore the Lord's Supper from abuses.
- D. The Passover was for the physical nation of Israel, and only as long as the Law of Moses was binding, Exod. 12:11-14, 21-27; 13:3, 8-10.
1. The Passover commemorated Jewish deliverance from Egyptian slavery and was instituted immediately before the inauguration of Judaism.
 2. The Passover was given to an Old Testament people, whereas everyone living today is amenable instead to the New Testament, Rom. 7:1-7.
- E. Jesus Christ and his apostles distinguished between the Passover and the Lord's Supper.
1. The Passover was in effect as long as Judaism was in force, and the Lord's Supper will be in effect as long as Christianity continues.
 2. The Passover and the Lord's Supper are two distinctly different memorial feasts, each pertinent to a different religious dispensation.
 3. Hence, the Old Testament has no bearing on the Lord's Supper, and the New Testament has no bearing on the Passover.

II. What are the elements of the Lord's Supper?

- A. Jesus used unleavened bread, so that that is what should be used today.
1. Exodus 13:7 forbade the Jews from having any leaven in the house during the feast of the Passover.
 2. Since Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper immediately following that year's observance of the Passover, only unleavened bread was available for use in the institution of the Lord's Supper.
 3. Leaven is equivalent to yeast and baking powder used today.
 4. Soup crackers, etc. (with or without salt) are unsuitable substitutes for unleavened bread in the Lord's Supper.
 5. To follow the biblical example in observance of the Lord's Supper today, we must use unleavened bread.
- B. Jesus used fruit of the vine, so that is what should be used

today.

1. Jesus Christ used the same drink that was used in observance of the Passover.
 2. Without question, the fruit of the vine refers to the grapevine, and the drink derived from it was grape juice.
 3. Anciently, Jews dehydrated grape juice and stored it until needed, then they added water to it (much like what we today do with frozen orange juice).
 4. No other juice or drink corresponds to following the biblical example of Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper.
- C. Jesus did not use fermented grape juice in the institution of the Lord's Supper.
1. Judaism forbade Jews from even looking at intoxicating wine or giving it to someone else, Prov. 23:29-34; Hab. 2:15.
 2. Therefore, Jesus could not have used fermented wine without violating the Law of Moses.
 3. If Jesus had violated the Law of Moses, then he was not sinless and could not be our Savior, Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5.
- D. Unleavened bread and grape juice should be used in observance of the Lord's Supper today because there is no doubt that these elements are satisfactory to God.

III. What names refer to the Lord's Supper?

- A. There are several contemporary terms commonly used respecting the Lord's Supper: Eucharist, sacrament, elements.
- B. There are several biblical names for the Lord's Supper.
1. Luke and Paul use the words "breaking of bread" when referring to the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16.
 2. Paul refers to the Lord's Supper as "the communion," 1 Cor. 10:16.
 3. Paul also refers to the Lord's Supper as the "Lord's Table," 1 Cor. 10:21.
 4. The words "Lord's Supper" that we have been using throughout this lesson appear in 1 Corinthians 11:20.
- C. We would do well to use biblical terms to refer to biblical activities, such as the Lord's Supper, 1 Pet. 4:11.

IV. What is the purpose of the Lord's Supper?

- A. The primary purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in his death on Calvary's cross, 1 Cor. 11:24-26.
 - 1. The burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not memorialized in the Lord's Supper, but instead in baptism, Rom. 6:3-5.
 - 2. Further, the resurrection of our Lord is memorialized by Christians gathering for worship each week on the day the he arose from the grave, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
- B. The Lord's Supper is a special opportunity to experience supreme fellowship with Jesus Christ and one's fellow Christians.
 - 1. The Greek word for "communion" in 1 Corinthians 10:16 where it refers to the Lord's Supper is *koinonia*.
 - 2. It means partnership, and *koinonia* is the Greek word translated "fellowship," among other words.
 - 3. Depending on the context in which the word appears, *koinonia* may refer to the Lord's Supper, fellowship or the contribution, 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:7; Rom. 15:26.
 - 4. The use of the Greek word for fellowship to refer to the Lord's Supper indicates the fellowship that Christians have with Jesus Christ and with each other when they observe the Lord's Supper.

V. Who may partake of the Lord's Supper?

- A. Only citizens of our Lord's kingdom may partake of the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:29-30.
 - 1. Jesus used the terms "kingdom" and "church" interchangeably, Matt. 16:18-19.
 - 2. The Lord's Supper is a New Testament act of worship in which the Lord's church participates, Acts 2:42.
- B. Non-Christians cannot actually observe the Lord's Supper though they may sit in our assemblies and go through the motions as we partake of the Lord's Supper.
 - 1. The unleavened bread and grape juice is no more than unleavened bread and grape juice for those who are not Christians.
 - 2. Yet, the New Testament does not teach that Christians

are to forbid or otherwise examine for the purpose of permitting or forbidding people to eat the unleavened bread and drink the fruit of the vine, i.e. Open or Closed Communion.

VI. On what day must the Lord's Supper be observed?

- A. Contemporary people often are not careful or particular as to when they observe the Lord's Supper.
 - 1. Many religious people observe the Lord's Supper on any day of the week, monthly or quarterly or annually.
 - 2. Sometimes, religious people observe the Lord's Supper in conjunction with a wedding.
- B. The New Testament, though, teaches that the Lord's Supper should be observed on the first day of every week, Acts 20:7.
 - 1. Every week has a first day of the week.
 - 2. Similarly, the Law of Moses (Judaism) required the Israelites to keep every Sabbath Day holy or face capital punishment, Exod. 20:8; Num. 15:32-36.
 - 3. Likewise, the New Testament teaches that the contribution should be collected on the first day of every week (and most religious people do so), 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
- C. The first day of the week is a fitting day on which to observe the Lord's Supper.
 - 1. Jesus Christ arose from the grave on the first day of the week, Matt. 28:1-6.
 - 2. Jesus made many appearances after his resurrection on the first day of the week, John 20:11-26.
 - 3. Our Lord's church began on the first day of the week, Pentecost (7 Sabbaths from the Passover + one day = 50 days or Pentecost), Acts 2:1.
 - 4. The early, apostolic-guided church worshipped on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
- D. To faithfully follow biblical example and command, Christians today must observe the Lord's Supper exclusively on the first day of each week.

VII. How has the Lord's Supper been abused?

- A. The first century Corinthian church abused the Lord's Supper, for which reason the apostle Paul instructed them to follow the example of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:20-34.

- B. Christians today can take the Lord's Supper "unworthily" or in an unworthy manner just as the Corinthians observed the Lord's Supper unworthily, 1 Cor. 11:27.
- C. Manmade religions have abused the Lord's Supper in a number of ways.
 - 1. Some have removed the cup or the fruit of the vine from the people (Catholicism with its *clergy* and *laity*).
 - 2. Some teach that the bread and the fruit of the vine become the literal body and blood of Jesus in the observance of the Lord's Supper.
 - 3. Many have changed the days on which or the frequency with which the Lord's Supper is observed.
 - 4. Some teach that it does not matter if the bread and the fruit of the vine are exchanged for other items.

VIII. Consider some tips for presiding or serving at the Lord's Supper.

- A. Consider these tips for presiding at the Lord's Table.
 - 1. Preside reverently.
 - 2. Pray clearly and loudly enough that everyone present can hear the prayer.
 - 3. Do not pray a general prayer in which prayer is made for things that are irrelevant to the observing of the Lord's Supper.
 - 4. Do not make the Lord's Supper a time for commenting on the sermon or anything else that does not pertain to observing the Lord's Supper.
 - 5. This is a good time to read some pertinent verses of Scripture relative to the Lord's Supper or the sacrificial death of Jesus, Matt. 26:26-29; Isa. 53.
 - 6. End the prayer in Jesus' name so all will know that the prayer is to the Father through Christ, Col. 3:17.
 - 7. Refrain from saying that the Lord's Supper is the most important act of worship.
 - 8. Consider using the most reverential language available to address the Father in prayer, including "thee," "thy" and "thou" instead of "you" and "your."
- B. Consider these tips for serving at the Lord's Table.
 - 1. Be dependable; if unable to keep one's scheduled appointment at the Lord's Table, give ample notice so a replacement can be found ahead of time.

2. Leave the Lord's Table together and orderly and return to the Table together and orderly.
 3. Hold the bread and the cup low enough that people sitting can easily reach them without straining.
 4. Be extra patient with the aged whose hands may be slow and shaky, or with the young mother who may be trying to take care of one or more children.
- C. Above all, let all things be done without confusion, decently and in order, 1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord's Supper is one of five acts of worship observed on the Lord's Day.
2. The Lord's church is faithful to the New Testament pattern and observes the Lord's Supper each first day of the week.

Invitation:

1. Everyone needs to be faithful to New Testament instruction regarding every biblical subject, including salvation.
2. Non-Christians need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of their sins and be immersed in water for the remission of sins, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians need to repent of their sins and pray for forgiveness, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

The Divided Assembly or Separate Togetherness

Deuteronomy 31:10-13

Thesis: To examine the concept of the divided assembly in light of biblical information.

Song: *Oft We Come Together*

Introduction:

1. The divided assembly is first a subject that bears many names: youth worship, junior church, children's Bible hour, parallel worship.
2. Secondly, the divided assembly is a concept that the churches of Christ borrowed from denominationalism, namely the Christian Church (Decker 19).
3. In the third place, the divided assembly often arose among churches of Christ to deal with undisciplined masses of children brought in by the bus ministry.
4. It is freely granted that a practice is not necessarily sinful owing to the fact that denominations may practice it, e.g. that denominational people enter their buildings through doors does not mean that members of the churches of Christ must enter their buildings through windows.

Body:

- I. **Is the divided assembly by whatever names it may be known a biblical practice? No!**
 - A. First, there is a complete void of Scripture pertaining to the institution or maintenance of divided worship assemblies, 1 Pet. 4:11.
 - B. Secondly, all the passages that describe the worship assembly portray the congregation gathering together in one place at one time.
 1. Christians at Troas came together for observance of the Lord's Supper and preaching, Acts 20:7-8.
 2. One reason for which the Corinthian congregation assembled together was to observe the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:20.
 3. The worship assembly is specifically described in the New Testament as the whole church coming together

- in one place at one time, 1 Cor. 14:23.
4. The early church “assembled together,” not separately, Acts 4:31; 14:27; 1 Cor. 14:26.
 5. The apostle Paul instructed the Corinthian church to discipline its wayward members in the assembly, 1 Cor. 4:5.
 6. A single assembly of a local church represents a congregation worshipping together, Jam. 2:2.
 7. Voluntary failure of any Christian to assemble with other Christians for worship is described in Scripture as willful sin for which God reserves the severest punishment in eternity, Heb. 10:25-31.
- C. The definition of the Greek words describing the local worship assembly speaks to the singleness of that gathering.
1. The word “together” in Acts 20:7-8; 4:31; 14:27 and 1 Corinthians 4:5 is a compound word, its parts meaning ‘close union’ and ‘leading or bringing; hence, “together” means “to lead together” or “convene” (*Biblesoft’s*).
 2. The word “together” in 1 Corinthians 11:20; 14:23 is a compound Greek word meaning “close union” and “come” or “go”; hence “together” here means “to convene” (*Biblesoft’s*).
 3. In James 2:2 and 1 Corinthians 14:26, the Greek word translated “assembly” or “come together” is *sunagoge* (soon-ag-o-gay), which means “an assemblage of persons; specifically, a Jewish ‘synagogue’...the meeting...” (*Biblesoft’s*).
 4. The words “assembling together” in Hebrews 10:25 come from a compound Greek word *episunagoge* (ep-ee-soon-ag-o-gay), which means “a complete collection; especially a Christian meeting (for worship)” (*Biblesoft’s*).

II. Is the divided worship assembly necessary or even advisable?

No!

- A. It was the practice under the Old Testament to assemble men, women and children together to hear the preaching of God’s Word, Deut. 31:10-13; Josh. 8:32-35; Ezra 10:1; Joel 2:16.
- B. Children were present among the multitudes that Jesus

taught, Matt. 14:21; Mark 10:14.

- C. The Greek identifies the “young man” (KJV) or “lad” (ASV) of Acts 20:12 who fell out the window during worship as “a boy” or “a child” (*Biblesoft’s*); children were in, not out of, the worship assemblies of the early church.

III. Is the practice of the divided worship assembly potentially dangerous? Yes!

- A. Separating children from the worship assembly tends to heighten the so-called generation gap between parents and other adults from children.
- B. If coming together in one place at one time is not necessary, Christian worship could easily evolve into family or even individual worship—effectively destroying the assembly altogether.
- C. The principle of dividing the worship assembly on the basis of special needs could divide the worship assembly into multiple, parallel assemblies.
 - 1. At least one church in Charlotte, NC in the past implemented two junior worships.
 - 2. Divided assemblies could be arranged for various degrees of educational achievements, various ages, marital status, vocational groups (e.g. farmers, professionals, housewives, etc.).
- D. Taken to its logical conclusion, divided assemblies (i.e. ignoring the “together” of Scripture) would destroy the church in its local sense, disrupt Christian fellowship and make church leaders inoperative (e.g. elders, deacons, preachers, treasurer).

IV. Are the objections to the criticism of the divided assembly valid? No!

- A. “There is as much biblical authority for the divided assembly as there is for Bible classes; passages that apply to Bible classes permit the divided assembly.”
 - 1. This objection is a flawed assumption that fails to acknowledge the crucial distinctions between Bible classes and worship assemblies.
 - 2. Though Bible classes may provide opportunities for prayer, songs and teaching, the Lord’s Supper, congregational collection and preaching belong to the worship assembly; there is a real distinction between

- Bible classes and worship assemblies.
3. Whereas women must be silent in worship assemblies, excepting singing and the good confession (1 Cor. 14:34, 1 Tim. 2:11-12), women are permitted to speak in Bible studies, Acts 18:26; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1:5.
 4. New Testament Bible studies are neither confined to one day of the week as is the Lord's Day assembly nor are they regulated by "the whole church be assembled together."
 5. Bible studies may be independent or collective efforts, in either case where the whole church is not present, 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 8:35-39.
- B. "The same principle by which we have nurseries allows divided assemblies."
1. Customarily, there remains a link between the nursery and the ongoing worship assembly, e.g. a speaker system, a window between the nursery and the auditorium, closed circuit TV, Christians in the nursery still observe the communion and collection with the worship assembly.
 2. Having a necessary place to which one can resort (perhaps temporarily) to change a baby's diaper or discipline unruly children is comparable to having restroom facilities; who would argue the propriety of having divided worship assemblies because there are bathrooms in the building?
 3. There is no similarity between nurseries and divided assemblies.
- C. "Are not multiple services at different times equal to the divided assembly?"
1. Multiple services themselves do not necessarily disrupt congregation fellowship, e.g. Sunday a.m. and p.m. assemblies in which at both times the whole church is supposed to be present.
 2. It is true, that two morning worship services, perhaps because the building is too small to accommodate the entire church at one time, disrupts Christian fellowship and complicates the responsibility of elders toward souls in their charge.
 3. Something we do must be justified by what the Bible

- says, not by some other practice that itself either stands or falls based on whether there is Bible authority for it.
- D. “Children have special needs that cannot be met adequately in the one assembly.”
1. Moses, Joshua and Jesus addressed men, women and children with the Word of God; the Holy Spirit did not inspire any biblical writer to write about attending to the special needs of children or anyone else in an assembly.
 2. As already noted, divided assemblies could be arranged for various degrees of educational achievements, various ages, marital status, vocational groups (e.g. farmers, professionals, housewives, etc.).
 3. Adult Christians forsake the worship assembly in violation of Hebrews 10:25 when they organize junior or youth worship.
- E. “Since all the divided assemblies meet in the same building, it is really only one assembly, one congregation.”
1. If in the same building at the same time alone constitutes an assembly, then various religious groups meeting in the same public building at the same time would be the same congregation, e.g. Pentecostals, Methodists, etc.
 2. Would all the people and activities in a mall or other building in which the church assembled also be included in congregational worship, e.g. shoppers, banking, a bar in the same building, etc.?
 3. Scripture does not identify an assembly by the confines of a building but by the act of a close union together of Christians for the purpose of worship.
- F. “Divided assemblies in the same building or even in more than one building are only one assembly because they are under one eldership.”
1. If this principle were true, several congregations in an area that had no elderships would be only one congregation owing to the existence of one congregation with an eldership.
 2. If elders have authority over assemblies meeting at the same time, they have auth over all such assemblies regardless of the miles that may separate the

congregations.

3. This corrupt notion taken to its logical conclusion results in Catholic dioceses or even house-churches.

Conclusion:

1. The Bible does not authorize divided assemblies.
2. Divided assemblies frustrate Christian fellowship and weaken the effectiveness of elders and preachers.
3. Divided assemblies keep some Christians from worshipping with the rest of the saints.
4. Divided assemblies re-enforce the so-called generation gap between the young and the older.
5. Divided assemblies taken to their logical conclusion could destroy the Lord's church in its local sense.
6. Adopting divided assemblies in the absence of biblical authority for them diminishes appreciation of biblical authority on any subject.

Invitation:

1. The only surety one has respecting how one can please Almighty God relies on respect for Bible authority.
2. Salvation from past sins can only be obtained by consulting the Word of God and practicing what it instructs, Acts 22:16.
3. Surety respecting eternity in heaven with God can only be attained by consulting and practicing what the New Testament teaches, Rev. 2:10.

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The Origin of the Philippian Church

Acts 15:36-16:40

Thesis: To show the origin of the church at Philippi and relate background information about the city.

Introduction:

1. The Philippian church was a model church in an often wicked and diverse society.
2. The Philippian church demonstrated both doctrinal purity and mutual love, without either a congregation can neither be a model church nor survive.
3. However, the Philippian church did not survive the centuries, and no church of the Lord meets there now.

Body:

- I. Note some facts about the origin of the ancient city of Philippi.**
 - A. One ancient name for the city of Philippi was the Fountain City.
 - B. Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, renamed the city Philippi in 358 B.C.
 - C. Hundreds of years later, Philippi became a Roman colony in which retired Roman soldiers and their families were settled.
 - D. Philippi was also famous for its gold and silver mines.
 - E. Philippi was on a major highway, the Egnatian Way, stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Bosphorous Sea.
 - F. Philippi was a chief city of Macedonia, the large landmass north of the Isthmus of Corinth.
- II. Note some facts about the origin of the Philippian church.**
 - A. The apostle Paul's Second Missionary Journey took him to the city of Philippi in about A.D. 52, Acts 15:36-16:40.
 - B. The famous Macedonia Call occurred on Paul's Second Missionary Journey, Acts 16:9-12.
 - C. The apostle Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke entered Philippi together, but only Paul and Silas left Philippi.
 - D. The Jewish population in Philippi was too small for it to have a synagogue.
 1. The apostle Paul ordinarily went into Jewish synagogues upon arriving in a city.
 2. He, instead, went to a quiet place where some Jewish

women had gathered for prayer.

- E. The establishment of the Philippian church was not without hardship and pain, but the apostle Paul had occasion to rejoice over this congregation perhaps more than any other congregation he established.
 - 1. Paul and Silas were beaten and placed in prison.
 - 2. However, two cases of conversions are associated with this visit by the missionaries: Lydia and the Jailer.
 - 3. The Philippian church is either the first church established in Europe or one of the first (if Acts 2 converts returned to Rome or elsewhere in Europe and established the Lord's church).

III. Note some facts about the origin of the Philippian epistle.

- A. The apostle Paul is the undisputed author of the Philippian epistle.
 - 1. The epistle attributes itself to the apostle Paul.
 - 2. From antiquity, the epistle has been attributed to the apostle.
- B. Philippians is one of Paul's prison epistles.
 - 1. It was written near the end of his first imprisonment in Rome about A.D. 62.
 - 2. Other prison epistles that were written about the same time include Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon plus 1 and 2 Timothy.
- C. The Philippian epistle is more personal and affectionate than the letter of condemnation sent to the Corinthian church, and it differs from several other epistles that Paul penned.

The Letter to the Saints at Philippi differs in some respects from any of the preceding letters of the Apostle Paul. It contains less logic and more of the heart. It is distinguished by the absence of didactical reasoning, and by the presence of a tender friendship and fatherly affection which is more apparent than in other Pauline letters to the churches. The letter to the Romans in the profoundest logic; those to the Corinthians were designed to rebuke certain prevalent sins and necessarily contain more or less censure; that to the Galatians rebukes a dangerous heresy which threatened the welfare of the Galatian churches; that to the Ephesians is a sublime unfolding of the mystery of God in reference to the Gentiles, but this letter is the outpouring of the love of the

founder of the Philippian Church towards one of the most affectionate, faithful and self-forgetting of all congregations which he had planted. It has been remarked that there is no breath of censure for the Philippian saints, except in so far as it is implied in the tender exhortation to Euodias and Syntyche found in Php. 4:2. (Johnson 208-209)

- D. The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians for several reasons.
1. He wrote to express thanks for their assistance to him.
 2. Paul also desired to make them aware of his current circumstances.
 3. In addition, the apostle took opportunity in the epistle to give the Philippians some instruction.
- E. The tenor of the Philippian epistle is one of commendation instead of condemnation.
1. Philippians is a letter of joy, rejoicing, love and encouragement.
 2. The letter exhibits the mutual devotion of Paul to the Philippian church and that congregation's devotion to the beloved apostle.

Conclusion:

1. The study of Philippians is spiritually rewarding, enriching and uplifting.
2. Bible history and Bible geography complement each other when studying any Bible book, including Philippians.
3. The Book of Philippians was written by a real mortal (nevertheless, inspired) to a real congregation in a real city affected by a society much like our own today.
4. The Philippian church was successful, enjoyed the praise of the apostle Paul and the good favor of God.
5. Christians and congregations today can aspire to the same successes, joy and divine approval.

Invitation:

1. Every Christian can do his or her part to make the Lord's church like the Philippian church in the ways in which it enjoyed the good favor of God, with attendant joys on earth and in heaven to come.
2. The non-Christian can be a part of the success story of our Lord's church by becoming a Christian, after which Jesus will add you to his church, Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
3. Erring Christians can contribute again to the success of the Lord's

church by acknowledging sin and seeking God's forgiveness, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

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Salutation, Thanksgiving and Prayer

Philippians 1:1-11

Thesis: Exposition

Introduction:

1. Philippians is a different kind of an epistle from other New Testament epistles.
2. The apostle Paul was a real man who wrote a real letter to a real congregation of the churches of Christ in a real city.
3. We can glean from the relationship sustained between the apostle and the Philippian church.

Body:

I. Philippians opens with a salutation, 1-2.

- A. First, Paul introduces himself, much like the signature or letterhead on a contemporary letter; it was inconvenient to identify the writer only at the end of a scroll.
 1. The apostle Paul needs no introduction to Bible students, and he needed no introduction to the Philippian church he had begun.
 2. Hence, Paul did not assert his apostleship in Philippians as well as 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Philemon, but he did assert his apostleship in letters of particular doctrinal importance and condemnation such as Romans and 1 & 2 Corinthians.
- B. Next, Timothy's name appears.
 1. Timothy is not a co-author of Philippians with Paul.
 2. Timothy is a traveling companion and fellow laborer with Paul, Phil. 2:19.
 3. He joined Paul in the Second Missionary Journey, Acts 16:1-3.
- C. Paul referred to himself and Timothy as "servants."
 1. This was equivalent to depicting them as bondservants or slaves to Jesus Christ.
 2. However, they were servants of Christ voluntarily, but no less completely at the disposal of our Lord.
- D. Paul called the Christians at Philippi "saints."
 1. Unlike a Catholic doctrine respecting saints, biblically the words "saints" and "Christians" are synonyms.

2. The Greek word for “saint” means to be holy or sanctified and set apart for God.
- E. The epistle makes special mention of the “bishops and deacons.”
1. The epistle was addressed equally to the whole congregation with respectful mention of the congregation’s leaders and special servants.
 2. The epistle was the property of the whole church, but Paul acknowledged the divine plan for congregational leadership—a plurality of elders.
- F. Paul wished God’s grace and peace upon the church.
1. Grace means God’s unmerited favor.
 2. Peace is the absence of trouble and a sense of well being.
 3. Grace and peace were typical greetings.

II. Salutation is followed by thanksgiving and prayer, 3-11.

- A. Verse 3 is a remarkable statement considering the circumstances of that church’s beginning.
1. In spite of sever physical abuse he suffered while at Philippi, Paul had a fond memory of the Philippian church.
 2. The apostle Paul often prayed for the saints and often told them so, Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:3; Philemon 14.
- B. Verse 4 continues to reflect Paul’s prayer for the Philippian church.
1. The word “always” indicates the frequency with which Paul prayed for them.
 2. Whereas prayers for other congregations may not have been with joy, Paul’s prayers respecting the Philippian Christians was always with joy.
 3. Joy is a keyword in Philippians: joy in prayer, 1:4; joy of faith, 1:25; joy of seeing Christians in fellowship together, 2:2; joy of suffering for Jesus Christ, 2:17; joy of news of a loved one, 2:28; joy of Christian hospitality, 2:29; joy of the man who has been baptized into Jesus Christ, 3:1; 4:1; joy of the man who has won one soul for Jesus Christ, 4:1; joy inherent in every gift, 4:10.
 4. The word “all” respecting Paul’s prayers for the

- Philippians represents his affection for every member of the congregation.
- C. Verse 5 contains Paul's recognition and expression of appreciation for the Philippian church participating with Paul in the work of the Gospel.
 - 1. The word "fellowship" means participation, sharing, partnership, communion and may include but is not limited to financial contribution.
 - 2. The words "from the first day until now" seem to refer to Paul's first acquaintance with to his then present imprisonment.
 - D. Verse 6 expresses Paul's confidence that the Philippian church will continue to be a model church.
 - 1. Paul spoke of God having begun a good work in them by converting them (with the Gospel through the efforts of Paul).
 - 2. The apostle gave God the credit for the labors that Paul performed.
 - 3. Sometimes, the Calvinistic doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints is erroneously taught from this verse, but apostasy is possible, 1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Pet. 2:20-22.
 - 4. The "day of Jesus Christ" refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ when all will be judged, 2 Cor. 5:10.
 - 5. Overall, verse 6 also notes Paul's confidence in God.
 - E. Verse 7 expresses confidence in the Philippian church and acknowledges their part in Paul's ministry.
 - 1. Paul is affectionately desirous for the Philippian church to endure unto the end.
 - 2. Paul's interest in the Philippian church was not diminished despite his imprisonment.
 - 3. Through the moral and physical (financial) support of the Philippian church, Paul was enabled to continue his labors in the Gospel from prison.
 - 4. Therefore, the Philippian church was a part of the successes with the Gospel that the apostle enjoyed.
 - 5. A soul who contributes to the godliness and faithfulness of a congregation shares in the successes in the Gospel of that congregation, even if individual souls within the congregation are not personally responsible for converting souls.

- F. Verse 8 evidences the deep, emotional attachment that Paul felt for the Philippian Christians.
 - 1. Paul called on God as his witness of the unbounded, deep love Paul felt for the Philippian Christians.
 - 2. The Philippian church was in the inner circle of the affection of Paul, much like Jesus Christ had a special affection for Peter, James and John among the other disciples.
 - 3. Reference to “bowels” would be equivalent today to saying I love you from the bottom of my heart.
- G. Verse 9 contains Paul’s well wishes toward the Philippian church for the future.
 - 1. Paul revealed the substance of his prayers for the Philippian Christians—their love would abound, resulting in greater knowledge and discernment.
 - 2. Paul commended the love already evident in the Philippian church and wished for it to increase even more, John 13:34-35.
 - 3. In addition, love keeps one in compliance with the will of God, John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-4.
- H. In verse 10, the apostle encourages the Philippian church not to veer from the godly path on which it was already.
 - 1. Paul encouraged the brethren to always have God’s viewpoint toward what is right, Heb. 5:14.
 - 2. Paul commended the sincerity of the Philippian Christians and urged them to continue to practice Christianity in accordance with the will of God and with sincerity.
 - 3. The words “without offence” include being careful neither to sin nor cause others to stumble in sin.
- I. Verse 11 instructs the Philippians to be workers for God always, whereby God is glorified.
 - 1. The words “being filled with fruits of righteousness” compare to being fruitful Christians and being zealous of good works, John 15:1-6; Titus 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:58.
 - 2. We can also compare “fruits of righteousness” with the “fruits of the Spirit,” Gal. 5:22-23.
 - 3. God is not pleased with a mere profession of faith, but he demands appropriate conduct in life and service, Jam. 2:14-26; 4:7.

Conclusion:

1. The apostle Paul had an unbounded love for the Philippian church, which was greeted with an unbounded love toward him from the Philippian church as well.
2. The Philippian church was a model church in love as well as other aspects of Christianity.
3. The Philippian church was a helper in the Gospel of Christ through its moral and physical support of the apostle.
4. Both Paul and the Philippian church derived great joy from each other, had great joy respecting this life and anticipated immeasurable joy in the heavenly hereafter.

Invitation:

1. Each of us should strive to have Christian joy now and anticipate heavenly joy hereafter.
2. One can begin this journey of joy by becoming a Christian, Mark 16:16.
3. An erring child of God can resume this journey of joy by repenting of sin and praying for forgiveness, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

Studies in Philippians

Philippians 1:12-30

Thesis: Exposition

Introduction:

1. Philippians 1:12-30 reflects the human side of a man confronted with an uncertain future.
2. Overshadowing this, though, is the remarkable character of a faithful child of God faced with personal peril.
3. The apostle Paul was not the least swayed by impending danger from his allegiance to Jesus Christ.
4. The courage of the apostle Paul encouraged other Christians, especially those who might also experience severe persecution or death for being Christians, Rev. 2:10.

Body:

- I. **In verse 12, Paul turns his attention to himself to explain his then current circumstances and encourage the brethren.**
 - A. “The things which happened unto me.”
 1. When Governor Festus was minded to turn Paul over to the Jews, the apostle had to appeal to the judgment seat of Caesar, Acts 25:10-11.
 2. For two years, Paul remained a prisoner in Rome, in his own rented house but bound with a chain to a soldier, Acts 28:16, 20, 30.
 3. The Philippian Christians were already well aware of the abuse that Paul suffered in Philippi, Acts 16:22-24.
 4. In addition, Paul suffered much other abuse for the cause of Christ, 2 Cor. 11:24-28.
 - B. “Have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.”
 1. The specific ‘thing’ that “happened” to the apostle Paul about which he was writing was his imprisonment in Rome.
 2. Paul’s imprisonment provided an otherwise impossible opportunity to preach the Gospel.
 3. “Furtherance of the gospel” is the usual, calculated result of imprisonment.
 4. In Paul’s case, there was no reason to feel shame for his imprisonment; it was only an opportunity, 1 Pet.

4:16.

5. The difference between the jailing of Paul and the jailing of others is that Paul had committed no crime.

II. Verse 13 concerns the “bonds” or chains of Paul, Jude 6.

- A. “My bonds in Christ are manifest.”
 1. The general public and Paul’s captors were aware that Paul’s imprisonment was not because of either political or criminal reasons.
 2. It was commonly know that the apostle Paul was imprisoned for his religious convictions.
 3. Paul was jailed because he was “in Christ”!
- B. “In all the palace.”
 1. The ASV reads “throughout the whole praetorian guard,” the 1,000 Roman soldiers who served as bodyguards to the Emperor.
 2. Paul’s captors were aware of the basis of his captivity.
 3. Some of Caesar’s household were converted as a result of Paul’s bonds in Christ being manifested, Phil. 4:22.
- C. “And in all other places.”
 1. The public trials through which Paul went made the circumstances of his trials and subsequent imprisonment a matter of public knowledge.
 2. The apostle seized the trials as further opportunities to preach the Gospel of Christ, Acts 22-26.
 3. The influence of the apostle Paul was little hindered by his imprisonment.

III. Paul’s courage in spite of his imprisonment was contagious among other Christians.

- A. “Many of the brethren in the Lord.”
 1. Apparently, there were many Christians in Rome.
 2. Paul distinguishes between Jewish brethren and Christians by calling them “brethren in the Lord,” referring to Jesus Christ.
- B. “Waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”
 1. Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel though a captive of Rome greatly encouraged the church to boldly preach the Gospel.
 2. It appears that the church at Rome presumed the tolerance extended by the Roman government toward

Paul would extend likewise toward it.

IV. Verses 15-16 address two different reasons for which different ones preached the Gospel.

- A. Paul does not disclose the identity of or details concerning envious preachers who preach for the wrong reasons.
 - 1. These preachers may have been Judaizing teachers, who though they preached Christ objected to the apostle Paul preaching Gospel to the Gentiles without trying first to convert them to Judaism.
 - 2. At any rate, the preaching was substantially correct though their motives were impure.
 - 3. These preachers hoped to preach boldly enough to encourage Roman retaliation against the captive apostle Paul.

V. In verse 17, Paul makes the courageous statement, “I am set for the defence of the gospel.”

- A. Other preachers with pure motives also preached the Gospel boldly in imitation of the boldness of the apostle Paul.
 - 1. The love for Paul and the Gospel they preached is the highest form of love—agape.
 - 2. Even if their boldness would result in greater hardship on the apostle, still the motivation for their preaching (opposed to Judaizing teachers) was love.
- B. Paul’s statement, “I am set for the defence of the gospel,” is one of the most outstanding remarks by a man of faith recorded anywhere in the Bible.
 - 1. Paul’s allegiance to Jesus Christ was unwavering.
 - 2. “Defence” means to give an “answer,” as the same Greek word is translated in 1 Pet. 3:15.

VI. The apostle Paul’s concern was greater for the preaching of the Gospel than his concern for himself.

- A. “Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein rejoice, yea, ad will rejoice.”
 - 1. The Lord’s church and the preaching of the Gospel are bigger and more important than individuals.
 - 2. Though the Gospel was preached by some with insincere motives, Paul, nevertheless, rejoiced because the Gospel was being preached.
 - 3. In spite of the fact that some brethren meant to do

harm Paul by their bold preaching, Paul was simply happy that the Gospel was being preached.

- B. The apostle was not rejoicing that a partial or new Gospel was being preached.
 - 1. Paul would not endorse a half-truth or a perverted truth, Gal. 1:6-9.
 - 2. The apostle John directed Christians to test preachers with the Word of God to discern between true and false teachers, 1 John 4:1.
 - 3. The apostle Paul instructed the Christians at Rome to identify false teachers and avoid them, Rom. 16:17-18.
 - 4. Therefore, Philippians does not validate the errors of denominationalism.

VII. Verse 19 puzzles commentators as to whether Paul was referring to his release from prison or to his eternal salvation.

- A. Commentators who believe Paul referred to his deliverance from imprisonment cite 2 Cor. 1:10-11.
 - 1. The context of 2 Cor. 1:3-13 and Phil. refer to different occasions of suffering that the apostle experienced while and because of his preaching the Gospel of Christ.
 - 2. Yet, because both contexts address Christian suffering for the cause of Christ, Christians in every generation can learn how they ought to respond to such suffering, 1 Pet. 4:16.
- B. Commentators who believe Paul referred to his ultimate salvation resulting from patient suffering also make some valid points.
 - 1. The apostle was uncertain respecting the outcome of his trial and imprisonment.
 - 2. In the following verses, the apostle Paul exhibited more interest in obtaining eternal salvation than obtaining his freedom from imprisonment.

VIII. In verse 20, the apostle demonstrated a keen interest in glorifying Jesus Christ, whether that occurred in his life or in his death.

- A. “Earnest expectation and my hope.”
 - 1. This statement was not primarily about his safety, release from imprisonment or being spared from death.
 - 2. Paul’s greatest concern pertained to the cause of the

Gospel of Christ.

- B. “That in nothing I shall be ashamed.”
 - 1. As a faithful Christian, Paul realized that there was no shame in either living or dying for Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Shame could only result if Paul or other Christians did not remain faithful and active servants for Jesus Christ.
- C. “With all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body.”
 - 1. Paul expressed a desire to maintain his boldness respecting the Gospel even in the face of judicial judgment.
 - 2. If necessary, he hoped to be faithful even if his faithfulness was rewarded with death, Rev. 2:10.
 - 3. Paul desired to live the words of Jesus I Matt. 10:28.
 - 4. Paul hoped to glorify Jesus Christ irrespective of the circumstances he might face.
- D. “Whether it be life or death.”
 - 1. Paul’s life or death was of little concern to him compared to his earnest concern how he would conduct himself as a Christian if either his life was spared or if he was condemned to die.
 - 2. Following verses indicate that Paul was uncertain whether to prefer life or death.

IX. Verse 21 reveals that the apostle saw benefits to either life or death as a faithful child of God.

- A. “To live is Christ.”
 - 1. Paul’s only reason to live was to serve Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The material things in this life were not the primary concern for living life as far as the apostle Paul was concerned.
 - 3. Paul did not greedily grasp for every opportunity to prolong his life in fear of death.
 - 4. By contemporary standards, the apostle Paul was fanatical about his religion.
- B. “To die is gain.”
 - 1. Paul longed to be with Jesus Christ in glory.
 - 2. The apostle had not tired of life or become suicidal.
 - 3. J.W. Shepherd says about this half of the verse: “Death is a new stage of union with Christ” (Lipscomb 169).
 - 4. Paul penned similar words elsewhere to what he wrote

to here to the Philippians, 2 Cor. 5:6-9.

X. In verse 22, Paul exhibits the indecision characteristic of a zealous child of God who has full confidence in an eternity with God in heaven.

- A. "But if I live in the flesh."
 - 1. Paul was confident that if his life were taken away he would still live spiritually.
 - 2. If Paul lived, he would continue to serve Jesus Christ as he had since his conversion.
- B. "Yet what I shall choose I now not."
 - 1. Paul could not decide to prefer life or death were the choices his to make.
 - 2. The choices were not Paul's to make, and each child of God must serve Jesus as long as he lives.
 - 3. We learn from Paul's example that no faithful Christian should dread death.
 - 4. The dead are blessed if they die in the Lord, Rev. 14:13.

XI. In verse 23, Paul contrasts Christian duty with Christian reward.

- A. "For I am in a strait betwixt two."
 - 1. Paul had anxious moments of indecision respecting what he should desire for his immediate future.
 - 2. Paul was not simply willing to die if necessary, but he desired to be with Jesus Christ.
 - 3. Paul's sense of Christian duty, though, prompted him to consider the benefit of continuing to live on earth.
- B. "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."
 - 1. For any faithful child of God, death to be with Jesus Christ is a definite gain—personally.
 - 2. The apostle Paul knew nothing of either soul sleeping or annihilation at death.

XII. In verse 24, Paul's genuine concern for fellow Christians is apparent.

- A. "Nevertheless"
 - 1. Paul weighed in his mind both of the perspectives of life and death.
 - 2. The apostle considers the benefit of continued life.
- B. "To abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

1. Paul did not have an inflated conception of his own worth to the church.
2. As an apostle, Paul was commissioned by Jesus Christ until such time as Paul fulfilled the mission to which Jesus assigned him.
3. Paul was fully aware of his responsibility to various congregations of the Lord's church, 2 Cor. 11:28.

XIII. In verse 25, Paul's sense of Christian duty overshadows the desire of rest from abuse and heavenly reward.

- A. The apostle reasoned that it was needful for him to continue serving the infant, first century church.
- B. Therefore, Paul surmised that he would be set free from his then current imprisonment.
- C. Evidently, Paul was not speaking prophetically respecting his future, but with anticipation of continuing an apostolic mission not yet completed.

XIV. In verse 26, the apostle knows that faithful Christians, especially the Philippians who he converted with the Gospel, will rejoice if he is freed from prison.

- A. Paul's release from prison would result in a double joy among the Philippian Christians.
 1. The release of Paul from prison would bring joy to the Philippian Christians.
 2. Paul's subsequent return to visit the Philippian Christians would be an added joy.
- B. This double joy was contingent on Paul's release from Roman confinement.
 1. Paul was released from this imprisonment.
 2. However, it is unknown whether the apostle was afforded an opportunity to visit the Philippian church after his release.

XV. In verse 27, Paul encourages the Philippian brethren to continue their faithfulness to God.

- A. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."
 1. The apostle Paul often encourages Christians to be faithful servants of Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 15:58.
 2. Exhortations to be faithful would be meaningless wastes of time and parchment if it were not possible for Christians to fall so as to be lost, Acts 8:22; 1 Cor.

10:12; Rev. 2:10; 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

- B. “Whether I come and see you, or else be absent.”
 - 1. The apostle desires the Philippian Christians to practice godly living.
 - 2. Whether Paul lives or dies should have no affect on the Philippians’ Christian deportment.
 - 3. Like his admonition to the Corinthian Christians, Paul desired the Philippian Christians to walk by faith irrespective of Paul’s presence with them, 2 Cor. 5:7.
- C. “That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”
 - 1. The apostle Paul frequently encouraged Christians to seek Christian unity, Eph. 4:1-6.
 - 2. The apostle Paul rebuked the Corinthian Christians for internal division, 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

XVI. In verse 28, the apostle further encouraged the Christians at Philippi to be courageous in the face of opposition.

- A. “And in nothing terrified by your adversaries.”
 - 1. Evidently, the Philippian church was confronted with some type of undisclosed persecution.
 - 2. The boldness of the apostle Paul in the face of adversity bolsters the Philippian Christians as they face similar adversity for the cause of Christ.
 - 3. The apostle counseled Christians not to be terrified of what unbelievers may do to them, Matt. 10:28; 2 Tim. 3:12.
- B. “Which is to them an evident token of perdition.”
 - 1. The boldness of Christians in the face of persecution is misread by unbelievers as evidence of evil, 1 Pet. 4:12-16.
 - 2. Boldness among Christians is evident of their unfailing allegiance to Jesus Christ, Acts 4:13.
- C. “But to you of salvation, and that of God.”
 - 1. Boldness among Christians in the face of persecution is praiseworthy.
 - 2. Renouncing one’s allegiance to Jesus Christ in the face of persecution deserves condemnation.
 - 3. Faithfulness in the face of persecution will result in salvation, Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10.

XVII. In verse 29, Paul declares that suffering for Jesus Christ is a privilege.

- A. Strangely, the apostles rejoiced after suffering imprisonment, threats and beating from the enemies of Jesus Christ, Acts 5:41.
- B. The apostle Peter declared that Christians should rejoice when they suffer of Christ, 1 Pet. 3:14.
- C. The apostle Paul elsewhere taught that Christians who suffer for Christ shall reign with Christ, 2 Tim. 2:12.

XVIII. In verse 30, the Philippian Christians were experiencing suffering for the cause of Christ similar to what they witnessed Paul and Silas experience near the time of the beginning of the church at Philippi.

- A. “Having the same conflict which ye saw in me.”
 - 1. Acts 16 records the persecutions exacted upon Paul and Silas, of which the Philippian Christians were eyewitnesses.
 - 2. The Philippian Christians evidently suffered some of the same abuse for the cause of Christ.
- B. “And now hear to be in me.”
 - 1. Apparently, some of the Christians at Philippi were also imprisoned for their religious faith.
 - 2. Jesus Christ left the supreme example of suffering, 1 Pet. 2:21-23.

Conclusion:

- 1. Paul and the Philippian Christians were paying the cost of discipleship.
 - a. Each accountable soul must assess the cost of discipleship before deciding to become a Christian, Luke 14:28-33.
 - b. The cost in human suffering may vary from generation to generation and from locality to locality.
- 2. Christian service is obligatory upon every child of God, irrespective of the costs in human suffering.
 - a. Suffering for Jesus Christ will be richly rewarded, Rev. 2:10.
 - b. Unprofitable servants will be cast out into outer darkness, Matt. 25:30.

Invitation:

- 1. The apostle Paul is our worthy example to help us follow the Christ, 1 Cor. 11:1.
- 2. Paul’s example for salvation can lead souls to salvation today, Acts

22:16.

3. Paul's letter to the Christians at Philippi can encourage Christians today to maintain their faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

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Studies in Philippians

Philippians 2:1-11

Thesis: Exposition

Introduction:

1. In verses 1-11, the apostle Paul exhorts the Philippians to imitate the humility of Jesus Christ, which will lead to their exaltation.
2. In verses 12-18, Paul encourages Christians to model obedience, which leads to salvation and to the joy of Paul.
3. In verses 19-24, Paul expresses his intention to send Timothy to the Philippians and his hope to come himself also.
4. In verses 25-30, Paul wrote about Epaphroditus, another faithful servant about whom the Philippians had been especially concerned.

Body:

I. Verses 1-2.

A. "If"

1. Sometimes the word "if" is used to signal conditional circumstances.
2. Sometimes the word "if" is used to express a measure of doubt.
3. Here, "if" is used in a rhetorical sense to emphasize some of the key qualities of true Christianity.

B. "Consolation in Christ."

1. Paul affirms that there is "consolation in Christ."
2. Consolation means "comfort," so there is comfort in Jesus Christ.

C. "Comfort of love."

1. Immediately Paul affirms that comfort is in love, too.
2. The apostle also apprised Christians at Corinth about comfort of divine origin, 2 Cor. 1:3-7.

D. "Fellowship of the Spirit"

1. Now the apostle refers to the unity Christians enjoy with each other.
2. The word "fellowship" means partnership and sharing.
3. This fellowship evidences itself in a special relationship between Christians, Rom. 12:10.

E. "Bowels and mercies."

1. The ASV has in place of “bowels and mercies” the words “tender mercies and compassions.”
 2. Once more, we have a repetition of the love characteristic of true Christianity.
- F. “Fulfill ye my joy”
1. It was great joy for Paul when Christians lived as Christians were supposed to live.
 2. Christianity demands a particular deportment from Christians, which contrasts with their former ways and non-Christians.
 3. The Christian’s manner of life is supposed to be “worthy of the Gospel,” Phil. 1:27.
- G. “That ye be likeminded...being of one accord, of one mind.”
1. Paul exhorted the Philippian Christians to live peacefully together in unity.
 2. He encouraged them not to have a loose union or confederation, but unity of purpose, doctrine, heart and general deportment before fellow man and God.
 3. Compare 1 Corinthians 1:10 and 2 Corinthians 13:11.
- H. “Having the same love.”
1. Love is a primary aspect of Christianity and is emphasized repeatedly throughout the New Testament and in these verses, John 13:34-35.
 2. Love helps make Christians one people serving one God.

II. Verse 3.

- A. “Let nothing be done through strife.”
1. Strife is the opposite of the love, fellowship and unity emphasized in the preceding two verses.
 2. “Strife” refers to “factions.”
 3. Rivalry between Christians is forbidden.
- B. “Vainglory.”
1. “Vainglory” means “empty glorying or self-conceit.”
 2. Vainglory is an unchristian motive that is contrary to love and causes strife among Christians.
- C. “But in lowliness of mind let each esteem each other better than themselves.”
1. Christians are supposed to possess humility.
 2. Our Lord included the subject of humility in his famous Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:3.

3. Jesus taught humility with a parable about a wedding feast, Luke 14:7-11.
4. The apostle Peter, likewise, taught Christians to seek humility in their lives, 1 Pet. 5:6.

III. In verse 4, Paul taught that Christian responsibility extends to others besides the Christian.

- A. When Christianity is personified in the lives of Christians, Christians seek the good of others.
 1. Christians share the emotions of fellow Christians, Rom. 12:15.
 2. Christians are non-pretentious so they can identify with all men, 1 Cor. 9:22.
 3. Christians develop a love for their fellow man that rivals their love for themselves, Matt. 22:39.
- B. Christians cannot be disinterested in their fellow men.
 1. Christians cannot be hermits, islands to themselves or totally “private” people.
 2. Christians must have a genuine concern for other people and especially other Christians.
 3. No soul goes to heaven alone or without having influenced other souls.

IV. In verse 5 and through verse 11, Paul holds up Jesus Christ as the supreme example for Christians to follow.

- A. The disposition of Jesus Christ should be the disposition of every child of God.
 1. As in the previous chapter, Christians should view suffering the same way Jesus viewed his suffering, Luke 22:42; 1 Pet. 2:21-23.
 2. Christians also should adopt the view of Jesus Christ about love, unity, humility, mercy, obedience, etc.
- B. Jesus Christ is the perfect example for Christians to imitate, 1 John 2:6.
 1. Paul imitated Jesus Christ and instructed others to imitate him to the extent he imitated Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 11:1.
 2. The world (and other Christians) should be able to see Jesus Christ in the lives we live.

V. Verse 6 exalts our Lord to an equality with the other persons of the Godhead.

- A. There is no difference between the degree of Deity possessed

by any to the members of the Godhead, John 1:1-3.

- B. The ASV reads: “Who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.”
 - 1. Jesus did not covet his position as Deity in heaven to the extent that he would not leave all of that to be man’s Redeemer.
 - 2. Jesus was willing to leave glory and suffer a vicarious death on the cross for sinful mankind.

VI. Verse 7 refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

- A. This necessarily involved the Son of God coming to earth in the humbled form of a man—the creation instead of the Creator, John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; 8:3; Heb. 2:14, 17.
 - 1. Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the willingness of the Son of God to leave heaven on behalf of humanity, 2 Cor. 8:9.
 - 2. Paul told the Galatians and the Ephesians that the coming of the Son of God was a longtime plan of God, Gal. 4:4; Eph. 3:3-11; Titus 1:2-3.
- B. This emptying of himself (ASV) involved setting aside the glory due him as God (Deity).
 - 1. As such, Jesus came to serve mankind, not to be served while on earth, Matt. 20:28; Luke 22:27.
 - 2. Likewise, Christians must content themselves to be servants of God, Col. 3:24; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 9:14; 12:28.

VII. Verse 8 reveals that the reason for which Jesus Christ came to earth as a human being was to die on the cross—a sinless sacrifice to take away sins, 2 Cor. 5:21.

- A. Only a Divine Being could accept death obediently since humans must accept it as the natural course of existence, Heb. 9:27.
- B. Humbleness and obedience of the Son of God, which resulted in his death on the cross, made him our Savior, Heb. 5:8-9.
- C. The humbleness and obedience of Jesus Christ is a fitting example for every child of God to demonstrate.

VIII. Verse 9 refers to the exaltation of Jesus Christ by his resurrection and Ascension back to his former glory plus some.

- A. The glorification of Jesus Christ after his resurrection and

Ascension is key to his status as Savior, Eph. 1:20-23.

- B. Jesus Christ is now King of kings, Rev. 17:14; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

IX. Verses 10-11 portray Jesus Christ as in a class of his own and unequalled.

- A. "At the name of Jesus."
 - 1. The ASV reads "in the name of Jesus"; the Greek *en* for "in" appears here.
 - 2. Some people have mistakenly practice genuflecting in response to the word "at" in this verse.
 - 3. "In the name of Jesus" is equivalent to by the authority of Jesus or in recognition of the authority of Jesus.
- B. "Every knee should bow."
 - 1. Bending the knee before Jesus symbolizes the submission of the lesser to the greater.
 - 2. Paul wrote to the Roman Christians also about bending the knee to Jesus, Rom. 14:11; Psa. 72:11; Isa. 45:23.
 - 3. For many in the last day before the Judgment throne of Jesus the bending of the knee and acknowledgement of Jesus Christ will be unwilling, reluctant and unavoidable.
- C. "Of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."
 - 1. Some believe that angels, mankind and Satan's host are intended by the reference.
 - 2. In any case, the universal submission to Jesus Christ is certain, 1 Cor. 15:24-28.
- D. "And every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord."
 - 1. Those who voluntarily confess the name of Jesus Christ and follow through in their obedience to the Gospel of Christ will be saved, Rom. 10:9-10; 1:16.
 - 2. The apostle Peter and the Ethiopian treasurer are examples of confessing Jesus as Lord, Matt. 16:16; Acts 8:37.
 - 3. Jesus requires those who would be the children of God to confess Jesus' name before he will confess them to the Father, Matt. 10:32-33.
 - 4. Every tongue will (maybe reluctantly) confess Jesus as Lord, Rom. 14:11.

Conclusion:

1. Christians must act like Christians, Eph. 5:8.
2. Strife and arrogant pride have no place in true Christianity.
3. Jesus Christ should be the Christian's example in all things.
4. The name of Jesus Christ will be confessed by all men sooner or later.

Invitation:

1. It behooves all accountable souls to voluntarily confess Jesus (and all that is involved therein) while there is yet time.
2. The Ethiopian treasurer confessed Jesus to be the Son of God immediately before he was baptized and the 3,000 in Acts 2 were persuaded that Jesus is the Son of God preceding their baptism as well, Acts 2:36-38, 41; 8:35-38.
3. Even Christians must continue to confess Jesus to be the Son of God to have Jesus confess their names to the Father, Matt. 10:32-33.

Studies in Philippians

Philippians 2:12-30

Thesis: Exposition

Introduction:

1. In verses 12-18, Paul encourages Christians to practice obedience, which leads to salvation and brings joy to the apostle.
2. In verses 19-24, Paul addresses his intention to send Timothy to Philippi and further expresses his intention to visit, too.
3. In verses 25-30, Paul penned a paragraph about another faithful servant, Epaphroditus, about whom the Philippian Christians were especially concerned.

Body:

I. In verse 12, Paul writes about obedience and salvation.

- A. The word “wherefore” indicates that the apostle is about to present some logical conclusions based on what he has written already.
- B. When Paul writes “my beloved,” he demonstrates that he has the same degree of love for the Philippian Christians that they have for him.
- C. “As ye have always obeyed.”
 1. Paul had been an eyewitness to the obedience to the Gospel by the Philippian Christians.
 2. Jesus Christ is one’s supreme example of obedience, Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8-9.
 3. The Philippians had not been fickle in their obedience; they were constant in their obedience and unwavering.
- D. “Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.”
 1. The Philippian Christians were not like some employees who become lazy when the employer or supervisor is not around.
 2. The Christians at Philippi were dedicated, not merely interested in making a public show as though they were faithful Christians.
 3. Of course, Paul’s absence from visiting Philippi was involuntary, owing to his imprisonment in Rome.
- E. “Work out your own salvation.”

1. This phrase is one of several in the Bible that denies the false doctrine of “faith only,” Jam. 2:24.
 2. The Divine participation in salvation is not excluded in human redemption when mankind works out his own salvation; simply, man’s part is not excluded from his own redemption, Acts 2:40.
 3. However, working out one’s own salvation is not license to devise manmade schemes of redemption to replace God’s plan of redemption, Matt. 15:13; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19.
 4. Working out one’s salvation includes compliance with the Divine redemptive plan, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.
- F. “With fear and trembling.”
1. The Christian pursuit should not be undertaken lightly.
 2. Especially Christians need to exhibit reverence and awe of God, Heb. 12:28-29; Psa. 2:11.

II. In verse 13, Paul writes that God uses faithful Christians as instruments to perform his will on earth.

- A. Christians are coworkers with God, 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1.
- B. Faithful Christians are vessels or tools through which God works his works on earth today, 2 Tim. 2:21.

III. In verse 14, Paul writes that what a Christian is not is as important as what a Christian is.

- A. Christians are not supposed to be grumblers or complainers.
 1. Grumbling hindered the first century Jerusalem church and threatened it, Acts 6:1.
 2. Paul told the Corinthians that in the Old Testament, murmurers were punished with death, 1 Cor. 10:10.
- B. Christians are not supposed to even turn over evil thoughts in their minds, Jam. 2:4.
- C. Christian service should not be characterized by moaning, unwilling service, but Christians should be pleased to serve in whatever capacity they are needed.

IV. In verse 15, Paul contrasts dispositions not worthy of Christianity with Christian character.

- A. Paul describes Christianity negatively by citing what must not characterize faithful Christians.
 1. The faithful child of God must be “blameless,” i.e. not worthy of public rebuke, Luke 1:5-6.
 2. The faithful Christian must be “harmless” or innocent

- of crimes.
 - 3. The child of God must be “without rebuke” or unblemished.
 - B. Paul, though, characterizes the “nation” or generation (any generation) as being predominantly wicked.
 - 1. Paul writes that society is “crooked” or warped, Acts 2:40.
 - 2. He further pens that it is “perverse” or distorted.
 - C. From a positive analysis, Paul writes that faithful Christians are obvious non-conformists to the norm of wicked people comprising a wicked generation.
 - 1. He says that Christians “shine” or lighten the world in which they live, John 1:5.
 - 2. Christians do this by being “light” or illuminators, i.e. providing brilliancy in a sin darkened world, Rev. 21:10-11.
 - 3. Compare the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:14-16.
 - D. The contrast between Christian lives and non-Christian lives should be obvious, Eph. 5:8!
- V. In verse 16, the apostle Paul holds out the hope of heaven and eternal reward to Christians who faithfully and conscientiously practice Christianity.**
- A. “Holding forth the word of life.
 - 1. The “word of life” is equivalent to the Gospel, the Bible, the Scriptures or the “perfect law of liberty,” Jam. 1:25.
 - 2. Christians should hold forth or take hold of (retain or pay attention to) the word of life in conduct (Christian living), doctrine (Christian conviction) and practice (Christian service).
 - 3. There is no life for the child of God outside of the Word of God.
 - B. “That I may rejoice in the day of Christ.”
 - 1. Paul’s eternal reward was not wholly dependent upon the salvation of other person’s souls, 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Tim. 4:8.
 - 2. Paul, though, found a great sense of joy in the success of his labors in the Gospel—saving souls.
 - 3. The “day of Christ” refers to the Second Coming and Final Judgment.

- C. “That I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”
 - 1. The vain labor Paul mentions does not pertain to whether he personally will be saved.
 - 2. Rather, Paul would like to think that the great effort he expended and much suffering he endured was not wasted upon Christians who would not endure to the end.
 - 3. The reference to “run” is an allusion to the Christian race with which Paul sometimes illustrated the Christian pursuit, 1 Cor. 9:26.
 - 4. The word “laboured” means working to fatigue or hard work.

VI. In verse 17, Paul affirms that he is willing to lay down his life if necessary for the cause of Christ.

- A. Paul notes that he could more willingly lay down his life for the cause of Christ were he confident that those he was instrumental in saving through the Gospel continued to be faithful Christians.
- B. The “joy” he expresses is a calm happiness or contentment.
- C. The rejoicing with the Philippian Christians refers to glad congratulations on their initial salvation and continued Christian faithfulness.
- D. Two years of confinement in Rome and trial before Caesar had occurred, and Paul was awaiting the verdict, but ready to die if necessary for the cause of Christ, 2 Tim. 4:6.

VII. In verse 18, Paul writes that he knows the Philippian Christians share the same attitude about joyful service to God irrespective of earthly outcomes.

- A. Doubtless, the Philippian church would suffer bereavement were Paul to be executed, but the church possessed the same mind as Paul.
- B. Paul and the Philippians derived strength and encouragement from each other.
- C. Early Christians counted suffering for Jesus Christ when necessary as not something for which to be ashamed, but an honor, Acts 5:41; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:16.

VIII. In verses 19-24, Paul announces that he will send Timothy to them until Paul is able to go to them himself.

- A. Paul sent Timothy ahead of him to other congregations, 1 Thess. 3:2, 6; 1 Cor. 16:10.

- B. Paul praises the admirable characteristics of Timothy.
 1. Timothy's zeal was superior to the zeal of anyone else laboring with Paul at that time.
 2. Other Christians were not abased by Paul, but Timothy was recognized for superior achievement as a Christian minister.
 3. The sincerity of Timothy was unsurpassed except perhaps by Paul himself.
 4. Whereas others might seek their own advantage, Timothy would seek advantage for others, especially Christians.
 5. Timothy was Paul's son in the Gospel, not only because Paul converted Timothy, but also because they nurtured that relationship for each other, 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; cf. Titus 1:4.
- C. The timing of Timothy's coming to the Philippians would be after the verdict was known whether Paul would live or die.
 1. If Paul received a death sentence, Timothy could console the Philippians.
 2. Throughout the epistle, Paul evidences contradictory thoughts as to whether he would be freed or executed.
 3. Yet, in verse 24, Paul musters the courage to suppose that he also will visit the Philippians soon.

IX. In verses 25-30, Paul writes that he is sending Epaphroditus to the Philippians.

- A. Verse 25.
 1. Epaphroditus' name appears only in this epistle, though he is held in very high regard by the apostle Paul.
 2. Paul calls him a "brother" in Christ.
 3. He is Paul's "companion in labour, and fellowsoldier."
 4. The closeness of Epaphroditus to Paul was dangerous because Paul was awaiting a possible death sentence, and those associated with him closely could possibly suffer the same fate.
 5. The idea involved in the word "fellowsoldier" reminds the child of God about the constant, spiritual warfare that rages, 2 Tim. 2:3.
 6. Epaphroditus had carried support money from the Philippian church to Paul and remained with Paul.

- B. Verses 26-27.
 - 1. While away from Philippi, Epaphroditus became critically ill, causing much concern to Paul as well as the Philippians.
 - 2. Evidently, Epaphroditus recovered through non-miraculous means, as had some other faithful Christians, 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20.
 - 3. Mark 16:20 states the purpose of miracles, and miracle workers were not at liberty to use miracles outside the purpose for which miracles were to be performed.
- C. Verse 28.
 - 1. Paul sent Epaphroditus to the Philippians because Epaphroditus and the Philippian Christians greatly longed to see each other again.
 - 2. Paul was more concerned about the joy of Epaphroditus and the Philippian Christians than the usefulness of Epaphroditus with him.
- D. Verse 29.
 - 1. Paul anticipates the great joy both Epaphroditus and the Philippians will have upon the arrival of Epaphroditus.
 - 2. Paul instructs the church at Philippi to bestow special honor upon Epaphroditus for unselfish labor for the cause of Christ.
- E. Verse 30.
 - 1. Epaphroditus had rendered service to Paul on behalf of the church at Philippi since it was impossible for the entire church to do so.
 - 2. Epaphroditus risked his own life to serve the wishes of the church at Philippi and serve the apostle Paul.
 - 3. The dedication of Epaphroditus is evident in that he valued his own life little compared to serving Paul on behalf of the Philippian Christians.
 - 4. This degree of dedication is praiseworthy and should be ordinary among truly converted Christians.

Conclusion:

- 1. So far in the Epistle of Philippians, we have observed the model church at Philippi and several dedicated and zealous Christians in particular.
- 2. Jesus Christ is both the example for and the object of devoted

Christian service.

3. Paul and the Philippian Christians encouraged each other in the respective Christian service.
4. Paul, the Philippian church and especially Jesus Christ provide Christians today ample encouragement to be faithful, zealous children of God, who derive great joy from serving God irrespective of earthly disappointments.

Invitation:

1. We like the Philippians can rely on Jesus Christ for present joy and eternal joy that lies ahead.
2. Joy begins with the forgiveness of one's sins, Mark 16:16.
3. Joy is renewed when the erring child of God repents of sins and prays for forgiveness, Acts 8:22.

Studies in Philippians

Philippians 4:1-11

Thesis: Exposition.

Song: *True Hearted, Whole Hearted*

Introduction:

1. Verses 1-3 contain warnings about false teachers, especially Judaizing teachers.
2. Verses 4-11 emphasize that salvation is only attainable in Jesus Christ.
3. Verses 12-17 encourage Christians to consciously strive toward the Christian goal.
4. Verses 18-19 warn about enemies of the cross.
5. Verses 20-21 present worthy motives to live Christianity.

Body:

I. Warnings, verses 1-3.

A. Verse 1.

1. “My brethren” refers to Christians, and it includes only those in Jesus Christ who are faithful, but it excludes everyone else.
2. The words “rejoice in the Lord” announce that there is a joy that only faithful children of God can have, and which Christians ought to exhibit.
3. The words “to write the same things to you...” either indicate that the apostle was reminding the Philippian Christians of what he previously presented to them orally, or what he penned to them was the same Gospel message he penned (and preached) everywhere, 2 Cor. 13:2; Gal. 5:21; Phil. 3:18; 1 Thess. 3:4; 2 Thess. 2:5; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17.

B. Verse 2.

1. “Beware of dogs” is a warning respecting vicious false teachers who in verse 18 are called “enemies of the cross,” cf. Matt. 7:6; Deut. 23:18; Psa. 22:16; Rev. 22:15.
2. “Evil workers” actively rather than passively injure fellow Christians with false teaching.
3. The words “beware of the concision” describe the false

teachers as cutting down or mutilating with their words, Gal. 1:6-9.

C. Verse 3.

1. “For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit” distinguishes the true children of God under Christianity as not necessarily Jewish ancestrally but children of God by the Gospel irrespective of one’s race or ethnicity, Rom. 9:6, 8; Col. 2:11.
2. “Rejoice in confidence and have no confidence in the flesh” especially distinguishes between Judaizing doctrines (highlighting circumcision) and appealing rather to Jesus Christ through the New Testament, Gal. 5:1-8.

II. Material gain is useless in obtaining salvation, verses 4-11.

A. Verse 4.

1. The apostle Paul discredited all the temporal things to which people sometimes appeal as unable to procure salvation.
2. Paul had these advantages and spoke as one who was well aware of temporal blessings, but equally aware that they do not lead to salvation.

B. Verse 5.

1. The phrase “circumcised the eighth day” indicates that Paul was a Jew instead of a Gentile, Edomite or proselyte, Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3; Luke 1:59.
2. “Of the stock of Israel” means that Paul was a descendant of Jacob rather than a proselyte or a descendant of a proselyte.
3. “Of the tribe of Benjamin” further attests to Paul’s Jewish ancestry and carries the esteem associated with Israel’s first king Saul, who came from the tribe of Benjamin.
4. The words “Hebrews of Hebrews” attests to the pure Jewish lineage of Paul, without admixture of Gentile ancestors between Jacob and himself.
5. The phrase “as touching the law a Pharisee” refers to one of the strictest sects of Judaism, Acts 22:3; 26:5.

C. Verse 6.

1. The phrase “concerning zeal, persecuting the church” represents Paul’s former life were he manifested a

radical form of Judaism by which Christians were arrested, imprisoned or murdered, Acts 26:10; 1 Tim. 1:12-14.

2. “Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” means that Paul had not been worthy of public rebuke and that he had always obeyed Jewish ceremonial laws.
3. If salvation were attainable based on one’s ancestry or religious fervor, Paul would have been saved without the Gospel, but ancestry and religious fervor alone do not save souls.

D. Verse 7.

1. The apostle had little regard for those things in which he formerly trusted before becoming a Christian, e.g. ancestry, education, prosperity, etc.
2. He realized that none of those things contributed to one’s salvation.
3. The difference in attitude has to do with the phrase “for Christ.”

E. Verse 8.

1. “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss” acknowledges Paul’s discounting of family and national prestige in favor of being a Christian, trusting in Jesus and his Gospel.
2. “For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” means that the value and preciousness of a New Testament covenant relationship with Jesus Christ far outweighs all earth’s wealth, honors and delights, Eph. 3:19.
3. The phrase “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” means that Paul voluntarily laid aside his confidence in worldly and material matters (as though they were refuse or garbage) in favor of serving Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 11:24-28.

F. Verse 9.

1. “And be found in him” compares to other occasions of the words “in him,” “in Christ” and “in the Lord” that appear about 150 times in the New Testament, Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3.

2. In the phrase “not having mine own righteousness which is of the law,” the apostle declares that he does not rely any longer on either the Old Testament or his goodness for his salvation, Col. 2:14.
3. “But that which is through the faith of Christ” means that Paul relies as a Christian on the system of faith, the Gospel or New Testament, John 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:7.
4. The phrase “the righteousness which is of God by faith” indicates that righteousness that humanity needs to pursue is not found in the Old Testament or through human devices, Rom. 10:1-3.

G. Verse 10.

1. The phrase “that I may know him” refers to the unique relationship or fellowship that only a Christian can enjoy with Jesus Christ, not only on earth but especially the co-habiting relationship anticipated by Christians in heaven.
2. “And the power of his resurrection” refers to not only one’s participation in the General Resurrection, but especially the resurrection to glory that only faithful Christians will experience; the prospect of this resurrection provides the child of God sufficient hope in this life to bear all.
3. “And the fellowship of his suffering” announces the willingness of the faithful child of God to suffer for the cause of Christ (if necessary), 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:12-16; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:21.
4. “Being made conformable to his death” declares the child of God’s willingness not only to suffer for the cause of Christ, but to die because of Christianity (if necessary), Rev. 2:10.

H. Verse 11.

1. The joyful resurrection of the dead is conditional on the life lived, Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-15.
2. One’s resurrection from the dead to spend forever in heaven is the basis of Christian hope, 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
3. Whereas all souls will be resurrected and appear in Final Judgment, these events are only favorable toward faithful children of God, John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15;

26:6-8.

Conclusion:

1. Christians must be careful not to be duped by Christians who teach falsely.
2. Christians must not trust in the comforts of this life or befriend this world, Jam. 4:4.
3. God defines righteousness and the child of God must consult God's Word and believe.
4. Nothing in this world compares or should be allowed equal consideration with serving God wholeheartedly, even if one should lose his life in the process.

Invitation:

1. Anyone willing to make that degree of commitment to God can become a Christian.
2. Faith, repentance, professing Jesus Christ and immersion in water for the remission of sins made Christians in the first century, and the same procedure makes Christians today, too, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:28; 8:37.
3. Likewise, erring Christians need to repent and pray for the forgiveness of their sins, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

Studies in Philippians

Philippians 3:12-21

Thesis: Exposition.

Introduction:

1. Verses 12-17 encourage Christians to consciously strive toward the Christian goal.
2. Verses 18-19 warn about enemies of the cross.
3. Verses 20-21 present worthy motives to live Christianity.

Body:

I. Verses 12-17 contain exhortations to actively pursue the Christian goal.

A. Verse 12.

1. The apostle Paul alludes to the Isthmian Games (forerunner of our Olympics) when referring to the Christian race, 1 Cor. 9:26.
2. Whereas Paul acknowledged he had received salvation from past sins, he distinguishes that from eternal salvation, Acts 22:16.
3. The sense of the verse is that Paul is striving to attain that which he has not yet attained and that which can only be received after the glorious resurrection of the just, 2 Tim. 4:8.
4. Paul was not a mission, primarily to the Gentiles, on which mission Jesus Christ had specifically assigned him, Rom. 15:16.

B. Verse 13.

1. "Forgetting those things which are behind" includes the material and prideful aspects of his former life mentioned in verses 4-8, past failures such as when he persecuted the church mentioned in verse 6 and past successes lest one prematurely rests from his labors, 1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14.
2. "Reaching forth to those things which are before" portrays Paul always looking ahead toward the finish line of the Christian goal, straining every muscle to that end like a courageous competitor in the Olympian Games.

- C. Verse 14.
1. “I press toward the mark for the prize” involves the strenuous effort of the runner, nearing the finish line, who leans forward toward the victory, 1 Cor. 9:24-25.
 2. “Of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” is the prize to which the Gospel calls all men, but only a few pursue—eternal salvation in heaven.
- D. Verse 15.
1. “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded” refers to mature Christians (“of full age,” Heb. 5:14; cf. Eph. 4:13) who have the mind of Christ, Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16.
 2. “And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” indicates that whereas those who want to know the Truth and abide therein may do so (John 7:17; 8:32), but anyone who refuses to acknowledge Truth in this life will necessarily acknowledge Truth in Final Judgment, Phil. 2:10-11.
- E. Verse 16.
1. The “word of life” or Gospel had brought the Philippian Christians out of their sin and into Jesus Christ, and if they continued in the Gospel, the Word would lead them through the Second Coming to eternal salvation, Jam. 1:21.
 2. Christians are obligated to walk a certain path, which if they walk that path they will be victorious in this life and the life to come, 1 John 1:7; 2:6; Eph. 5:8.
 3. “Mind the same thing” means that the minds of faithful Christians must agree with each other as each Christian’s mind conforms to the mind of Christ, 1 Cor. 1:10.
- F. Verse 17.
1. “Be ye followers together of me” is comparable to the instruction Paul wrote to the Corinthian and Thessalonian congregations, 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7-9.
 2. In the phrase “mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample,” the apostle acknowledges that other Christians who are imitating Jesus Christ (all Christians ought to imitate Jesus Christ) likewise can

- be examples for living as Christians ought to live.
3. Elsewhere, Paul warns Christians to “mark” the bad examples among erring Christians to avoid duplicating their sins, Rom. 16:17-18.
 4. Whereas some brethren need to be noted or marked publicly as examples of sinfulness, other brethren need to be noted or marked publicly as examples of Christ-likeness.

II. Verses 18-19 warn about enemies of the cross.

A. Verse 18.

1. Enemies of the cross of Jesus may be non-Christians or they may be Christians, but “false brethren,” Acts 20:28-30; 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4.
2. Especially false teachers pose a great risk to fellow Christians, 1 John 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:1-9.
3. The apostle Paul sorrowed (“weeping”) for the lost, anyone corrupted with false teaching and for corruption of the Gospel Truth, Luke 19:42.

B. Verse 19.

1. As in Romans 16:17-18, these about who Paul writes are said to serve their own “belly,” i.e. carnal and concerned more about earthly, material matters than spiritual matters.
2. Everyone who does not obey or obeys and does not continue to obey the Gospel will be lost eternally, 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

III. Verses 20-21 list motives for Christian purity and service.

A. Verse 20.

1. “Our conversation is in heaven” simply means that the Christian is not really a citizen of this world, but he is merely a pilgrim passing through on his way to heaven, Heb. 13:14.
2. “From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus” refers to the Christian hope and basis of Christianity that our resurrected Lord will return to retrieve the redeemed, John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18

B. Verse 21.

1. Our feeble, mortal bodies will be refitted for heavenly habitation, 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 48-54; 1 John 3:2.
2. “He is able to subdue all things to himself” speaks of

the authority or power of Jesus Christ, which he possesses especially from the time of his resurrection until after Final Judgment, Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

Conclusion:

1. Christians must ever keep the Christian goal in view, always consciously striving for it (salvation on earth and eternal salvation in heaven).
2. Christians must be careful lest enemies of the cross cause them to lose their souls.
3. Our resurrection and subsequent refitting of our bodies for a heavenly habitation is sufficient motivation to remain faithful Christians.

Invitation:

1. Every accountable soul is either an enemy of the cross or a courageous soldier of Christ; which are you?
2. If you have never obeyed the Gospel, you are an enemy of the cross of Christ, Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:8-9.
3. If you are an erring Christian, you are an enemy of the cross of Christ, Heb. 6:6; 10:29.