

TO BE A CHRISTIAN

A SEEKER'S GUIDE

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THE SEEKER'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Whoever we are, regardless of our race or color, whether we are rich or poor, and whatever is our social status in life, we face one serious problem: we have sinned in the eyes of God; and unless we are reconciled with God, we will eventually suffer the consequence of our sinfulness, in this life and in the life to come. The scriptures declare:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

Because Adam brought sin into this world by eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we have inherited a sinful nature that leads us to commit wickedness and rebel against God. There comes a point in our lives when we desire the freedom to do anything we please without having to be accountable for our behavior. Tempted by the pleasures of this world, we disobey the teachings of our parents and the will of God. Our disobedience is a result of our selfish desire or self-will that initiates our rebellion against God. It is written:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise." Ephesians 6:1

"Children obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord."
Colossians 3:20

And as we are separated from God, we become slaves to sin. Evil controls our thoughts and deeds. Satan, the prince of the world, is our provider of worldly pleasures, for a costly price. Eventually, money becomes the object of our faith because of its power to acquire material possessions to satisfy the lust of our eyes. We also have that uncontrollable urge to possess what we do not now own, and to boast of what we have and what we do. We squander time and money in wild living, drunkenness, addiction, sexual immorality, and such other works of the flesh.

Our acts of sinfulness are obvious:

"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21

Sinfulness is not from the Father:

"For everything in the world -- the cravings of a sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does -- comes not from the Father but from the world."

1 John 2:16

Out of our hearts come evil thoughts:

"For out of our heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." Matthew 15:19

Instead of repenting of our evil ways, we often attempt to justify them. When confronted, we readily make excuses, and instead of humbling ourselves, we cover up our acts of sinfulness by putting the blame on circumstances beyond our control.

Then, without warning, tragedy strikes. It comes in a variety of forms: serious illness, strained family relationships, bankruptcy, mounting debts, loss of job, addiction, a failed career, and a host of unwanted sufferings, but most of all, we suffer a guilty conscience. This is the consequence of our disobedience: we will eventually experience a feeling of deep sorrow for the things that we have lost. We will all suffer, one way or the other, as a result of our disobedience. Paul says so:

"For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all."

Romans 11:32

Perhaps you are one of those who hopelessly need help. Will your friends be there to help you out, or have they abandoned you? You'd hope that you can struggle free from this perpetual tragedy and start all over. Is there a way? You know that there is a God, yet doubt whether He will help you out. Yes, my friend, God loves you, but you need faith.

Do not let your disappointments and sorrow ruin your life. Let your sufferings remind you that there is a merciful God. Make that sorrow work for you by humbly laying your troubles before God. Paul declares:

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10

This Seeker's Guide will help you obtain faith by learning from the scriptures that tell about the Prophecies in the Old Testament and how these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ in the New Testament scriptures. You will learn more about the purpose of the ministry of Jesus when you read the Parables of Jesus explaining His Kingdom. You will increase your faith when you learn about the wonderful Miracles laid out in the scriptures as witnessed by the Apostles and disciples as a testimony that Jesus Christ truly is the Son of God.

You now encounter a forked road. The road to the left will lead you back to where all your troubles began -- the road to destruction: the road to the world. The road to the right leads you to a life of peace where Jesus with outstretched arms beckons on you.

You have a choice. Yes, my dear friend, Jesus can set you free from the bondage of sin! Let Jesus Christ be the foundation of your faith and your life. Jesus said:

"Come all of you who are heavily burdened and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

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LESSON I

God's Love for Us

Jesus Christ was with us from the very beginning. All things were created by him and for him. It was through him that all living things were shaped and formed. Col 1:16

The earth was filled with beauty, splendor and wonderful peace until Satan planted the seed of confusion in the heart and mind of mankind.

Satan led Eve to believe that the fruit from the tree of knowledge will give her wisdom. She ate the forbidden fruit and gave some to Adam who willingly shared in the transgression. As a result of their disobedience, God banished them out of the garden with a curse that brings pain, hard work, sweat, and disappointment. Genesis 3:19-23

Satan sought equality with God when he deceived the angels to wage a rebellion. With these angels at his command, he desired for a kingdom of his own, with a following of men who would knowingly disobey God's commands. Crafty as he is, Satan knew that no amount of animal sacrifices would stop men from sinning.

But God foreknew what Satan was up to. So great was God's love for us that He sent his only begotten Son to suffer and die as a perfect sacrifice for our redemption from the bondage of sin, and a promise of eternal life. John 3:16

Prophecies and Fulfillment

It is said that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

The coming of Jesus Christ to redeem us from the bondage of sin was not an afterthought. God revealed His plans of sending a redeemer called the Messiah through the prophets. The prophecies on the birth, death and resurrection of the Messiah were written in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament.

The book of Matthew contains the most number of fulfilled prophecies than any other book in the New Testament. In the opening chapter of the book, Matthew traced the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham to whom God made a covenant for the rise of a nation that will be blessed through him. Genesis 18:19

The place of birth was foretold. Micah 5:2

The place of birth was fulfilled. Matthew 2:1

For your easier reference, the instances of the prophecies on the coming of Jesus Christ are listed in page 10 as *Exh A*. Read each prophecy in the Old Testament and its fulfillment in the New Testament. Ponder upon these prophecies. Do not leave this page

until you are convinced in your heart and in your mind that Jesus is truly is the Messiah (Savior).

The Birth of Jesus Christ

Joseph and Mary traveled a long lonely road from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Weary and homeless, they looked for a resting place for the night as Mary was heavy with a child. There was no room for them at the crowded inn so they had to endure with what was at hand -- a rough shelter for the beasts and cattle. In a manger, Jesus was born.

The time and place of birth of Jesus, the Messiah were foretold in the scriptures, but Jerusalem was not jubilant to honor that day. But the lowly shepherds, while keeping watch over their flock at night, received the good news from the angels. They marveled at the fulfillment of the story that has been told them, as they spread the news to everyone. Luke 2: 8 -12

On the eighth day, Jesus was circumcised, and after performing the ritual of purification in accordance with the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and offer a sacrifice. These rituals were all religiously observed in obedience to the law, as Jesus was under the Law. Luke 2:21-38

Magi from the east anxiously awaited the fulfillment of the great prophecy, having gotten the knowledge of the birth of the Messiah from Daniel, a prophet who was held captive in the kingdom of Babylon. Daniel 9:25 A star, foretold in the scriptures, guided them to the place where they finally saw Jesus, and they worshipped him, offering precious gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh. Mt 2:1-12

The surrounding circumstances about the lowly birth of the Messiah now opens our eyes to the true nature of God's Kingdom. The unadorned, makeshift dwelling place where Jesus was born portrays an image of his Kingdom, which is within our reach. Everyone is welcome -- whether rich or poor, of whatever race or color, and/or whatever social status in life. We now learn that in order to fully embrace and appreciate the love of God for us, we must humble ourselves as demonstrated by the lowly shepherds and the wise men who came to worship him.

Childhood and Youth of Jesus

As a child, Jesus lived in a little mountain village where he helped Joseph, his earthly father in carpentry work. Jesus lived in a peasant's home among the wicked citizens of Nazareth, a place where folks would often ridicule because nothing good can come out of it. Jesus may have spent much time helping his father, Joseph and we can see that he was more popularly known as a "carpenter's son". Jesus set an example. He lived with the poor to tell us that it is only when we experience a feeling of poverty that we can demonstrate true humility. Matthew 13:55,56

The Ministry of Jesus

Jesus did not begin his ministry until after he was baptized by John the Baptist where God declared Jesus to be His begotten Son. Luke 3:21-22

In his entire ministry, Jesus talked about his Kingdom. He delivered sermons on how to enter his Kingdom. He performed miracles to build up our faith so we can enter his Kingdom. He related parables to teach about what it is like in his Kingdom.

Sermon on the Mount

Jesus began his sermon on the mount by expressing how blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. In his Kingdom, those who mourn will be comforted, those who are meek will inherit the earth; those that hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled; blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy; the pure will see God; the peacemakers will be called the children of God; the persecuted for righteousness sake will share the kingdom of heaven; those who are persecuted will rejoice, for great is their reward in heaven. All of these joys will happen in his Kingdom. Luke 6:20-29

Miracles of Jesus

Miracles are events that were described in the scriptures as works of wonder. The miracles of Jesus, in controlling nature, casting out demons and healing the sick are manifestations of the power of God in him. These actual events that took place were written so that seekers of the truth will believe in him and build up their faith.

In page 14 Exch C you will find a list of the miracles performed by Jesus. Read each miracle and observe the following:

- Miracles are above the normal laws of nature
- Miracles have instant consequences
- Miracles are the results of unusual and spectacular power from God

Jesus performed miraculous signs so that we may believe that he is the Messiah, the son of God. John 20: 30-31.

Parables

Parables are stories narrated by Jesus to illustrate the nature of his Kingdom. Relating anecdotes from ordinary daily living, he compares its similarity to his Kingdom. At the end of the parable, he often leaves a puzzling conclusion and a call to a firm decision which can only be understood and obeyed by one who truly seeks his Kingdom with humbleness in his heart.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son [Luke 15:11-24](#) is perhaps the most popularly narrated parable in the New Testament. As we look closely into this parable, we will dwell on two things: 1) Man's separation from God, and 2) Man's reconciliation with God; and study its practical applications into our lives today.

- 1. Man's separation from God**
- 2. Man's reconciliation with God**

Man's separation from God is caused by self-will. When the younger brother demanded his share of the estate, (v 12) his arrogant behavior demonstrated an act of self-will. Normally in those days, a father would not divide the estate too early. In the parable however, the father grants the son's request anyway. The parable teaches that God allows us to go our own way even with the knowledge that the result of our disobedience is suffering. In this way, He can show mercy on us. [Romans 11:32](#)

Disobedience to our parents initiates our rebellion against God. To be disobedient to our parents is to be disobedient against the will of God. [Ephesians 6:1](#) | [Colossians 3:20](#)

By the time we reach the age of accountability, we start to disobey our parents because we are lured to a more carefree lifestyle, without having to submit to any form of authority, and without having to be responsible for our behavior. This act of self-will initiates our rebellion against God and thus, we are separated from God.

What is the consequence of our being separated from God?

- a) We become slaves to sin (v13)

We learn from the parable that the prodigal son squandered his wealth in wild living. In v. 30 of the same chapter, we also learn that he spent his wealth with prostitutes.

- b) We suffer both physically and spiritually.

In v. 14-15 of the parable, we can see that the prodigal son had absolutely nothing; he began to be in need, and he experienced hunger. He worked for a Gentile to feed swine. He lost his dignity and self-respect. He was a Jew after all, and for a Jew to work for a Gentile to feed swine brings great dishonor to himself and his family.

In our life today, a tragedy can be in a form of serious illness, bankruptcy, loss of earnings, mounting debts, broken family relationships, and a host of other sufferings.

Just like the prodigal son, a sinner will be in need, will experience hunger, will do whatever it takes to survive, and finally, will lose his dignity and self-respect.

2) Man's reconciliation with God.

In v. 17-19 of the parable, we read that the prodigal son "came to his senses". Suddenly he realized that in his father's house even the hired hands had plenty of food to spare, and there he was, starving to death! After making a practical rationalization, he was resolved to go back and be reconciled with his father. He humbled himself and repented of his disobedience.

In the end, the prodigal son was restored to his family, regaining his dignity and self-respect; and where he will hunger no more.

His father's house mentioned in the parable is the Kingdom of God where there is joy, peace and contentment. Matthew 6:25,26

There are more parables listed on page 13, Exh B. Read each parable with a prayerful heart. In the scriptures Jesus engages you to a heart-to-heart conversation about the right attitude and perception of his Kingdom. He speaks about humility, repentance and forgiveness. He also foretells about his death, resurrection and second coming. Contemplate as you read the parables line by line, observing the things that Jesus wants you to know.

The Road to Emmaus

We will conclude this lesson by looking at an incident in the last chapter of the book of Luke where on the day of the resurrection of Jesus, two men on their way to Emmaus were talking about the things that happened on that day.

Jesus came up and walked along with them and inquired what they were talking about. The two men, not knowing that they were talking to Jesus, related the story of the prophet Jesus of Nazareth, whom they hoped would redeem Israel.

At this point, Jesus seized the opportunity to explain that the man whom the prophets have spoken about had to suffer and then enter his glory. And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27

Many people speak of receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. They were led to believe that simply praying and accepting Jesus as their Savior would lead to their salvation. Yet there is no change in their lives, they continue to live in sin. Do not be deceived by those who preach that simply believing in Jesus Christ will save you! Even Satan believes in Jesus Christ! The Gospel provides us with a solid foundation and faith leading to obedience of God's commands for your salvation. To believe and accept Jesus Christ as a savior without a solid foundation of what the scriptures speak of him, yields a weak faith and a shallow knowledge that is easily confused by every teaching of deceitful men for their selfish gains. Ephesians 4:14

The prophecies and their fulfillment, the wonderful miracles, the thought-provoking parables, and the ministry of Jesus were all laid out in the Bible so that by understanding the nature of Jesus and his Kingdom we may build up our faith with a firm foundation in our hearts and now believe that:

1. Jesus is the son of God
2. Jesus is the Messiah

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>OT Prophecy</u>	<u>NT Fulfillment</u>
1 As the Son of God	Ps 2:7	Lu 1:32,35
2 As the seed of the woman	Ge 3:15	Ga 4:4
3 As the seed of Abraham	Ge 17:7 22:18	Ga 3:16
4 As the seed of Isaac	Ge 21:12	Heb 11:17-19
5 As the seed of David	Ps 132:11 Jer 23:5	Ac 13:23 Ro 1:3
6 His coming at a set time	Ge 49:10 Da 9:24,25	Lu 2:1
7 His being born of a virgin	Isa 7:14	Mt 1:22,23 Lu 2:7
8 His being called Immanuel	Isa 7:14	Mt 1:22,23
9 His being born in Bethlehem of Judea	Mic 5:2	Mt 2:1 Lu 2:4-6
10 Great persons coming to adore him	Ps 72:10	Mt 2:1-11
11 The slaying of the children of Bethlehem	Jer 31:15	Mt 2:16-18
12 His being called out of Egypt	Ho 11:1	Mt 2:15
13 His being preceded by John the Baptist	Isa 40:3 Mal 3:1	Mt 3:1,3 Lu 1:17
14 His being anointed with the Spirit	Ps 45:7 Isa 11:2 61:1	Mt 3:16 Joh 3:34 Ac 10:38
15 His being a Prophet like to Moses	De 18:15-18	Ac 3:20-22
16 His being a Priest after the order of Melchizedek	Ps 110:4	Heb 5:5,6
17 His entering on his public ministry	Isa 61:1,2	Lu 4:16-21,43
18 His ministry commencing in Galilee	Isa 9:1,2	Mt 4:12-16,23
19 His entering publicly into Jerusalem	Zec 9:9	Mt 21:1-5
20 His coming into the temple	Hag 2:7,9 Mal 3:1	Mt 21:12 Lu 2:27-32 Joh 2:13-16
21 His poverty	Isa 53:2	Mr 6:3 Lu 9:58
22 His meekness and want of ostentatious	Isa 42:2	Mt 12:15,16,19
23 His tenderness and compassion	Isa 40:11 42:3	Mt 12:15,20 Heb 4:15
24 His being without guile	Isa 53:9	1Pe 2:22
25 His zeal	Ps 69:9	Joh 2:17
26 His preaching by parables	Ps 78:2	Mt 13:34,35
27 His working miracles	Isa 35:5,6	Mt 11:4-6 Joh 11:47
<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>OT Prophecy</u>	<u>NT Fulfillment</u>
28 His being rejected by his brethren	Ps 69:8 Isa 63:3	Joh 1:11 7:3
29 His being a stone of stumbling to the Jews	Isa 8:14	Ro 9:32 1Pe 2:8
30 His being hated by the Jews	Ps 69:4 Isa 49:7	Joh 15:24,25
31 His being rejected by the Jewish rulers	Ps 118:22	Mt 21:42 Joh 7:48

32	That the Jews and Gentiles should combine against Him	Ps 2:1,2	Lu 23:12 Ac 4:27
33	His being betrayed by a friend	Ps 41:9 55:12-14	Joh 13:18,21
34	His disciples forsaking him	Zec 13:7	Mt 26:31,56
35	His being sold for thirty pieces silver	Zec 11:12	Mt 26:15
36	His price being given for the potter's field	Zec 11:13	Mt 27:7
37	The intensity of his sufferings	Ps 22:14,15	Lu 22:42,44
38	His sufferings being for others	Isa 53:4-6,12 Da 9:26	Mt 20:28
39	His patience and silence under suffering	Isa 53:7	Mt 26:63 27:12-14
40	His being smitten on the cheek	Mic 5:1	Mt 27:30
41	His visage being marred	Isa 52:14 53:3	Joh 19:5
42	His being spit on and scourged	Isa 50:6	Mr 14:65 Joh 19:1
43	His hands and feet being nailed to the cross	Ps 22:16	Joh 19:18 20:25
44	His being forsaken by God	Ps 22:1	Mt 27:46
45	His being mocked	Ps 22:7,8	Mt 27:39-44
46	Gall and vinegar being given him to drink	Ps 69:21	Mt 27:34
47	His garments being parted, and lots cast for his vesture	Ps 22:18	Mt 27:35
48	His being numbered with the transgressors	Isa 53:12	Mr 15:28
49	His intercession for His murderers	Isa 53:12	Lu 23:34
50	His Death	Isa 53:12	Mt 27:50
51	That a bone of him should not be broken	Ex 12:46 Ps 34:20	Joh 19:33,36
52	His being pierced	Zec 12:10	Joh 19:34,37
53	His being buried with the rich	Isa 53:9	Mt 27:57-60
54	His flesh not seeing corruption	Ps 16:10	Ac 2:31
55	His resurrection	Ps 16:10 Isa 26:19	Lu 24:6,31,34
	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>OT Prophecy</u>	<u>NT Fulfillment</u>
56	His sitting on the right hand of God	Ps 110:1	Heb 1:3
57	His exercising the priestly office in heaven	Zec 6:13	Ro 8:34
58	His being the chief corner-stone of the Church	Isa 28:16	1Pe 2:6,7
59	His being King in Zion	Ps 2:6	Lu 1:32 Joh 18:33-37
60	The conversion of the Gentiles to him	Isa 11:10 42:1	Mt 1:17,21 Joh 10:16 Ac 10:45,47
61	His righteous government	Ps 45:6,7	Joh 5:30 Re 19:11

- 62 His universal dominion
- 63 The perpetuity of his kingdom

Ps 72:8 Da 7:14
Isa 9:7 Da 7:14

Php 2:9,11
Lu 1:32,33

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Exh B

PARABLE

MATTHEW

MARK

LUKE

1 The Speck and The Log	7:1-5		6:37-42
2 New Cloth on Old Garment	9:16-17	2:21-22	5:36-39
3 The Divided Kingdom	12:24-30	3:23-27	11:14-23
4 The Sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
5 The Growing Seed		4:26-29	
6 The Rich Fool			12:16-21
7 The Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9
8 The Weeds Among the Wheat	13:24-30		

9 The Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-34	13:18-19
11 The Leaven	13:33-34		13:20-21
12 Hidden Treasure	13:44		
13 Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46		
14 The Net	13:47-50		
15 The Good Samaritan			10:29-37
16 The Invited Guests			14:7-24
17 The Heart of Man	15:1-20	7:1-23	
18 The Lost Sheep	18:10-14		15:1-7
19 The Prodigal Son			15:11-32
20 The Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19-31
21 The Persistent Widow			18:1-8
22 The Pharisee and The Publican			18:9-14
23 Laborers in the Vineyard	20:1-16		
24 The Tenants	21:33-45	12:1-12	20:9-19
25 The Wedding Feast	22:1-14		14:15-24
26 The Fig Tree	24:32-44	13:28-37	21:29-33
27 The Faithful or Wicked Servant	24:45-51		12:35-48
28 The Ten Virgins	25:1-13		
29 Ten Talents or Gold Coins	25:14-30		19:11-27

MIRACLE OF JESUS

EXH C

Miracle	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>	<u>John</u>
1 Jesus Turns Water into Wine				2:1-11
2 Jesus Heals an Official's Son				4:43-54
3 Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit		1:21-27	4:31-36	
4 Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
5 Jesus Heals Many Sick at Evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
6 First Miraculous Catch of Fish			5:1-11	
7 Jesus Cleanses a Man With Leprosy	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-14	
8 Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
9 Jesus Heals a Paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-12	
10 Jesus Heals a Man's Withered Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
11 Jesus Raises a Widow's Son in Nain			7:11-17	

12	Jesus Calms a Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
13	Jesus Casts Demons into a Herd of Pigs	8:28-33	5:1-20	8:26-39	
14	Jesus Heals a Woman in the Crowd	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:42-48	
15	Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter to Life	9:18, 23-26	5:21-24, 35-43	8:40-42, 49-56	
16	Jesus Heals Two Blind Men	9:27-31			
17	Jesus Heals a Man Unable to Speak	9:32-34			
18	Jesus Heals an Invalid at Bethesda				5:1-15
19	Jesus Feeds 5,000	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
20	Jesus Walks on Water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
21	Jesus Heals Many Sick in Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
22	Jesus Heals a Gentile Woman's Demon- Possessed Daughter	5:21-28	7:24-30		
23	Jesus Heals a Deaf and Dumb Man		7:31-37		
24	Jesus Feeds 4,000	15:32-39	8:1-13		
25	Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
26	Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind				9:1-12
27	Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	
28	Miraculous Temple Tax in a Fish's Mouth	17:24-27			
29	Jesus Heals a Blind, Mute Demoniac	12:22-23		11:14-23	
30	Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman			13:10-17	
31	Jesus Heals a Man With Dropsy on the Sabbath			14:1-6	
32	Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers			17:11-19	
33	Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead				11:1-45
34	Jesus Restores Sight to Bartimaeus	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
35	Jesus Withers the Fig Tree	0.8877546	11:12-14		
37	Second Miraculous Catch of Fish				21:4-11

Lesson II

The Meaning of the Gospel

The Gospel simply means "*the good news*" because it shows us the right path to salvation from the bondage of sin, and gives us hope to salvation. . The Gospel holds the key to a course of action that a sinner, with newfound faith, must do in order to be saved. The scriptures warn us that God will punish those who do not obey the Gospel. II Thessalonians 1:8 .

The power of the Gospel was foretold in the Old Testament as:

- a set of directions to take so that we may walk the path of the LORD; Isaiah 2:3

- words on scroll that are so powerful, the deaf can hear and blind can see; [Isaiah 29:18](#)
- so precious that those who proclaim it are praised; [Isaiah 52:7](#)
- the power to free captives and give light from the darkness. [Isaiah 61:1](#)

In the New Testament, the scriptures describe the Gospel as:

- the good news of the Kingdom; [Matthew 4:23](#)
- good news to be preached to everyone; [Acts 20:24](#)
- a matter of such great importance that Paul had to sacrifice anything for it rather than hinder it ; [I Corinthians 9:12](#)
- a secret, veiled from those with hardened hearts; [II Corinthians 4:3](#)
- the good news to be preached and prayed for; [Ephesians 6:19](#)
- a reason for the brethren to conduct themselves worthily of; [Philippians 1:27](#)
- the good news with the power of the Holy Spirit to convict; [I Thessalonians 1:5](#)
- the good news is to be preached to all nations before the end will come. [Matthew 24:14](#)
- the Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. [I Corinthians 15:1-4](#)

The accounts of the Gospel as written in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and these things are clearly spoken:

Jesus died;

Jesus was buried;

Jesus was resurrected.

Thus, to obey the Gospel,

a) we must die to our sins;

b) we must repent and be buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of our sins;

c) be resurrected into the newness of life.



The Death and Burial of Jesus

Haven't you ever asked yourself, why Jesus had to die for us? Couldn't God have instituted a better plan to save mankind than to send his only begotten son to suffer and die for our sins?

Jesus himself, praying on the Mount of Olives in the garden of Gethsemane, asked his Father to take away the cup of suffering from him. Yet Jesus knew there was no other substitute for the redemption of mankind, except that by the will of the Father; and he was ready to suffer and to die a humiliating death on the cross, even as he grew weaker in anguish while sweat like drops of blood fell to the ground. Luke 22:39-44.

In the Law of Moses, sacrifices in the form of burnt offerings and blood of animals were offered to God for the forgiveness of sins. Exodus 29:18-21. Blood was sprinkled to the people to confirm a covenant. Exodus 24:1-8

In the New Testament, the book of Hebrews, Paul explains why Jesus had to suffer a humiliating death and shed his blood to finish and fulfill the law on sacrifice.

- A high priest is appointed to offer a sacrifice, but he himself is subject to weakness; he has to offer a sacrifice for his own sins. As Christ is the high priest appointed by God, he is the perfect sacrifice. Hebrews 5:1-10
- Unlike the other high priests, Jesus did not have to offer sacrifices day after day for his sins and that of other people. Hebrews 7:27-28
- The blood of Jesus confirms a new covenant with the laws put in the minds and written in the hearts of those who obey; by calling the covenant "new", the first one becomes obsolete. Hebrews 8:8-13.
- Christ is the unblemished sacrifice to God. Hebrews 9:14.
- Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of people and he will appear a second time to those who wait for him. Hebrews 9:27-28.
- Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. Hebrews 12:24.
- Because of the blood of Jesus, God will equip us with everything good for doing his will. Hebrews 13:20.

It was foretold in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ will be buried with the rich. Isaiah 53:9 This was fulfilled in the New Testament, Thus

- A rich man and a follower of Christ, also waiting for the Kingdom of God named Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus, wrapped it and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in a stone. Luke 23:48-56.
- Nicodemus, who first came to Jesus at night, brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes. John 19:38-42

We also learn of the conspiracy of the scheming Pharisees and the chief priests, fearing about the prophecy that Christ will rise on the third day, commanded that the sepulcher be sealed. [Matthew 27:62-66](#).

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus

On the first day of the week Christ was resurrected as foretold in the scriptures. [Psalms 16:10](#). Jesus had time and again told to his disciples about his resurrection, but they never understood.

- Peter was confused when Jesus said that he would be killed but would rise again. [Matthew 16:21-23](#)
- Jesus promised his disciples that after he is risen, he will go with them to Galilee. [Matthew 26:32-33](#)
- The disciples asked one another what the rising from the dead should mean. [Mark 9:9](#)

When Jesus was resurrected, he rebuked his disciples because they did not perceive the meaning of the resurrection.

- Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of their hearts. [Mark 16:13-14](#)
- Jesus had to show Thomas the wound in his hand and on his side to prove that he was resurrected. [John 20:27](#)

The Promise of the Resurrection:

Without the resurrection of Jesus, we do not have hope for an eternal life. Observe the following passages.

- We hope that we will be resurrected and be with Jesus. [I Thessalonians 4:14](#)
- Raised up for our justification. [Romans 10:9](#)
- Knowledge of the deity of Christ. [Ephesians 1:20](#)
- Hope by the resurrection. [I Peter 1:3](#) | [I Peter 3:18](#)

Warnings to those who do not believe and obey:

- Many that sleep will be judged. [Daniel 12:2](#)
- All who are in their graves will be judged. [John 5:28](#)
- The good, the evil. [John 5:29](#)
- The just and the unjust. [Acts 24:15](#)



What then must we do to obey the Gospel?

Die to our Sins

If we have faith that Jesus Christ died for us, then we ought to have faith that when our sinful body is crucified with him, we should not serve sin any longer. Observe the following passages:

- Our old body is crucified with Jesus Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed and henceforth, we should not serve sin. Romans 6:6
- Jesus, bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. I Peter 2:24
- Being dead into sins, we were forgiven of our sins. Colossians 2:13

Repent

Repentance is not merely an act of being sorry for our sins and to ask God for forgiveness. You do not have to confess your sins one by one. God knows them all, and counts them as one. Repentance calls for a change of heart with a firm resolve to turn away from sinfulness. There is no forgiveness without repentance.

Unless you repents, you to will perish . Luke 13:3

Peter tells sinners to repent and their sins will be blotted out. Acts 3:19

God commands all men everywhere to repent. Acts 26:20

Be buried with Jesus in Baptism

To be dead with Jesus Christ is to repent of one's sins and be buried with Jesus in baptism. Baptism is to be immersed in water, symbolic of being buried with Christ into death. The water symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ washing away one's sins.

- Those who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Romans 6:3-4
- Peter calls on every sinner to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, and they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.. Acts 2:36-38

Being immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins explains the command that puzzled Nicodemus when Jesus said: "Unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." John 3:5

Conversions in the New Testament

The following conversions written in the book of Acts culminated in their baptism:

a) Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

"As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. What hinders me to be baptized?'" Acts 8:26-39

b) Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

"Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized." Acts 9:1-18

c) Conversion of Lydia.

"When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home." Acts 16:14-15

d) Conversion of the Philippians jailer.

"At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized." Acts 16:33-34

Salvation is culminated by one's baptism into Christ. All conversions during Christ's dispensation ended with baptism. When they started to walk astray, Paul reminded the brethren about the significance of their baptism.

a) Those who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Romans 6:3-4

b) Christians were raised to the newness of life with Christ in baptism. Colossians 2:12

c) After water baptism, they were joined into one body. 1 Corinthians 12:13

d) Those who were baptized have put on Christ Galatians 3:27

e) Baptism saves. 1 Peter 3:21

Why tarry?

My friend, time is running out. Life is short. If Jesus Christ comes now, are you prepared? Is your name written in the book of life? Do not linger; do not delay, Arise and wash away your sins. Acts 22:16

Do not wait for a perfect time. The right time is now. You need not wait until you become righteous from your own efforts, for righteousness is from God. You do not earn your salvation. All you need to do is to obey the Gospel, after which you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who will dwell in you, and his power will help you to resist temptations and comfort you in troubled times. Titus 3:4-7

Your decision determines your destiny. Let your faith confirm your resolve. Let the love of God give comfort to your weary heart. Do not linger; do not delay. If there is a Church in your place, talk to the minister about your decision to become a Christian. In the absence of a Church or a minister that believes in water baptism through immersion, find a place where there is much water. Look for someone to baptize you. Before you are immersed in the water however, you must not forget: you need to repent of your sins and confess with faith that Jesus Christ is the son of God.

Lesson III – The Church

If you have repented of your sins and confessed with your lips that Jesus is the son of God, and if you have been immersed with Christ in baptism, you are now a follower of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:38 Because of your obedience, you were added to the Church, the kingdom of God. Acts 2:47

The Church welcomes you as the angels in heaven rejoice. Your brothers and sisters in Christ are spiritually with you, whoever and wherever you are.

The lessons in this chapter should enlighten you about the Church. The discussions below teaches us that the Church is not a building or a place. The Church is described in the scriptures as the body of Christ and Jesus Christ is the only Foundation. You will also

learn that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. Finally, we will study what the scriptures command concerning the qualifications and duties of the elders and the deacons, the overseers and special servants of the Church.

Click every link to the scriptures as these words explain to you about the Church that Jesus built. [Mathew. 16:18](#)

The Church is the Body of Christ

- One body and each member belongs to the others. [Romans 12:5](#)
- The Holy Spirit works in each member. [1 Corinthians 12:27](#)
- Christ is head over everything and the Church is his body. [Ephesians 1:22-23](#)
- The objective is to prepare Christians for works of service so that the Church may be built up. [Ephesians 4:12](#)
- Our sufferings are made for the sake of the Church. [Colossians 1:24](#)
- No Church will grow without help from God. [Colossians 2:19](#)
- There is one body . . . [Ephesians 4:4](#)

Christ is the Head of the Church

- Head over all things to the Church. [Ephesians 1:22](#)
- In all things, which is the head, Christ. [Ephesians 4:15](#)
- As the husband is the head of the wife, Christ is the head of the Church. [Ephesians 5:23](#)
- That in all things he might have prominence. [Colossians 1:18](#)

Jesus Christ is the Only Foundation

-
- Christ is the only foundation and cornerstone of the Church.
 - No other foundation than Christ. [1 Corinthians 3:10-11](#) | [Ephesians 2:20](#)
 - Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament as the stone that was rejected. [Mathew 21:42](#) | [Acts 4:11](#)
 - A precious cornerstone. [1 Peter 2:6](#)
 - Therefore, as we have faith in Jesus, we should faithfully obey his commandments. [Luke 6:46-49](#)



Leaders of the Church

The Elders

The early local Churches were autonomously led by a group of leaders called the elders. They were regarded as shepherds of the flock and overseers of the Church. There is a plurality of elders so as to avoid an authoritarian, one-man rule in the Church. Apostle Paul warns against elders lording it over the brethren.

The following passages will give us more enlightenment on the qualification of elders and their duties to the Church.

- Paul gave instructions to Titus to ordain elders in every city as leaders of the Church. He also gave Titus the qualifications for elders. [Titus 1:5-9](#)
- Elders must have the desire to serve. [Titus 3:1-7](#)
- Elders have a special role in the Church. [James 5:14](#)
- The elders are exhorted to feed the flock of Christ and not to lord it over them. [1 Peter 5:1-3](#)

The Deacons

Deacons are special helpers in the Church with particular duties, such as caring for the sick and the poor. They were chosen from among men who were known to be full of spirit and wisdom. [Acts 6:3](#). Paul calls on deacons to be worthy of respect, sincere and not pursuing dishonest gain. [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)

The qualification of a deacon are similar to those of an elder, except that a deacon need not be able to teach.

A problem arises where there are no serving elders because no one is qualified according to the requirements laid down in the scriptures. There may be qualified

members, but are not desirous for the position of an elder. There is then a void in the Church leadership.

In this case, the affairs of the Church are to be deliberated by a group of members, spiritually united, who meet on certain days of the week to plan Church activities that are geared toward the involvement of members in Church activities, particularly evangelism work. The members convened may also decide on administrative matters. These meetings are called for the purpose of setting up Church activities in an orderly fashion and to avoid chaos and confusion.

To a greater extent, the objective of having members convene in a meeting to decide on Church affairs is to prevent the occurrence of a one-man rule that is oftentimes harmful to the Church.

It is therefore a noble aspiration for men of the Church to become elders. They occupy a special position in the Church and they perform a special work for God.



The Name: simply Church

The Greek word *ecclesia* denotes any assembly of people. It was only in the 3rd or 4th century that the word Church came into use to denote a specific assembly composed of believers, and the Greek word for it is *kuriakon*, meaning "belonging to the Lord". For a more comprehensive discussion on the history of the early Church, read the article "Assembly of Believers: the Church" in the Compton's Encyclopedia.

The name simply Church was also referred to by Paul in the following verses:

- For Christ is head of the body, the Church. [Colossians 1:18](#)
- Christ is the head over all things to the Church. [Ephesians 1:22](#)

Babes in Christ

As a new babe in the faith, you were fed with spiritual milk. As you mature, you need to be fed with spiritual meat or solid food in order to grow stronger in faith, and become an effective teacher. In the book of Hebrews, Paul chastised the brotherhood for their immaturity. [Hebrews 5:12](#)

You will need to read your Bible daily to grow in faith. Ponder upon the scriptures that teach how the great men of the Old Testament were rewarded for their strong faith and how they were punished for their lack of faith.

But you also need to fellowship with your fellow Christians to receive encouragement and give them encouragement as well. This is the subject matter of the next lesson -- the Fellowship.

Almost certainly, you will encounter hard doctrines that may confuse you. Here is one rule of thumb: All commandments in the Bible are consistent with each other. Jesus Christ issued two commandments, also called the greatest commands, found in the book of Matthew, upon which all commands issued by the Apostles are consistent with. Therefore, if there be any teaching that does not conform with the greatest commandments of our Lord Jesus, consider this as a human doctrine, and one that does not come from God. Matthew 22:37-39. See also 1 John 3:21-24.

Lesson IV – The Fellowship

Purpose of Fellowship

On the first day of the week, the believers came together to break bread. Acts 20:7 Their fellowship helped them grow stronger in the faith, as they used their gifts and resources to encourage and help each other. They worshipped in spirit and in truth. The fruit of their fellowships was the strengthening of their faith.

During his lifetime, Paul wrote fourteen (14) letters called *epistles* to the Christians, encouraging them to help one another and use their gifts for every good work that will strengthen each other's faith. He made it clear that faith is essential:

- It is impossible to please God without faith. Hebrews 11:6

- We should walk by faith and not by sight. II Corinthians 5:7
- Faith is our shield against wickedness. Ephesians 6:16
- Faith is our breastplate against sinfulness. I Thessalonians 5:8

The need for strong faith is the compelling reason that Paul vigorously exhorted the believers not to forsake or miss the assembly meeting. Hebrews 10:25 The lack of faith weakens our shield against wickedness and sinfulness.

We also learn from the scriptures that the common activities during their fellowships are the following:

- Breaking bread in communion with Christ, commemorating his death for the forgiveness of sins. Acts 2:42
- Singing: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, with grace in their hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16
- Instructing and admonishing one another Romans 15:13-14
- Praying, giving thanks for all things, submitting themselves to one another. Ephesians 5:18-21
- Giving according to purpose in their hearts. II Corinthians 9:7

The Fellowship Order

As Paul reminded that every activity in the assembly should be done decently and in order, the early Christians may have organized their fellowship activities to prevent chaos and confusion. I Corinthians 7:17 | I Corinthians 14:40 We know for sure that there were deacons performing specific tasks, such as helping and feeding the poor. For the fellowship to function in an organized manner, specific tasks or functions should be assigned to gifted men. Those who can lead, to lead the worship. Those with gifts of preaching should preach. Those who can pray should lead the prayers. Those who can lead the singing to a joyful rhythm should be assigned as song leaders. Others will be assigned to do the collecting of offerings. What is important here is to encourage all Christians to share their gifts.

Praying

The early Christians prayed in thanksgiving for all things. Ephesians 5:18-21 Prayers were likewise made for a Christian's specific request. Take notice that Paul asked the brethren to pray for him, in many occasions.

- to fearlessly proclaim the Gospel Ephesians 6:19
- pray for faith 1 Thessalonians 5:25
- pray that the Gospel be spread rapidly 2 Thessalonians 3:1
 - pray against wicked and evil men 2 Thessalonians 3:2

The act of requesting a prayer is a manifestation of one's faith that the prayer will be heard by our Lord God with special attention. It also displays a demonstration of humility in acknowledging one's needfulness. Matthew 18:19-20

Prayer

When you pray, address your prayer to the Father. Pray for thankfulness, petitions and forgiveness, and most importantly, pray from your heart. End each prayer "in the name of Jesus Christ", our intercessor. Matthew 6:9

Singing

Singing is another way of expressing adoration and praise toward God, and of edifying and admonishing one another. Meaningful traditional hymns come to mind such as "Count Your Blessings", "Dwelling in Beulah Land", etc. These hymns are full of love and encouragement. Listen to these hymns by clicking on this link: **Christian Hymns.** These hymns will surely teach, inspire, and encourage you.

As we were admonished to sing psalms to one another, everyone must sing. Sing songs that edify one another. Avoid 7-11 songs (songs of 7 words and repeated 11 times!) Sing melodies with joy and thankfulness in your hearts. There is no reference in the New Testament for a public song service.

The Sermon

A sermon is a lesson based on a religious truth from the scriptures of the Bible, elaborately treated with a view to persuasion.

As we mature as Christians, a sermon message should be anticipated with gladness. For they convey admonition, exhortation and encouragement. Furthermore, the sermon equips us with spiritual knowledge that we will one day utilize when we teach others.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul reminded him about how to preach the word, and be prepared in season and out of season; correcting, rebuking, and encouraging with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:1-2

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus Christ himself, when he commanded his disciples to observe this simple act of partaking of the unleavened bread that represents his body, and the fruit of the vine, which represents his blood. Mathew 26:26-27
The Lord's supper is celebrated every first day of the week. The early Christians broke bread when they came together in fellowship every first day of the week. Acts 20:7
The Lord's Supper is a memorial. We commemorate the death of Jesus on the cross for the following reasons:

- His death makes the new covenant possible. Hebrews 9:16
- His blood was shed for the remission of sins. Ephesians 1:7

As the Passover was a memorial commemorating the deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt, through the blood of the lambs on their door posts; the Lord's Supper is a memorial of our Lord's death, which delivered us from the bondage of sin.

The Lord's Supper is a proclamation. We proclaim our faith in the return of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:26 . We look forward with trust in our hearts that when Jesus comes again, he will gather his own.

The Lord's Supper is a communion. We share in the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:16 . His blood continually washes away our sins. As we partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine, we commune with the body of Christ.

Giving

The early Christians gave regularly, freely, and with simplicity. God does not need our money, for He owns all the riches in this world. He needs nothing from us. He simply commands that in everything that we do, we must do it for His glory. The early Christians did not observe a law on how much one should give. They were commanded to give in accordance with their ability. Observe the following attitudes of a true giver:

- a) Give freely Matthew 10:8
- b) Give with simplicity Romans 12:8
- c) Give regularly 1 Corinthians 16:2
- d) Give cheerfully 2 Corinthians 9:7
- e) Give according to ability Acts 11:29

Surely, the Church needs regular giving from its members to fully support its different ministries. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul thankfully praised for their deep concern over his needs, but most of all, Paul pointed out that their act of benevolence would be credited to their account. Philippians 4:17

God will reward your faithful giving. Give and it will be given you in good measure, pressed, shaken and running over. Luke 6:38

More on strengthening one another

We learn from the scriptures that the early Christians shared a meal after breaking bread together. [Acts 20:11](#) Christians continued in their fellowship as long as time allowed. They were encouraged to show love to one another not only by words but by deeds. Click the links to view the scriptures. Read the passages carefully with understanding.

- Loving one another fulfills the law. [Romans 13:7-9](#) | [1 Peter 1:21-23](#) | [John 3:10-12](#)
- Accept one another. [Romans 15:6-8](#)
- Greet one another with a holy kiss. [Romans 16:15-17](#)
- Speak the same things. [1 Corinthians 1:9-11](#)
- Serving one another in love. [Galatians 5:13-14](#)
- Gifts are to be used for the work of the ministry for edifying the body of Christ. [Ephesians 4:11-15](#) | [1 Peter 4:10-11](#)
- Bear one another, forgiving one another [Colossians 3:12-14](#)
- Encourage one another. [1 Thessalonians 5:10-12](#)
- Humility, do not speak evil, do not judge [James 4:10-12](#)
- Younger to submit to elders. [1 Peter 5:4-6](#)

How to put up a Fellowship

We conclude this lesson with a reminder that the main purpose of the fellowship is to strengthen the faith of one another. In your fellowships, therefore, make sure that you praise God, in all activities.

There are various other activities that are being conducted in a fellowship that have nothing to do with the strengthening of faith. These are activities that waste time, considering that Christians meet only once in a week. We need not list them all here. You are now a Christian and you should be able to discern which is of faith and which is not. If you need wisdom pray for it and gladly will God give it to you. [James 1:5](#)

If there is no congregation in your community, start one. Start with your family, then invite your neighbors. It only needs two or three Christians to start a fellowship. [Matthew 18:19-20](#)

Lesson V – CHURCH FUNDS

Stewardship

Leaders of the Church are expected to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to them.

Apostle Peter warns us to be continually watchful against the evil one, Satan, because he is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. [I Peter 5:8](#) Let us heed this warning for Satan sets a trap in every place and cleverly lays a bait that we might fall prey into it. Like a lion, he watches eagerly as we take the bait of temptation, then he devours us. One such temptation that Satan often uses is money. Although Church leaders are trusted with money, they are not exempt from temptation. Paul warns us to take heed, he who thinks he is strong should be careful, or he may fall. [I Corinthians 10:12](#)

It is then imperative for the Church leadership to explore avenues which Satan may utilize to tempt its flock, and try to eliminate them. One such item is Church funds.

It is therefore urgent that the Church leadership set up an adequate accounting system aimed to safeguard Church funds. Regretfully, many congregations have been divided or have been shut down due to cases of mishandled Church funds committed by a Church leader or leaders. More disgraceful is the discouraging effect this incident may cause to the members of the Church as well as to those outside of the Church.

Control of Church Funds

Unlike commercial business concerns the financial transactions of a Church are few and simple. However, it is important that the Church adopt and implement a sound accounting system to ensure that all collections are properly recorded and all disbursements are properly authorized.

The following procedures are recommended. (Click on the links to view the suggested forms to be used and pro-forma reports)

1. All collections should be counted and recorded on the [Collection Count Sheet](#). Collections should be turned over to the Church treasurer who shall deposit the same to the bank, if available.
2. All disbursements should be covered with a [Cash Voucher](#) approved by a Church leader, and paid out by the Church treasurer.
3. A Church bookkeeper records the collections and disbursements and prepares a [Weekly Statement of Collections and Disbursements](#) which shall be reported to all members every week.
4. The Church bookkeeper should also prepare a [Monthly Statement of Collections and Disbursements](#) summarizing transactions for the month and likewise reported to the members during fellowship day.

Warning:

Almost certainly, there will come a time when the local Church accumulates a sizable fund, and there will be inviting suggestions or recommendations from the leadership or from the membership for the Church to engage in a business activity that will earn more money for the Church. Lest you will be walking into another trap set up by Satan, let the congregation be forewarned of the following:

1. The main source of revenues of the Church should come from members' offering or giving.
 2. The business of the Church is to win souls. The funds should be used for expenses in spreading the Gospel. In fact, it is more encouraging to see a Church fund at a bare minimum than one with a large cash balance. A large cash balance means that the Church is not doing evangelism work.
 3. A business plan, no matter how noble its purpose may be, will sooner or later cause disagreement among the members, which may create a division in the Church. Besides that, special meetings need to be held and committees need to be formed to oversee and monitor such business activity. The time spent on these meetings is wasted as this time could be used in planning and organizing evangelism work that encourages involvement of all members of the Church for the work of seeking the lost.
-

Start a Church Accounting System

You should set up a control system for Church collections and disbursements right now. First, appoint a treasurer who shall receive all collections from offerings or giving. Secondly, look for a qualified bookkeeper to perform the record-keeping function and preparation of financial reports.

Financial reports should be made available to all members on a weekly or a monthly basis.

LESSON VI – OUR DUTY TO SPREAD THE WORD

What is the Great Commission?

You became a Christian because of your faith and obedience to the Gospel. Your obedience to the Gospel has made you a follower of Christ, entitled to all the privileges of a rightful heir in the kingdom of God, as promised in the scriptures. Therefore, as you were saved through the power of the Gospel, God calls upon you to call the lost through the Gospel. This command is often called the Great Commission.

After his resurrection, Jesus announced an invitation to his disciples for them to meet him in Galilee. The angels announced the invitation to Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James. Mathew 28:7; Jesus himself repeated the invitation to his disciples when he suddenly appeared to them.

The meeting in Galilee was a rallying point for the final announcement of Jesus to his disciples before he ascends to heaven and sit at the right hand of the Father. These are the final commands of Jesus, often referred to as "The Great Commission", found in the following passages: (Please click and view each link)

[Matthew 28:18-20](#) | [Mark 16:15](#) | [Luke 24:46-49](#)

Read the above passages thoroughly and observe the following commands:

- "Go and teach the Gospel to all nations"
- "Teach them to observe all things I have commanded."
- "I will be with you until the end of the age."

Go and teach the Gospel

Until the Gospel is preached to all men, the second coming of Jesus Christ will not take place. [Matthew. 24:14](#)

Matthew simply narrated the command for Christians to go to all nations and teach, culminating the teaching with a submission to baptism, the final act of acceptance and washing away of sins, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. [Matthew 28:18-20](#)

Mark underscored the presence of faith and submission to baptism, as essential steps to be taken by a repentant sinner in order to be saved. [Mark 16:15](#)

Luke was more specific in his description of the Gospel with his account that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached among all nations. [Luke 24:46-49](#)

The Gospel must be preached by all Christians

It is therefore urgent that we preach the Gospel. The work of evangelism does not lie solely upon the leaders of the Church. The Great Commission was issued to all Christians, young and old, men and women.

The New Testament records several instances when women preached about Jesus, take note of the following instances:

- The Samaritan woman, the woman evangelist. [John 4:29](#)
- Women with Paul who helped in preaching the Gospel. [Philippians 4:3](#)
- Anna the prophetess, a preacher to the Jews. [Luke 2:37](#)

However, a clear distinction as to the role of women in the Church has to be made at this point. While teaching the Gospel may be performed by women, the duty of

preaching sermons, with words of exhortation and admonition is the sole responsibility of men. Take note of the following passages:

- Women not to take over the duty of preaching words of admonition and exhortation, but instead to remain silent. [I Corinthians 14:34](#)
- Women should not have authority over men in the assembly. [I Timothy 2:11:13](#)

Christianity flourished in the first century even as the Gospel was preached by ordinary men and women. The early preachers and evangelists did not have excellent educational backgrounds. They did not have imposing buildings that would invite listeners and stir their interest. They did not have to wait for a good weather or a convenient time to preach. They simply preached the Gospel, in season and out of season. [I Corinthians 1:26](#) | [II Timothy 4:2](#)

Teaching them to observe my commands

Christians belong to a new dispensation founded by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are not under the Old Testament law. This is the reason we meet in fellowship on the first day of the week, which is a Sunday, also called the Lord's Day, and not on the Sabbath day, which is Saturday, as the Jews did in the Old Testament. This also explains why Jesus issued a new command.

■ The greatest command. [Matthew. 22:37-39](#)

- Love one another. [John 13:34-35](#)
- Commands through the Holy Spirit. [I Corinthians 14:37](#).

Therefore, do not be contentious and quarrelsome. Be of one mind, Paul says. Avoid disagreements over opinions and over things that are not laid out in the scriptures. Jesus said that unless we love one another, and abide in him, the world will never believe that he was sent by the Father. [John 17:21](#)

And I will be with you

The divine promise of Jesus Christ that he will be with us until the end of time should keep the fire of evangelism burning in our hearts. Hesitation and fear of persecution should not hinder us from preaching the Gospel.

Again, these passages from the scriptures (Click the link, please) should encourage you and continue to strengthen your faith:

- Like branches in the vine. [John 15:4](#)

- In perpetual fellowship. John 17:23
- No power can separate us from the love of God. Romans 8:38-39

We will end this lesson with an encouragement that the Holy Spirit will abide in us. He will teach us bring to remembrance whatsoever commands Jesus has given to us. John 14:26

With the power of the Holy Spirit that gives you love and enthusiasm, start using your gifts and blessings to spread the good news, which is the Gospel, by which you were saved.

LESSON VII – THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GOVERNMENT

The Function of a Government

One of the fundamental functions of any government is to provide public order. A government that cannot enforce the rule of law over its citizens cannot achieve its objectives. This is the underlying reason that Paul exhorted us to be subject to higher powers. The authorities that exist have been established by God to promote order. Romans 13:1 Paul warned us that to resist authority is to rebel against God. Romans 13:2. Paul continues to exhort Christians to pray for the government and pay their taxes.

The Jews looked forward to receiving a king who would usher in a glorious reign and banish all oppressions from imperial Rome. They hated the Romans for they were corrupt and oppressive. Yet Jesus announced that his Kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36

Christians, therefore, live in two kingdoms: first, the spiritual Kingdom of God and second, the physical kingdom of earth . The Bible teaches us to be good citizens in both kingdoms.

But being obedient in everything does not justify carrying out commands that contradict the will of God. We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29 Should we disobey the government under these circumstances, we must be ready for persecutions, but let us rejoice that we suffer for what is right. 1 Peter 3:14

The Church is not a force against any government

Jesus paid his taxes to exemplify respect and honor to the government . When required to pay his tax, he summoned Peter to go to the lake and catch a fish, and take the coin from its mouth to pay for both of their taxes. Matthew 17:27

Apostle Peter pointed out that obedience to government authority is in reverence for the Lord's sake. 1 Peter 2:13-14

The Church, therefore, must not be involved in partisan politics for any reason. Church leaders should not use the Church and its members as a source of influence to support their political agenda. They should not bind the flock in support of political issues and things of this nature, simply because this exercise may offend those in the authority, who might take retaliatory steps to suppress the Christian's freedom to worship and assemble.

Pray for the government

The Church and state are separate. The Church does not need a special favor from any government in order to survive; it only desires freedom to assemble and worship in a holy and peaceful manner. Therefore, as we are commanded, let us pray with thankfulness that we may continue to assemble and fellowship in peace. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Pray for those who make laws to give us laws which are just, to benefit the majority and not only a selected few.

Pray for the head of state, to properly execute the law without prejudice and discrimination; to be prudent but strict in the implementation of ordinances and laws; and to give equal opportunities to everyone.

Pray for those who judge, that they may bring justice swiftly, and that all matters under their judgment have been examined to the full satisfaction of the law.

Pray for governments all over the world to grant us the freedom to worship and assemble.

It doesn't take a whole nation to pray in order to be heard by God Almighty. It only takes two or three Christians gathered in Jesus name, praying in faith. Matthew 18:19-20

Pay your taxes

To sustain and support its objectives, and to attain economic stability, a government imposes taxes on its citizens. Every government needs money to defray the cost of salaries, supplies, and such other costs that are necessary in government administration. To support the government, Paul encourages us to pay our share. Romans 13:6

Warning to those in corrupt government

Blessed are those whose governments look at the welfare of their people. Woe to those whose governments are ruled by tyrants and the corrupt. But let us not harbor hatred against them, instead let us pray for them. Ponder on these encouraging words:

- Vengeance is mine says the Lord. Roman 12:19-20
- God is just. II Thessalonians 1:6

and more . . .

- Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees. Isaiah 10:1
- Those who receive gifts in exchange for favors will be overthrown. Proverbs 29:4

- To the judges, take heed. 2 Chronicles 19:6

Even as we worship and assemble in peace, let us offer prayers for our brothers and sisters, who suffer persecution because of their faith, from a repressive government that is ignorant of the power of God.

We will end this lesson with an urgent plea: will you now pray for your government? If your answer is yes, look for a brother or sister in the faith and start praying together. From this time on, always include those in the government authority in your fellowships and prayers.

LESSON VIII – THE CHRISTIAN AS A WORKER

Paul encourages Christians to be model workers, exemplifying diligence, exceptional service, and obedience because this praiseworthy nature of a Christian when seen by others make teaching of the Gospel attractive. There is nothing greater on earth than for a sinner to be given the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Paul explains the right conduct and behavior of a Christian in the workplace. Titus 2:9-10:

- be subject to our masters in everything

Obedience to our masters should be made in faith, not grudgingly, and most importantly, not for selfish gains. This can be explained fully in Colossians 3:22
But being subject to everything does not include doing sinful things. When your master compels you to perform work that is against the will of God, you should disobey

because we are commanded to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29. Have faith in your heart that God will not allow you to become slaves of men to do evil works.

- try to please them

Not to win their favor, but to please our masters with sincerity of the heart and reverence for the Lord. Colossians 3:22

- not to talk back to them

Talking back to your master even when he is wrong should be avoided. Your humility will give you rewards. Put your trust in the Lord and not yourself.

- show that you can be fully trusted

Never steal for any reason. God provides all of your needs. Show that you can be trusted by being honest at all times in dealing with your master.

In his other letters to the Christians, Paul outlined the right attitude of a Christian towards work.

- Steal no more. Work with your hands. Ephesians 4:28
- Do not be a freeloader. Work your own bread. II Thessalonians 3:12
- Do not be busybodies, being idle. I Timothy 5:13
- If a man will not work, he shall not eat. II Thessalonians 3:11

The right work attitudes

Be encouraged to work diligently as cited in the the following passages:

- Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. Proverbs 10:4
- The lazy should look at the ant. Proverbs 6:6
- A sleeper is disgraceful. Proverbs 10:5 | Proverbs 20:13
- Money gathered by labor grows while dishonest money dwindles away. Proverbs 13:11

Work for the Lord

Whatever work you do, give it your best shot, as though you were working for the Lord. Do not be discouraged when you seem to be miles away from the top of the ladder of success in your career. The road to any worthwhile achievement is paved with bitter disappointments. Your struggles are not unknown to God, who provides you with the strength to face every single day of toil. Colossians 3:23-24

