

Program Transcripts

February 2024



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

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Topics subject to change without notice

FEBRUARY 4 – WHO IS JESUS?

No one in all of history is like Jesus Christ, but who is this Jesus who loved us and died upon a cross? The New Testament describes Jesus by titles and descriptions that reveal who He is and why He came to earth.

FEBRUARY 11 – EXAMINE YOURSELVES

Paul asked the church at Corinth, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.” Perhaps we too should take an inventory of our spiritual lives and character. What might we see?

FEBRUARY 18 – A SIN-SICK SOUL

Many today are sick and may not know it! I’m not speaking physically but spiritually. People who have allowed sin habits to form in their lives are opening their lives to much harm, and they desperately need the Lord to save them.

FEBRUARY 25 – FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Paul said in Galatians 6:1, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free.” Many think Christianity restricts us and has too many rules, but true Christianity frees us from sin and opens the door to a new life!

Who Is Jesus?

No one in all of history is like Jesus Christ, but who is this Jesus who loved us and died upon a cross? We will look into Scripture to consider who Jesus is.

The Scriptures provide for us an unfailing guide to the truth. If we have theological questions, we can be sure the Scriptures will never deceive us or lead us astray. Scholars have studied the Bible for thousands of years, every book and every word. They found Jesus was right when He said in Matthew 4 verse 4 that, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Now Jesus was indeed unique. There've been other prophets found in Scripture, but none are like Jesus. Many religious leaders have arisen through the ages, but none have the love, purity, grace, and truth like Jesus Christ.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John chapter 1 verses 43 to 49. Where Jesus meet two individuals an apostle named Philip and also Nathanael.

"The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.'"

This reading helps us to know a little more about Jesus. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You have given us Your word that helps us to understand our savior Jesus Christ. Who is our Lord and who has blessed in so many ways. Helps us Heavenly Father to always follow Him and to serve Him and to love Him. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Lord Jesus was anointed of God as a prophet, a priest, and a King. The Scriptures first assure us that Jesus was indeed a prophet. In Acts 3:22 to 24 Peter reminds the Jews of Moses' prophecy, "Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days."

The Lord Jesus was, second, also a priest, not a Levitical priest of the old covenant, but a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The book of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 2:17 to 18, "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation (that is atoning sacrifice) for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." Now Jesus was not like the Levites since He never sinned and was from heaven. Hebrews 4 and verse 14 to 16 says, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 7:23 to 25 explains another difference: "The former priests (that is the Levitical priest) were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." Yes Jesus intercedes for us, mediates for us, and advocates for us with the Father, so that we might remain in God's grace.

Hebrews 7:26 to 28 says, "For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever."

The Lord Jesus, third, is indeed a King. He is the promised Messiah. That's the word Christ means: "Messiah," the anointed One. The word "Christ" appears nearly 500 times in the New Testament; and each time means Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of David and King of Israel. Isaiah 9:6- to prophecies: "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

When the wise men came to Jerusalem to Herod, they asked in Matthew 2 and verse 2, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." Well the priests and the scribes knew Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem in fulfillment of the prophecy found in Micah 5 and verse 2.

After Jesus was tried by the Council, on another occasion, they sent Him to Pilate and Pilate examined Him. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Well the Lord Jesus answers in John 18:36 to 37, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Jesus as Messiah ruled over not a physical country but a spiritual kingdom that is world-wide. When Jesus was crucified, Matthew 27:37 says that they put a charge against Him which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Revelation 17:14 calls Jesus the "Lord of lords and King of kings."

The Scriptures, fourth, call Jesus the Son of God. Matthew 16 verses 15 to 17 says: that He (Jesus) said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." When Jesus was baptized, you'll remember, the Father in heaven recognized Him. Luke 3:21 to 22 says: Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

The Lord Jesus was present at creation with the Father. You see He is the creator and sustainer of all. Colossians 1:15 to 17 says that, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (not the first one created but the first born who rules over creation) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Hebrews 1:1 to 3 begins by saying, "God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The Scriptures, fifth, speak of Jesus as a Divine person with the Father. John 1:1 to 4 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. (there

wasn't anything made except what He did) In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Now after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, you'll remember that Thomas doubted and said, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." But when the Lord Jesus appeared again and Thomas was present, He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:27 and 8).

Now Hebrews 1:8 to 9 goes farther: But of the Son (speaking of Jesus) he says (and he's quoting from Psalm 45:6 to 7), he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of (your) uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, (speaking to Jesus) your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

The Scriptures, sixth, call Jesus Lord. Now this is no small matter. As Lord, we belong to Him and are accountable to Him. 1 Corinthians 6:19 reminds us, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." Since Jesus is Lord of all, we belong to Him and must obey Him. Our bodies don't belong to us. They belong to Jesus. He purchased us with His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18 to 19). For this reason, we need to change our perspective about how we think of the Lord Jesus. We must take up our crosses and follow Him.

Philippians 2:5 to 11 says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Yes it matters whether we follow Jesus as Lord or live in lawless rebellion. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 that, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Again the Lord Jesus asked in Luke 6:46, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Many live as if the Lord Jesus didn't exist, not caring that they will one day have to give account to Him. You can't treat Jesus as if He doesn't matter and expect Him to bless you.

The Lord Jesus Christ, seventh, is our Savior. In fact, the very name "Jesus" refers to one who delivers and saves. In Matthew 1:21 the angel of the Lord told Joseph about Mary that, "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." The Lord Jesus said in John 3:17 to 19, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; (but) he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

The Lord Jesus wants you to be saved and He painfully suffered in your place on the cross so that you could be delivered from sin. 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says, "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might bring you to God." No one could ever pay a higher price with greater love than your Savior. He said in Matthew 20:28 that, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Paul knew how important it is to be saved from sin and saved from this evil world. He said in 1 Timothy 1:15 that, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." John said in 1 John 4:14, "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

Now saving us was more important than simply forgiving our sins. He wanted something better for us. In Titus 2:13 to 14 Paul speaks of "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." Jesus leads us to love righteousness rather than loving sin. And we can become zealous to do good rather than evil. He offered us something better than being enslaved to sinful desires. We can become children of God who love God with all our hearts and we love others as well. Won't you come to Jesus Christ?

Let's pray together. Father we're grateful for the offering of Jesus Christ as our Savior. We pray that You will help us to make Him Lord of our lives to follow Your will always. And we're thankful for all that He has done for us. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

There is one last description of Jesus that we need to mention. When Jesus comes again, Jesus will come to bless those who follow Him and to judge disbelievers and the disobedient. John 12:48 Jesus says that, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." Again 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." When Peter preaching to Cornelius in Acts 10:42 he said, "And He (that is Jesus) ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead." Yes, the Lord Jesus will judge you on the last day according to His words.

Now the Lord Jesus knows all about you; He knows whether you believe in Him or whether you've rebelled against Him. He knows whether you serve Him or serve sin. You can't escape the Day of Judgment. Ecclesiastes 11 and verse 9 says, "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things."

Please get right with the Lord and stay faithful. To become a Christian, believe in the Lord Jesus; repent of your sins; confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and be baptized into Christ. Now baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). God will wash away your sins when you're baptized (Acts 22:16). So please come to the Lord and follow Him.

Examine Yourself

Let's take a pause right now to take an inventory of our spiritual lives and character. Let us examine ourselves according to the Scriptures. What will we see?

Proverbs 9 verse 10 says that, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Now if you wish to know the Holy One and desire wisdom, study the Scriptures. The Bible contains a treasury of wisdom and knowledge for the soul hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Now each moment you spend searching the Scriptures will bless you.

Robert Burns in his humorous poem, "To A Louse," tells the story of spotting a louse crawling on a lady's bonnet in church. Well this fine lady had no idea that the louse (what we call "lice") is moving around on her head. And he remarks, "O would some Power the giftie give us To see ourselves as others see us! It would from many a blunder free us." Well we often make judgments about the faults of others but are unwilling to admit or deal with our own sins and weaknesses. In all the history of the Bible, there are only a handful of times when people say, "I have sinned." We'd rather make excuses or blame someone else for our faults.

Most of us check the mirror before we go out. We want to see how we appear to others, so that we may present ourselves at our best. Have we ever taken time to check our disposition and attitudes before we worship God or we meet with others? Some complain and some slander; some are angry, and others are depressed. Some have tongues that deceive, while others have mouths full of cursing. Some disrespect both God and people. And some simply don't care what God thinks!

Our reading today comes from James chapter 1 verses 22 to 25. And James is telling the people how they need to live up to what they believe and what they read. He says,

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

What a wonderful reading from God's word. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your love and we're thankful Father for Your word which teaches us. Father help us not only to be good listeners to Your word but also people who put it into practice. May we do Your will always. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Paul in his last written message to the Corinthians said in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" Examining ourselves is not always an easy task. Many people hate to go to the doctor's office and be examined, because they don't want to know the truth or to have to change. God expects us to do the right thing, when we learn what is right. James 4 and verse 17 says, "Therefore, to one who knows to do the right thing and does not do it, to him it is sin."

King David wanted to know the truth about his spiritual life and relationship with God; so he asked God in Psalm 26:2, "Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart." Again, David asked God in Psalm 139 verses 23 and 4, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." Do you want to know what God knows about you? Now God already knows all about us; He didn't need to

examine us. David, however, needed and wanted to know what God saw in him, so that he could correct his hurtful ways.

The Lord said in Jeremiah 17:9 to 10 that, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds." Now it's common for people to lie to themselves when the truth is painful or unwanted. If God revealed your hurtful ways to you, would you make changes? If you compared your behaviors and attitudes to the way the Lord Jesus lived and acted, would you make changes?

Some know their faults but ignore them; they would rather focus on others. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 15:18 to 19, "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." God knows our deeds and knows our hearts. He knows we thought of sin before we committed sin.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:21 to 22, "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not murder' and 'Whoever murders shall be guilty before the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell." Now it's easy and arrogant to apply the rules of God only to our actions. God knows our hearts too. Calling others names that condemn can actually cause a person to condemn himself.

The Lord continues to speak of the need to control our thoughts in Matthew 5:27 to 28, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." 2 Corinthians 7 and verse 1 urges us, "Since we have these promises, (that is promises from God) beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." We must control our actions and also the desires of our hearts.

The Lord Jesus remarked about the foolishness of the individual who judges others but doesn't take the time to deal with his own flaws and weaknesses. He said in Matthew 7:3 to 5, "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." It's arrogant to think we aren't accountable for the very things we hold others accountable for. It's easy to nitpick at others' faults and ignore our own.

Friends, our words reveal our character. The Lord Jesus said about words that we speak in Matthew 12:33 to 37, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

There are many sins that start in the heart and arise in our words. Ephesians 5:3 to 4 says, "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving." The words and tone of voice you use say more about your character than you

may realize. Crude critics say more about themselves than they do about the person they criticize and slander.

How do you regard what God says in His word is another thing. 1 Thessalonians 5:20 to 22 says, "Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." Many despise the word of God, and others are ashamed of it. You remember the Lord Jesus said in Luke 9:26 that, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Some who sit in judgment of God's Holy Word today forget that the very words they despise will one day judge their souls for eternity.

How we worship matters. The church at Corinth was ruining their participation in the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:20 to 21 tells the story: "Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk." And he reminded them that this was a time when we should take seriously the body and the blood of Jesus. The Lord's Supper is a solemn memorial feast.

And he remarked in verses 27 to 32, "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." Now it's better to find out the truth and make changes than to continue in error and sin to the destruction of our souls.

We must understand: God always knows our thinking and our way of life. When confronted by his three friends, Job defended his way of life. And Job said in chapter 31, verses 4 to 8, "Does He not see my ways And number all my steps? If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart followed my eyes, Or if any spot has stuck to my hands, Let me sow and another eat, And let my crops be uprooted."

Job continues in Job 31:9 to 11. He says, "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway, May my wife grind for another, And let others kneel down over her. For that would be a lustful crime; Moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges." Job recognized that he cannot cover up his sins. And he said in Job 31:33 to 34, "Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, Because I feared the great multitude, And the contempt of families terrified me, And kept silent and did not go out of doors?" Job was not perfect, but he was an honorable man who took God seriously. Do you?

2 Corinthians 6:14 to 18 says: Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." We must be careful that we don't allow the ways of the world to overwhelm our devotion to our Father in heaven.

We need to be busy in the Lord's work. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Paul then wrote in Colossians 4:17: And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." Are you working for the Lord?

Some people think that everyone will be saved, that no matter what they believe or do they'll still be saved. Well, this simply isn't true. People who think this have really deceived themselves. 1 John 1:5 to 7 says, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." I tell you, "if" is a big word! If we aren't walking in the light with the Lord, we have no promise that our sins will be forgiven.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 to 14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is (confined) constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it." Are you surprised at that? You know most people think everybody's going to be saved. And if you say that everyone will be saved, should I listen to you or should I listen to what the Lord Jesus said? Our Savior said in Matthew 7. The Lord said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." We need to please put Jesus Christ first. To put Him in our heart and in our life. And now only believe what His word says but to practice it, to do it, to live it out in our lives. Let me encourage you to take time to examine yourself to see how you're living. Whether you're faith is being lived out or it's just pretended.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we pray that You will bless us in our study and in our lives that we may truly commit ourselves to You and to Your will always. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." God wants us to live good lives. The apostle Paul urges us in Romans 12:1 and 2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Yes the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect.

Now this transformation begins with getting right with the living God. Some people think everything is all right with God but are unaware that they never came to the Lord or have drifted away from the Lord. Now if you've never obeyed the gospel, then trust in the Lord Jesus, repent of your sins, confess Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Now that's what Peter told the lost to do in Acts 2 verse 38. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion or burial in water and we do that with Christ whenever we're baptised. We die to sin, at that point, and we live to righteousness. When you're baptized, God washes away your sins and adds you to His church (Acts 2 verse 41 and 22 verse 16). Now the main thing is not to wait. Don't wait, get right with God today!

Now just because there was a time when you went to church when you were young doesn't mean that God accepts you at this point in your life. You can drift away from God in sin and neglect a great salvation (Hebrews 2 verses 1 to 3). Christian friend, if you're living in sin, confess it, repent of your sin, and ask God's forgiveness. And God is merciful to the humble and contrite.

A Sin-Sick Soul

Many today are sick and may not know it! I'm not speaking physically but spiritually. They have a sin-sick soul. In this lesson we will look to Jesus to save us from a sin-sick soul.

We want to please the Lord and have no other purpose than to do His will. We encourage everyone else to do His will as well. Ezra 7 and verse 10 says, "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." Well we have the same desire, but we're set on studying, teaching, and practicing the teaching of Jesus Christ found in the New Testament. The gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16).

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:34, "Truly, truly, I say to you, (that) everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin." Well we often don't realize how just one simple sin can affect our lives. Sinning only one time can lead to repeating it. We tend to downplay our sins and ignore the harm a sinful habit can do to our thinking, to our homes, and our communities. Sin today may bring you pleasure and it'll bring you heartache tomorrow.

1 Timothy 6 and verse 10 says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." Sin—that is all sin because it's pleasurable—is addictive! It destroys lives and families. Sin's slavery causes people to do things that they hate. Paul said, you remember, in Romans 7:14 to 15, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Do you hate what you do?

Our reading today is from Matthew chapter 9 verses 10 to 13 and this tells about Jesus eating with many sinners and tax collectors and what happened.

"Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, 'Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?' But when Jesus heard this, He said, 'It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: "I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"

Yes that's the heart of Jesus, to love all of us. Let's pray. Father we're thankful for the compassion that You have for us as weak people and people who sin. And we're thankful Father for Your love and for Your grace. Father we pray that You'll bless us now as we study and may we always do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Romans 3:9 to 18 says: What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Romans 3:22 to 23 concludes, "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

People often say they haven't sinned enough to be lost eternally. They don't understand how serious sin truly is. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and that is always true, even if it is but one sin. Some deny they've sinned altogether; but 1 John 1:8 says, "If we say (that) we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:10 goes farther: "If we say (that) we have not sinned, we

make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” When you say you haven't sinned, you deceive yourself and contradict the Lord. You act like Jesus Christ is a liar!

Jeremiah 17:9 to 10 says that, “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.” Jeremiah 16:12 reveals, ““You too have done evil, even more than your forefathers; for behold, you are each one walking according to the stubbornness of his own evil heart, without listening to Me.” So hard-hearted were these people that Jeremiah could say in Jeremiah 6:15, “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down,” says the LORD.

Well, our culture today is not much different than the culture of Jeremiah. Our culture laughs about our sins and condemns anyone who thinks sin is wrong. Many today have ceased to blush over anything. Some in our culture have turned morality upside down. They've spread immoral behavior of every kind. And this ruins our society and compromises our character. Many today don't even know their churches, who have twisted Scripture to permit ungodliness. They say what God calls sin is not only okay but good. They also oppose anyone who will not agree with them and approve every form of sin. Fulton Sheen correctly observed many years ago: “First we overlook evil. Then we permit evil. Then we legalize evil. Then we promote evil. Then we celebrate evil. Then we persecute those who still call it evil.”

Isaiah 5:20 to 21 says, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!” Do you honestly believe you can turn God's ways upside down and imagine that God won't notice or care? Ecclesiastes 12:14 reminds us: “For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.” Again, Romans 14:10 to 12 says: For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Ephesians 5:5 to 6 says, “For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” This is why God warns us in Hebrews 3:12 to 13, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” 2 Timothy 3 and verse 13 predicts, “But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

Yes people will lie to themselves and they'll lie to others rather than admit they have sinned or have been exposed to sin. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.” Many think well, “I can watch whatever I want, and it won't change or hurt me.” Many think “I can run with any crowd I want, and they won't lead me away from Christ.” Don't be deceived. Whatever sinful things or people you associate with will affect how you think and what you'll behave and how you'll behave. Many people have found themselves committing sins that surprised them. And it was because they associated with bad people who did evil things.

People can change and drift away from God over time. Remember King Solomon, the wisest man of his day; but his wisdom didn't keep him from being weak to sin. 1 Kings 11:1 to 4 says, “Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel,

'You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.' Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been." My friend, if you love and hold fast to the wicked, in time you will become wicked too.

Paul dealt with a terrible sin troubling the whole church at Corinth. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 5:1 to 2 that, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and sexual immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. And you have become puffed up and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst." You see the church wouldn't discipline the man appropriately. They became arrogant. And sin should cause us to mourn; it costs us more suffering and heartache than any other thing. Sin does.

Paul determined the need to judge this man and he rebuked the church for ignoring this terrible sin. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 6, "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" When one person sins and gets away with it, other people think they can sin and get away with it too! When churches fail to deal with sin, it affects the whole congregation.

The church at Thyatira also failed to deal with a sin-sick soul who had infected others with her false teaching. The Lord Jesus Himself rebuked this church, because they tolerated sin. The Lord said in Revelation 2:20 to 23, "But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.'" Do you see how seriously the Lord Jesus takes sin?

Choosing to sin opens the door to more sin, and in time these sins will start controlling your mind and your life. Romans 8:5 to 8 says, "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." James 4 and verse 4 speaks to Christians who give in to sin. He said to them: "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world sets himself as an enemy of God." Sin will make an enemy of God out of you. You can't love God and love sin at the same time.

1 John 2:15 to 17 clearly says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

Galatians 5:19 to 21 speaks of the works of the flesh, which will condemn us: "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. (and Paul says) I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." My friends, only punishment awaits those who have sin in their lives and do not know the way of the Lord.

Thankfully, God is aware of our sin-sick souls. God's heart breaks over our sins. He loved this world so much that He could not leave us in sin. He wanted something better for us. 1 Timothy 2:3 to 4 says, "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God is willing to give us time to change. 2 Peter 3 verse 9 says, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." The Lord God doesn't want you to lose your soul; He wants to save you from sin and He sent His Son Jesus to this earth to die for your sins so that you could be saved.

Now because God wanted to rescue us from sin, He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross. 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says, "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might bring you to God." Jesus said in Luke 19 and verse 10 that, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Are you a sin-sick soul and are you lost? I want you to know that the Lord Jesus wants to rescue and save you! But you must let Him. Won't you.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for the grace and the love and the compassion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And we pray Heavenly Father that we will always come to Him, that we will love Him, that we'll repent of our sins. And Father that we will do Your will always. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

If you think your sins are no big deal and will not cause you to be lost, you are surely deceiving yourself. Sin separates us from God, it causes spiritual death, deceives us, ruins our morals, enslaves us, and ultimately causes us to be lost eternally. You may think sin is a small thing, but you're not the One offended by sin. Sin offends God; it's an abomination to Him. And God hates sin and condemns all sin.

God, however, loves you and gave His Son Jesus to save you from sin. He doesn't want to punish you for your sins. He wants something better for you than an evil life, enslaved to sin. He wants to set you free and give you life. The One who gave you physical life, also gives you newness of life in Christ, an abundant life as a Christian, and eternal life in heaven. That's His desire and His plan for you, if you're willing to accept it. Romans 6 and verse 16 says, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, (that) you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" What are you choosing to obey?

Please choose to follow the Lord Jesus Christ! Put your faith in the Lord and in His teaching. Love Him enough to turn from sin in repentance and follow Him. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Now baptism into Christ, an immersion in water, and it always, always precedes salvation! Acts 2:38 and 22:16 confirm this. Being baptized into Christ is a decision made by a person old enough to believe and repent. And I pray that you'll make that decision to obey the Lord today! Put Christ first!

Freedom in Christ

Paul said, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free." Let us see how Christ sets us free.

Many people, who don't understand our faith, think of Christianity as merely a list of rules telling us what we can't do and what we must do. While there are rules and precepts in Christ, God gave us these instructions to give us freedom not to ruin our lives. You can't buy a new car without also getting a manual. That manual informs us how to care for the car and how to get the most pleasure and use out of the car. We're grateful for that manual. And in the same way, God gave us a soul, and the Bible is God's manual for the soul. He didn't give us this manual to punish us but to provide what we needed so we could be free to enjoy life forever. I'm so thankful to God for the Bible.

People long to be free from painful and humiliating restraints. Prisoners tired of walls want their freedom; slaves want to be free of their human masters; addicts want to be free from their enslaving habits; people who are ill or infirmed long to be healthy; and students want to finish school so they can be free to pursue their lives. We love the Lord, and our love for the Lord frees us from the things that harm us and gives us the opportunity to serve. It gives us the opportunity to bless others. The more we know the Lord, the more we want to be like Him. We freely choose to follow Christ because we love Him, and we know that He loves us.

Our reading today is from 1 Peter chapter 2 beginning in verse 13 and continuing down to verse 17. It talks about how our freedom in Christ means we honor authority.

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You give us freedom to be Your children and to be Your servants. To do good and to bless the lives of all around us. Help us to live as free men but always to honor You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Galatians 5 verse 1 says, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free." While Christianity is a commitment to Christ; it's also a means of freedom for the soul. Christ came to this earth to give us an abundant life and eternal life. He came to bless us in the present and in the life to come. If you are in Christ, you now have all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. Treasure those blessings.

When we speak of freedom in Christ, we have to understand that Christ sets us free from many things that will harm us. When people decide to follow sin, they inevitably fall into ruin. They hurt themselves and usually hurt those that they love. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:34, "Truly, truly, I say to you, (that) everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." We might call this an addiction or a habit, but it's really enslavement. Sin is controlling and makes people do things they don't want to do. Paul explained in Romans 7:14 to 17, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me."

When people find pleasure in sin, that pleasure leads them to do wicked things that they regret and it brings them shame. It controls their thoughts and actions and only leads to ruin. We mentioned last week, Romans 8:5 to 8 and we'll say again, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on

the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Because he had sinned, Paul saw himself as wretched and he longed for the freedom that came in Christ! He said in Romans 7:24 to 25, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Maybe you've felt that way, felt trapped by sin and you longed for forgiveness. Paul wanted to live a righteous life that would please God. Paul knew sin—not God—was the real enemy that enslaves us and makes life miserable. The Lord Jesus came to this earth to set us free from sin and to give us peace and hope. He came to show us a better way of life and to give us the opportunity to live it.

How sad that some Christians return to the very sins from which they were delivered. They've forgotten the price Jesus paid to free them from sin. They have forgotten how sin traps them, and shames them, and ruins their lives. They let their eyes, their flesh, and their pride lead them away from God and back into misery. They put their souls at great risk. 2 Peter 2:20 to 21 says, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them (that is those defilements) and overcome, (he says) the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." Christian brother or sister, don't let sin take back your soul.

The forgiveness and freedom we have in Christ does more for us than the Old Testament Law could ever do. Paul told the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13:38 to 39, "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him (Jesus) forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

The book of Galatians tells how some Jewish Christians were trying to bind circumcision and the Law of Moses on the Gentile Christians. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:15 to 16 that, "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." We find our freedom from sin by faith and obedience to Christ, not by the works of the Law. Galatians 5 and verse 6 says, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love."

The freedom we have in Christ is not merely freedom from the things that hurt us; it's also a freedom to pursue the things that build us up and bless others. Galatians 5:22 to 23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." God is at work in our lives to produce some wonderful qualities, and there's no limit to how much these things we can enjoy and share with others. We are free to pursue these things to our heart's content, knowing they will not only bless our lives but bless everyone around us.

We have no limit on the amount of God's love we can show to others. The more we know of the grace and love of God, the more we rejoice and the more we want to share it. Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:18 to 19 that the Christians "may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." The more we know the love of God, the more we are thankful for it!

Christ's love leads us to a joy inexpressible and full of glory! There is no limit to the joy we know in Christ. In fact, though he was in prison and fearful of losing his life, Paul urged the church in Philippians 4 and verse 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Life can give us many miseries, but it cannot snatch from us our joy in Christ, the joy of a home in heaven.

As the Spirit works in our lives through the word, we can find peace. The Scriptures are filled with the promises of God in black and white. In Christ we can live free from worry, because we know our Father in heaven provides for us, that He hears our prayers, forgives our sins, protects us from evil, and gives us an inheritance. We can sleep at night with the assurance that God cares for us and is with us.

When we read of Christ's patience in Scripture, it leads us to be patience. Patience is the ability to remain emotionally calm and assured in the face of frustration or misfortune and keep from complaining. We see how Christ endured the cross without taking vengeance, and it gives us the inner strength to endure whatever hostilities we may face.

Because God has been so kind to us, we are free to pursue kindness towards others. We're free to help others in times of trouble, to forgive others, and to give freely of our time and energy to bless others. There's no law against kindness. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 6 verse 38, "give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure (that) you use it will be measured back to you."

God's example of generosity leads us to pursue a life of goodness and generosity. We know we can never out give God. Galatians 6:9 to 10 says, "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

The Spirit through the Scriptures also reveals to us the faithfulness of God, which leads us to be faithful. He fought for hours through the pain, the mocking, and the shame of the cross. The Lord Jesus endured the cross to the end and never gave up on us. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." We can count on the Lord, and that assurance leads us to be faithful to Him and never give up living the Christian life.

Now since God is gentle with us, blessing us even when we don't deserve His blessing, we learn to be gentle with others. Paul said in Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Our loving Father in heaven is the God of all grace, (He's) the God of all comfort, and (He is) the God of all hope. Because God treated us gently in saving us, you know what, we can forgive others when they trespass against us.

Some people think to be self-controlled is somehow a lack freedom, but the truth is that no one can be free who lacks self-control. When people can't control themselves, their passions enslave them to their desires and to their lusts. Addictions enslave, but self-control keeps us out of slavery. Self-control allows us to pursue what is good, pursue what's healthy rather than to feed some evil habit.

The gospel of Christ frees us from sin and frees us to pursue Christian love and service; but to have this freedom, we must abide in Christ. Our freedom is in Christ, not outside of Him. The Lord Jesus promised in John 8:31 to 32, "If you continue in My word, (that is you stay with what the word teaches) then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Staying within the words of Christ found in Scripture is how Jesus distinguishes His true disciples from others.

A train can't go anywhere unless it's on the tracks! The very tracks that confine it are the very tracks that make it free to travel mile after mile and carry heavy, heavy loads. Let's hold fast to Christ; only

Jesus has the words of eternal life. And when we leave the teaching of Christ, we move away from God and from the freedom He gives to us. 2 John 9 says that, "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; (did you catch that, does not have God) the one who abides (stays and dwells) in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son." To have the Father and the Son, we must abide in that teaching in His words. We must hear what Scripture says and follow it.

Well why does this matter? Well here's why. The Lord's words teach the truth that keeps us free from false hopes and lies. The words of Christ provide the truth and it means to tell right from wrong. They distinguish these words of Christ the real from the imaginary. They're a firm foundation to build our lives on. True freedom comes from hearing and doing what they say, from sticking to God's word. And to go beyond these words doesn't free us; it tangles us up in twisted human doctrines and opinions. And this is why we must ask ourselves if we're abiding in the words of Christ. It's the truth that sets us free, and we shouldn't settle for anything more. And we shouldn't settle for anything less.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for the love that You give us through Christ Jesus. And Father we're thankful that You've given us Your word. And Father help us to remain in Your word. So that we might be true disciple. And so that we might be free. Father we're thankful for Your love. Bless us and help to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:36, "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." I'm thankful for the Lord's power to set me free from sin and spiritual death. God gives us hope that we can change and become the people He wants to bring home to heaven. We don't have to be deceived and enslaved by sin. God desires something better for us. Romans 6:16 to 18 says, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." Here were lost, slaves of sin who obeyed the Lord Jesus, were set free from sin, and became the servants of righteousness.

The Lord frees us from misery to set us on a better pathway to the abundant life of love and service, to joy, and to eternal life. You become a Christian by being united with Christ. To be one with Christ you must put your faith in Him as the Son of God, repent of your sins, confess Him before others, and be baptized into Christ. Galatians 3:26 to 27 says, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Now baptism is that time when those outside of Christ are united and come into Christ, where His forgiveness and blessings are. The Lord will wash away your sins when you're baptized according to Acts 22:16 and He'll unite you with Christ according to Romans 6:4 and 5. Won't you come to the Lord today!