



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

*Program  
Study Guides*

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## **Better Person** **Matthew 5:13-16**

Today Search celebrates its 34<sup>th</sup> year of ministry on television. We're grateful for all our viewers. And we're deeply grateful to the churches and the individual Christians who make this program available and to our volunteers at Edmond who help us in our ministry. We come to you by the grace of God and with the support of many who love the truth and love your souls. God's Word is filled with truth and righteousness, and following the Lord is the best way. Today we are going to look at what it takes to make a better person.

**Today's reading is from the words of Jesus in the Gospel According to Matthew 5:13-16.**

Many people fall into the \_\_\_\_\_ of complaining and criticizing. They seem to concentrate on what is \_\_\_\_\_ and ignore what's \_\_\_\_\_, focusing on what is wrong and neglecting to see what's right. It's easy to become \_\_\_\_\_ about everything – your life, your family, your community, and your nation. We realize that worldly \_\_\_\_\_ surrounds us. It discourages us to see the constant battle militant unbelievers are waging against \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus and the pressure to remove God from everything in our society. Bible history, however, reminds us that \_\_\_\_\_ is in control of everything. In the end, the Lord Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ us in victory.

We can \_\_\_\_\_ the fact that our world is growing spiritually worse day by day and just give up; or we can resolve to make our little corners of the world a \_\_\_\_\_ place. We can't \_\_\_\_\_ much of what happens in our government, but we can make the most of our own lives. We can \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility for who we are, what we believe, and how we live. We can become the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ that God intended us to be. We can make our world a better place by making ourselves better people who \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ according to His teaching.

First, we would all do well to count our \_\_\_\_\_. Learning to be truly \_\_\_\_\_ for all things will brighten your life and make you a better person. First Thessalonians 5:18 urges us to "give \_\_\_\_\_ in all circumstances; for this is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God in Christ Jesus for you." In \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances, good or bad? Yes, in \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances! We can easily rejoice at victories and blessings; but it takes \_\_\_\_\_ to rejoice over the troubles and struggles. The apostles rejoiced in Acts 5:41 "that they were counted worthy to \_\_\_\_\_ dishonor for the name" of Christ Jesus. James 1:2-4 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet \_\_\_\_\_ of various kinds, for you know that the \_\_\_\_\_ of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

God is using that trial that you face today to \_\_\_\_\_ a better person out of you, so be thankful for it. If you can see your trial as something \_\_\_\_\_, you can rejoice even when life is difficult.

David went through many life-threatening experiences, but he said, “I will bless the LORD at \_\_\_\_\_ times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1). Count your blessings, and you will see you have \_\_\_\_\_ for which to be thankful. First John 3:1 says, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called the \_\_\_\_\_ of God; and such we are. For this reason the \_\_\_\_\_ does not know us, because it did not know Him.” God has marvelously \_\_\_\_\_ us in making us His children. The world won’t ever \_\_\_\_\_ us or even share our morals and values. But if we have to make a \_\_\_\_\_ between following the world or following the Lord, we choose the Lord. What we have in Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ than anything that this world offers. **Read Philippians 4:8.** We have to acknowledge the evil, yes; and the negative in our world from time to time; but we don’t have to \_\_\_\_\_ there. So let’s not focus our \_\_\_\_\_ there.

Second, we must \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God and take its teaching seriously. If you wish to feed and nourish your \_\_\_\_\_, you cannot find anything better than the Word of God. How long has it been since you read through a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible? Have you \_\_\_\_\_ read the Bible all the way through? While 88 percent of people own a Bible and 80 percent say that it’s sacred, 61 percent wish they read their Bibles \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible has the answers to the most important \_\_\_\_\_ of life. It reveals \_\_\_\_\_ we are, \_\_\_\_\_ we came from, \_\_\_\_\_ we are here, and \_\_\_\_\_ will happen to us after death.

We can measure the \_\_\_\_\_ of any nation or culture by how it treats God and the Bible. Those nations that \_\_\_\_\_ God and His Word may appear to prosper for a while, but as time passes, they crumble from the inside. Because they turn their backs on God and His values, they have no moral \_\_\_\_\_. When people are unafraid to lie, have no respect for authority, become selfish, and put their lusts before their families, their society \_\_\_\_\_ into great misery. When people \_\_\_\_\_ to God and put His commandments into \_\_\_\_\_, they find life filled with good things and with peace.

James contrasts human wisdom with God’s wisdom. **Read James 3:16-17.** When people do their own thing and live according to their own \_\_\_\_\_, it brings nothing but \_\_\_\_\_. But when people live according to the wisdom of God, they find \_\_\_\_\_. They are \_\_\_\_\_ to each other; and you can \_\_\_\_\_ with them. They’re willing to \_\_\_\_\_ those who need help; they bless everyone around them. They treat everyone the \_\_\_\_\_ and aren’t hypocrites. God’s way lifts people \_\_\_\_\_ instead of tearing them \_\_\_\_\_.

Third, we must \_\_\_\_\_ God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If everyone followed God’s \_\_\_\_\_ on earth, it would be a lot like \_\_\_\_\_. Crime and war would cease; all people would be treated like family and with \_\_\_\_\_. People would live honorably and speak the

\_\_\_\_\_ with one another. Instead of being filled with anger, they would \_\_\_\_\_ for forgiveness and they would \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness. They would settle their differences with \_\_\_\_\_, remembering the cross. They would help the weak, feed the hungry, and focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ on the cross. They would see sin as it truly is, destructive; and thank God for \_\_\_\_\_ us a better way in Christ.

If you don't \_\_\_\_\_ the people in your government, have you \_\_\_\_\_ for them? **Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2.** Whether we like people in government or not, we should pray for them, so that we could \_\_\_\_\_ peaceful and quiet lives and \_\_\_\_\_ godly and dignified in every way. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:44-45.** We should do the \_\_\_\_\_ thing, even if we're mistreated and slandered for it. We should do what is \_\_\_\_\_ to others, even when they don't \_\_\_\_\_ it. Why? Because we are \_\_\_\_\_ of our Father; and that's who we are.

Fourth, we must change our \_\_\_\_\_ and change our \_\_\_\_\_; that is, we must \_\_\_\_\_. We must \_\_\_\_\_ from evil and live out our faith. It does little good to pray for change if we are not \_\_\_\_\_ to change ourselves. We can change; and, in fact, God \_\_\_\_\_ us to change. The apostle Paul told an assembly of pagans who didn't even know God, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance is a change of \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to a change of \_\_\_\_\_.

Some say people cannot change; but the Bible everywhere assumes people \_\_\_\_\_ repent and \_\_\_\_\_ repent. Why would God command people to do something that's \_\_\_\_\_? Some think people are \_\_\_\_\_ so corrupt that they can't ever change, but the Bible shows how people do change. Romans 6:17-18 says, "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 are some \_\_\_\_\_ of sin who \_\_\_\_\_ God's will from their heart, and were \_\_\_\_\_ from their sin, and then became slaves of righteousness. Jonah chapter three tells how the people of Nineveh \_\_\_\_\_ in God and \_\_\_\_\_ of their wickedness and violence. Zacchaeus was a sinner, but he made things \_\_\_\_\_ and became very generous to the poor. The prodigal son came to his \_\_\_\_\_ and he came home, \_\_\_\_\_ his sinful life behind. Yes, we \_\_\_\_\_ repent. If we want God to \_\_\_\_\_ our nation, shouldn't we repent? Shouldn't we \_\_\_\_\_ from our wicked ways and \_\_\_\_\_ God's forgiveness? Reading God's Word and praying are necessary; but we must \_\_\_\_\_ repent of our sins. We can't expect God to bless us while we \_\_\_\_\_ in sin. We can't treat life as trivial or God's plan for marriage as optional and \_\_\_\_\_ God to bless us. Just because something becomes \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't mean that God approves of it. Changes in \_\_\_\_\_ law doesn't change \_\_\_\_\_ law.

We can be \_\_\_\_\_ in the eyes of the government but still \_\_\_\_\_ in the eyes of God. Human law will let you get \_\_\_\_\_ at home, but God condemns \_\_\_\_\_ in Galatians 5:19-21. Human law will let you take the life of the \_\_\_\_\_, but God condemns the shedding of \_\_\_\_\_ blood in Proverbs 6:16-19. Human law may \_\_\_\_\_ sexual behavior between consenting adults, but God still \_\_\_\_\_ fornication in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Just because you can escape the \_\_\_\_\_ of men doesn't mean that you'll also escape the judgment \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. Revelation 20:11-15 says He will judge us according to our \_\_\_\_\_ by what is written in the books; and that is, the Bible. Have you repented?

Fifth, we must \_\_\_\_\_ our faith in Christ. The gospel is good news that will bless everyone who \_\_\_\_\_ it. If the gospel is good for you, it's good for your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. How can anyone \_\_\_\_\_ to the message of salvation and then \_\_\_\_\_ it to himself? An angel told Cornelius to send for "Peter, who will tell you \_\_\_\_\_ by which you and your household will be \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 11:14-15). When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, he found that Cornelius had called \_\_\_\_\_ his family and friends to hear him speak. Acts 10:27 says there were "many people assembled." Cornelius couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ the good news to himself; he \_\_\_\_\_ all of his loved ones to know. I hope you're encouraging your family and friends to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and to \_\_\_\_\_ His will.

We're speaking so frankly because we \_\_\_\_\_ you and want you to \_\_\_\_\_ God and to be \_\_\_\_\_. We confront sin because we know how it \_\_\_\_\_ people. We want \_\_\_\_\_ person to be right with God. If you choose to do what is right, you'll \_\_\_\_\_ others to do what is right. If you make it your \_\_\_\_\_ to grow close to God, you'll encourage others to do the same. A better world begins with \_\_\_\_\_ of us making important changes in our hearts and our lives to draw close to God. An old hymn says, "Brighten the corner where you are!" We must not \_\_\_\_\_ till someone else comes along to make changes in our lives. Let's begin \_\_\_\_\_ to brighten our corner of the world. We can make a \_\_\_\_\_ in ourselves, and that will encourage others to change. Remember what the Lord Jesus said in today's text.

Being a better person begins with \_\_\_\_\_ a Christian; nothing is more important than putting Christ in your life. Becoming a Christian starts with \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ and love for Christ. When you believe and love Him, you will put your trust in Him; and you will \_\_\_\_\_ sinful ways and replace them with righteous ways; you'll \_\_\_\_\_ Him to everyone; and you will be \_\_\_\_\_ in His name for the forgiveness of your sins. Baptism is an immersion in \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you're baptized, the Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ away your \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what Romans 6:3-4 says.** We're baptized into Christ through faith in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Just as God raised Jesus, He raises us up to walk in \_\_\_\_\_ of life. Be baptized today!



## Not Biblical Anymore Exodus 1:6-10

Where is the \_\_\_\_\_ and our convictions these days? Many people \_\_\_\_\_ abandoned by their spiritual leaders. Many people today feel spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ because their denomination or church has forgotten God. Do you feel empty? The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). If Jesus is the way to the Father, we need to \_\_\_\_\_ what the Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_. If we love the Lord, we need to be \_\_\_\_\_ to what He says. If He has given us His way in the Scriptures, then we need to \_\_\_\_\_ what they teach and \_\_\_\_\_ firmly to them. We want the Lord's way because we know that nothing else can take its \_\_\_\_\_.

You've probably noticed that our \_\_\_\_\_ has changed in recent years. Both morality and religion seem to have \_\_\_\_\_ upside down. What used to be \_\_\_\_\_ is now \_\_\_\_\_, so society is telling preachers not to \_\_\_\_\_ against immorality. Society says we can't \_\_\_\_\_ certain immoral behaviors sinful any more. Some say that \_\_\_\_\_ is obsolete. Society says husbands and fathers are no longer the \_\_\_\_\_ of their homes. Some are pushing women to take \_\_\_\_\_ roles in the church. Many who stand with God's Word are amazed and they \_\_\_\_\_, "What has happened that people no longer hold to the Bible?"

### Our reading today comes from Exodus 1:6-10.

I once had dinner with an acquaintance who belonged to a prominent denomination, and the conversation \_\_\_\_\_ to religion. This man told me how much his church had \_\_\_\_\_ and how alienated he felt. He grimaced at the moral and spiritual compromises that the leadership of his denomination had \_\_\_\_\_. He felt like he was no longer in the \_\_\_\_\_ denomination. What he knew growing up and what he saw in the present were very \_\_\_\_\_. He felt that his denomination had abandoned what it had believed and had \_\_\_\_\_ something unbiblical.

Society and secular progressives have pushed many religious groups to accept views that \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible. They told the religious world that they were childish and backward believers and must \_\_\_\_\_ what a more advanced society thinks or they will die. They said evolution is \_\_\_\_\_, and the church must give up its belief in \_\_\_\_\_. They said the \_\_\_\_\_ are not viable people until they are born and may be aborted. They glorified non-traditional \_\_\_\_\_ and said marriage was obsolete. They said the Bible wasn't for us \_\_\_\_\_ but spoke to people in other ages. They decided that love for \_\_\_\_\_ was more important than loving and obeying \_\_\_\_\_. They argued that the \_\_\_\_\_ of God meant that we didn't have to keep any \_\_\_\_\_ at all. In the end they \_\_\_\_\_ that God has any authority over their lives or that He matters to them.

Sadly, the more any culture \_\_\_\_\_ God out of their thinking, and their ethics, or their morals, the more miserable and difficult their lives will become. Societies can't thumb their noses at God and expect the Lord to \_\_\_\_\_ them and \_\_\_\_\_ them. Just because the thinking of a people changes with time doesn't mean that God has changed His \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 33:11 says, "The counsel of the LORD stands \_\_\_\_\_, and the plans of his heart to all generations." People's attitudes may change, but God's \_\_\_\_\_ on the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage haven't changed. Just because people permit themselves to \_\_\_\_\_ God's law doesn't mean that God will \_\_\_\_\_ it. We can't \_\_\_\_\_ on God's will. God is God, and we are not. Wherever you live, whoever you are, God's Word is still \_\_\_\_\_ on you.

**Read what God said in Jeremiah 18:7-10.** God \_\_\_\_\_ nations, and God \_\_\_\_\_ nations. He deals with nations on the basis of whether they are \_\_\_\_\_ to listen to His voice. Are you listening to God?

I fear some think that because \_\_\_\_\_ believes or practices something, that it must be approved by God. God, however, doesn't take a \_\_\_\_\_ to determine what is right and wrong.

**Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14.** The popular, easy way is not \_\_\_\_\_, but leads to destruction. Only a few people will \_\_\_\_\_ God's narrow way, but it leads to life! Even if everybody tells lies, lying is still \_\_\_\_\_. Even if everybody steals, stealing remains \_\_\_\_\_. No matter how popular a sin is, sin will never be okay with God. You can't solve the problem of sin by making it \_\_\_\_\_.

The same is \_\_\_\_\_ with regard to religious groups. When people \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord's voice and \_\_\_\_\_ His teaching, He blesses them and counts them as His own. But when an individual or some group ignores His teaching or departs from the way of the Lord into moral or doctrinal error, God \_\_\_\_\_ them all accountable. Sometimes people create religious groups and cults according to their \_\_\_\_\_ thinking rather than listening to \_\_\_\_\_. Even if that group grows very \_\_\_\_\_, it's still accountable to God. The Lord created every person and will someday \_\_\_\_\_ each one according to the words that are found in the books. He commands all men everywhere to \_\_\_\_\_. We're all accountable to the Lord whether we know it, whether we acknowledge it, or whether we agree to it.

**Read Hebrews 4:12-13.** Time and distance don't \_\_\_\_\_ accountability. A change in the winds of \_\_\_\_\_ worldviews doesn't release anyone from God's jurisdiction. We're accountable to the Lord in matters \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Rebellion over a small matter is \_\_\_\_\_ rebellion against God.

More than accountability, \_\_\_\_\_ is our motivation to follow the way of the Lord. When people love the Lord they enjoy being \_\_\_\_\_ Him. The Lord's way lifts up virtue and makes every person \_\_\_\_\_ and nobler. Aren't you \_\_\_\_\_ of all the ungodliness, dishonesty, and indifference in our world today? Aren't you \_\_\_\_\_ of the selfishness, greed, pride, and

power-hungry attitudes? Aren't you \_\_\_\_\_ for what's pure and good? Don't you \_\_\_\_\_ people were kind and trustworthy? We love the Lord because we have seen what the love of the Lord does in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the people who turn from sin to righteousness. They become \_\_\_\_\_ people filled with faith, and hope, and love. Men become \_\_\_\_\_ and loving husbands and fathers when Christ is in their life. Wives become warm and \_\_\_\_\_ wives and mothers when Christ is in their life. Children look to parents with \_\_\_\_\_ hearts when Christ is in their life. Neighbors \_\_\_\_\_ each other and bear one another's burdens whenever Christ is in their life. Second Corinthians 5:17 rightly says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a \_\_\_\_\_ creature; and the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Those new things are so much better than the old ways.

Take God and His Word out of people's lives, and people will be \_\_\_\_\_ and in misery. They'll turn to destructive behaviors that \_\_\_\_\_ them. They will become indifferent to other people; they will be selfish, and ungrateful. They'll seek in \_\_\_\_\_ to find something to take God's place, but nothing will. The Lord's way is so much \_\_\_\_\_ than the ways of the world; and we have to wonder how anyone could prefer sin to righteousness, or prefer lies to the truth, or prefer selfishness to love.

When churches \_\_\_\_\_ story-telling, and pop-psychology, and humor for a study of the Word of God, they've \_\_\_\_\_ from following the instructions of Scripture to being a social club. **Read what Paul charged the young preacher Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5.** God expects preachers to preach the \_\_\_\_\_, not their opinions, not their experiences, and not their imaginations.

If you attend a worship service that doesn't study the Bible, you're being cheated out of God's \_\_\_\_\_. Has your religious group deserted the \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture so they can entertain you or make you feel good? One popular speaker decided that he will not speak out against \_\_\_\_\_ or speak about salvation; he said he would leave that to others. He may be a famous motivator, but he's no preacher of the \_\_\_\_\_. He has made his \_\_\_\_\_ religion that has references to some of the Bible, but he has cheated his listeners out of the whole counsel of God.

Some religious groups study religious books written by men but never open the \_\_\_\_\_. They may not realize that the \_\_\_\_\_ author may be contradicting Scripture or teaching something false. People who \_\_\_\_\_ studying Scripture often \_\_\_\_\_ their minds with half-truths and mistaken ideas. The Lord Jesus said, "It is written, that Man shall not live by bread alone, but by \_\_\_\_\_ that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We need \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word to live as God wills. Second Peter 1:3 says, "His divine power has granted to us \_\_\_\_\_ that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to his own glory and excellence." In the Bible, we find the truth, the \_\_\_\_\_ truth, and nothing but the truth. When we stop hearing the Bible, we can't be sure that what we're hearing is \_\_\_\_\_. Just because someone \_\_\_\_\_ himself a preacher doesn't mean what he says is true.

This is why the Lord Jesus gave the apostles the charge in Matthew 28:19-20. We must know the truth so we can \_\_\_\_\_ what God really says from what people think. Acts 17:11



calls the Bereans \_\_\_\_\_, because “they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” We too must begin examining the Scriptures so that we won’t be \_\_\_\_\_ by something that is unbiblical. Colossians 2:8 says, “See to it that no one takes you \_\_\_\_\_ through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, and according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Study your Bible; don’t let anyone \_\_\_\_\_ you astray from the truth of God’s Word.

Perhaps you attend where they substitute entertainment for worship; you may be cheating yourself out of \_\_\_\_\_ Biblical worship in spirit and in truth. Many religious groups have given themselves over to religious entertainment, where worship leaders and soloists perform religious music like at a \_\_\_\_\_. God wants everyone to worship Him, not \_\_\_\_\_ someone else perform for them. The Lord Jesus said, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in \_\_\_\_\_ to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 6:1). When people take the \_\_\_\_\_ off of God and put it on themselves as in a concert, they aren’t worshipping God; they’re performing. **Read what Jesus said in John 4:23-24.** Don’t substitute praising someone’s talent for the worship of God.

For some time you may have \_\_\_\_\_ what we’ve discussed today. Perhaps you’re attending a religious service or you belong to a religious group that doesn’t hold to Bible \_\_\_\_\_ anymore. You’re hearing preaching that isn’t preaching from the Word of God and isn’t leading you \_\_\_\_\_ to God. You are being entertained rather than called to \_\_\_\_\_. You need the Lord. God said through Isaiah, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor your ways My ways,’ declares the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8-9). What our sick world needs is not more looking from side to side at what people think or feel; we need to look up to God for His \_\_\_\_\_. What God teaches is far \_\_\_\_\_ than the ways of the world. Don’t substitute human ways for what is genuinely from God, and by doing that \_\_\_\_\_ yourself.

Isaiah 55:7 says, “Let the wicked \_\_\_\_\_ his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him \_\_\_\_\_ to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.” God yearns for every heart to come to Him, for people to \_\_\_\_\_ their own ways and follow His teaching. When people turn their hearts, God abundantly \_\_\_\_\_ their past and blesses their future. Don’t \_\_\_\_\_ yourself out of a genuine faith.

To get right with God, place your \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Believing in Him as Lord means believing His teaching is true and necessary to be \_\_\_\_\_. Real faith and real love leads to \_\_\_\_\_. Repentance means I will forsake every wrong and turn to what is right and be Biblical. Repent and be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ upon the confession of your faith. When you are baptized, the Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins according to Acts 22:16; and He will \_\_\_\_\_ you to His church according to Acts 2:47.

## Sin James 1:12-15

Are you aware that sin is a real, spiritual \_\_\_\_\_? What are you \_\_\_\_\_ about your sin? We love God and we love you; and that's \_\_\_\_\_ we spend time in God's Word. We know that the Lord's way will \_\_\_\_\_ your life and will help you \_\_\_\_\_ spiritually. We know the Lord's way will help you \_\_\_\_\_ the pitfalls of life. We want the \_\_\_\_\_ for you.

The word sin in the Old Testament first meant "to \_\_\_\_\_ the mark" and later by extension to the idea of sin. You get the original meaning in Judges 20:16, "Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss." The words "not miss" later came to apply to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. The mark that people miss today is when they \_\_\_\_\_ to do the revealed will of God. They either fail to do what God says should be done or they do what God says should never be done. In either case, they miss God's mark and they \_\_\_\_\_ sin.

Scripture uses a variety of terms to \_\_\_\_\_ sin: "evil," "abomination," "iniquity," "transgression," "lawlessness," "ungodliness," "error," or "wicked." Each of these sets aside the ways of God so that one can do as he \_\_\_\_\_. Sin is like a \_\_\_\_\_ that has an attractive power but ends up destroying the person who falls for it. In Genesis 4:7 God warned Cain not to let his past \_\_\_\_\_ overcome him. He said, "If you do well, will not your countenance (your face) be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain fell to \_\_\_\_\_ and killed his brother, Abel.

### **Our reading today comes from the letter of James 1:12-15.**

While everyone has an inner notion of what sin is, we are focusing on how \_\_\_\_\_ sees sin and how the \_\_\_\_\_ defines sin. We realize that about one in eight people say that there's no such thing as sin and about one in three think that sin is an obsolete word. But we feel it necessary to \_\_\_\_\_ God what He thinks rather than \_\_\_\_\_ to the fickle whims of society.

What is sin? First John 3:4 says, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." Another version said that, "sin is the transgression of the law." Sin ignores or violates the law of God, and in doing so it shows utter \_\_\_\_\_ for God Himself. It says to God that He is so insignificant that his laws and commandments do not \_\_\_\_\_. When we do what God says not to do, we really challenge His \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives. He created us; He gave us \_\_\_\_\_; and He provides for our \_\_\_\_\_. When we sin against Him, we show that we are \_\_\_\_\_ for what He has done for us. Sometimes we sin by \_\_\_\_\_ to do what God requires of us. James 4:17 says, "So whoever \_\_\_\_\_ the right

thing to do and \_\_\_\_\_ to do it, for him it is sin.” When we fail to keep the commandments of the Lord our God, we’re \_\_\_\_\_ God is not important in our lives. By failing to do what is right, we are actually showing \_\_\_\_\_ for God. First John 5:17 simply says, “All unrighteousness is sin.” When we fail to do what is right or do what God says is wrong, we are not \_\_\_\_\_ righteously; we are sinning.

Someone asks, “Is sin really that \_\_\_\_\_ a problem?” People commonly tend to \_\_\_\_\_ their sin. We try to \_\_\_\_\_ our sin by labeling it as a mistake, an inappropriate act, or a misjudgment. Some who cannot use the word “\_\_\_\_\_” will use the word “\_\_\_\_\_” to describe wickedness. When you are the person \_\_\_\_\_ by someone else’s sin against you, you don’t see sin the way that he does. He may feel indifferent or he may be genuinely \_\_\_\_\_, but you’re the one hurt by his sin. You understand the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin. Every sin is an \_\_\_\_\_ to God; sin violates God’s commandments and breaks God’s heart. God takes our sin personally.

When Potiphar’s wife tried to get the servant Joseph to commit \_\_\_\_\_ with her, Joseph said, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against \_\_\_\_\_?” (Genesis 39:9). The Lord was with Joseph, and Joseph knew that he had no \_\_\_\_\_ to have her. Joseph’s \_\_\_\_\_ was with violating God’s commands; he simply would not offend God! We hear people say that we ought to be able to love anyone that we want, but love doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ a wicked relationship or sinning against God. Love doesn’t make \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_. We must not \_\_\_\_\_ love with sexual desire. God has put \_\_\_\_\_ on whom we can have sexual relations with, whether we love them or not. Love does not make adultery or incest \_\_\_\_\_. Loving children doesn’t make it \_\_\_\_\_ to marry a young child. When we cross God’s boundaries, we cross God.

All sin is evil; it’s \_\_\_\_\_; and unjust. It offends God, \_\_\_\_\_ the one who commits it, and it hurts other people. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Mark 7:21-23.** We must be \_\_\_\_\_ not to let our hearts deceive us by thinking that whatever our hearts desire is okay. Our hearts can \_\_\_\_\_ us into sin if we’re not careful. **Read what the Bible tells us about fleshly desires in Galatians 5:19-21.** You can’t please the flesh by committing these sins and \_\_\_\_\_ to live with God in the kingdom of heaven.

Someone says, “Surely, God won’t \_\_\_\_\_ me.” Are you sure? **Read what the Bible says in 2 Peter 2:4-9.** God has a track record of punishing those who sin; and we must take this \_\_\_\_\_ seriously. People, on one hand, \_\_\_\_\_ the reality of sin because they’re secular and have pushed God out of their lives. On the other hand, they have a moral conscience that \_\_\_\_\_ them that certain things are wrong. A research professor in sociology at Trinity University in Connecticut said, “Secular people \_\_\_\_\_ believe there's sin, judgment and punishment. It's just a different \_\_\_\_\_ of sinners than religious traditions teach. What is unacceptable has \_\_\_\_\_. Racism and sexual harassment, which were \_\_\_\_\_ sins in the past, are \_\_\_\_\_. Adultery and addiction are just \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ behavior. And commercial sex is a no, but breaking the \_\_\_\_\_ of marriage is not.” He said there are \_\_\_\_\_ universal rules. “If people are held guilty, the punishment will be in \_\_\_\_\_ world, not the \_\_\_\_\_. Secular people (according to him) don't burn in \_\_\_\_\_; they burn in the \_\_\_\_\_ of public opinion.”

But God doesn't play by secular \_\_\_\_\_; He's not subject to our secular \_\_\_\_\_. He created this world; He keeps this world running; and will one day \_\_\_\_\_ this world by His rules. God is not a \_\_\_\_\_ who must come running to us for acceptance. He stands above us, and we need to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. God isn't our servant; we're God's \_\_\_\_\_. We can't \_\_\_\_\_ rules for God; we must \_\_\_\_\_ by His rules.

When we sin, we can't \_\_\_\_\_ that it won't affect us. Sin leaves its \_\_\_\_\_ on our lives. First, we must realize that sin will \_\_\_\_\_ us. **Read Hebrews 3:12-13.** Sin will promise you \_\_\_\_\_, but will end up hurting you and hardening your heart. The deception of sin leads to a second thing. Sin \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you that, everyone who \_\_\_\_\_ sin is the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin" (John 8:34). Romans 6:16 says, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for \_\_\_\_\_, that you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" When a person \_\_\_\_\_ himself to pleasure, desires begin to take over and will \_\_\_\_\_ people to do things that they would never have thought they would do.

Third, sin will \_\_\_\_\_ your heart. When people \_\_\_\_\_ God, according to Ephesians 4:19, they "become callous" and they give "themselves over to sensuality for the \_\_\_\_\_ of every kind of impurity with greediness." When people give themselves to sin, they end up having no \_\_\_\_\_. They don't \_\_\_\_\_ what they do or how they hurt others. Our culture has \_\_\_\_\_ so much, permitting sin and encouraging sin, that we have \_\_\_\_\_ desensitized to sin. People use the foulest of language; television glamorizes the worst of behaviors; and we lose respect for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Fourth, sin will bring \_\_\_\_\_ death. James 1:15 says, "Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." Spiritual death means we no longer have the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. **Read Ephesians 2:1-3.** Sin and spiritual death are \_\_\_\_\_! The wrath of God is not something to \_\_\_\_\_. Are you in sin?

Fifth, sin will \_\_\_\_\_ you from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." When we fall out of favor with God, He ceases to hear our \_\_\_\_\_ or to give us His \_\_\_\_\_. We can lose our friends on \_\_\_\_\_ and still go to heaven, but we can't lose our friendship with God and have a \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven. We can afford to lose everything that we have except our \_\_\_\_\_. What are you doing about your sins?

People tend to \_\_\_\_\_ themselves about sin! Many see the sins of \_\_\_\_\_ but they don't consider their \_\_\_\_\_ sins. No one likes to recognize himself as a sinner or suppose that he could be \_\_\_\_\_. Many people think they can live just any way they \_\_\_\_\_ and not face the

consequences. Galatians 6:7-8 says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man \_\_\_\_\_, this will he also \_\_\_\_\_. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” We can’t \_\_\_\_\_ God by living a sinful life and expect God to bless you and ignore your sin.

**Read what 1 John 1:6-10 says.** The consequences of sin are heartbreaking, but thanks be to God that we have forgiveness through the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus His Son and can be cleansed of all our sins.

We’ve talked about sin today because it’s \_\_\_\_\_. Your \_\_\_\_\_ is at stake. Because God loves you; and because we love you, we must \_\_\_\_\_ about sin’s challenge to your soul. Thankfully, God has the \_\_\_\_\_ to sin in Christ, and we have \_\_\_\_\_! Put your hope in \_\_\_\_\_!

What are \_\_\_\_\_ going to do with your sin? Will you get \_\_\_\_\_ that somebody pointed out that you’ve sinned? Or, will you \_\_\_\_\_ your old sins and just kind of hope they will be forgotten? Will you \_\_\_\_\_ that you’ve done anything wrong? The best thing, the only thing, you can do about your sins is to \_\_\_\_\_ of them and to \_\_\_\_\_ to the grace of Christ. God’s grace is powerful and wonderful, but it works \_\_\_\_\_ your repentance, not in \_\_\_\_\_ of it. Again, I ask you, “What are you going to do with your sin?” I hope you’ll think seriously about this.

God’s forgiveness is \_\_\_\_\_ because of the \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus paid for us. Isaiah 53:5-6 says, “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.” He personally \_\_\_\_\_ our sins in His body on the cross.

If the story of His amazing love \_\_\_\_\_ your heart, \_\_\_\_\_ by showing your love for Him. Put your trust in Him by \_\_\_\_\_ that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ your faith publicly. Because you love God, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ from the sin that offends and grieves Him. Repentance is not merely a turning away; it’s also a turning to God to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Because you believe and love God, be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. God’s grace is abundant; He can forgive \_\_\_\_\_ your sins. Acts 22:16 says, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” Don’t delay! Become a Christian today!



## When We Fail

### Psalm 103:8-12

A lady called and said, “Phil, I’ve made the \_\_\_\_\_ mistake of my life. What am I to do? Is there any \_\_\_\_\_ for someone like me?” I told her there is \_\_\_\_\_ hope. The Bible teaches us the things that we most \_\_\_\_\_ to know. It speaks to us with \_\_\_\_\_ and gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ we need when we need it. Though the truth is not always \_\_\_\_\_ to hear, it’s always what’s \_\_\_\_\_ for us. It reminds us of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and of the desire God has to save us and bless us. Even when we’ve made the biggest mistakes, God’s \_\_\_\_\_ gives us hope.

Sometimes people think they have so messed up their lives with \_\_\_\_\_ that there’s no hope for them at all. Some even think they’re \_\_\_\_\_ God’s ability to forgive. God, however, reveals His perfect patience with us in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus. He \_\_\_\_\_ all about us. In spite of our sins, the Lord still loves us and wants us to be \_\_\_\_\_. God can help you \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness.

The apostle Paul said, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to \_\_\_\_\_ sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found \_\_\_\_\_, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16). If Paul is the foremost sinner, you aren’t. If God could save him as foremost, then God can always \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ you. There is hope! You can \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

### Our reading today comes from Psalm 103:8-12.

The New Testament tells of a man whose \_\_\_\_\_ failed for a time. While circumstances may differ, the experience of trying but failing is common to all of us. **Read Matthew 14:22-32.** As long as Peter kept his \_\_\_\_\_ on Jesus, he did well; but when Peter became frightened by the wind, he began to sink. His faith in the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ him afloat. How \_\_\_\_\_ people take their eyes off of Jesus and put them on their circumstances. They forget who Jesus is and how \_\_\_\_\_ He is. When Peter sank, he \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus to save him. We all need saving from \_\_\_\_\_. Peter showed doubt, but the Lord graciously \_\_\_\_\_ him anyway. He will also help you even in those times when your faith seems

\_\_\_\_\_. Call to Him. When you see the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, you too will say, “You are certainly God’s Son!”

**Read Matthew 16:21-23.** Oddly, Peter first confessed Christ, but he \_\_\_\_\_ the point about His suffering. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Peter for confessing Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God; but Peter missed the word “\_\_\_\_\_” in Jesus’ prophecy about his upcoming suffering and crucifixion. Peter didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus out of spite. Peter loved the Lord and didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ Him to suffer and die. But the suffering and crucifixion “must” take place for Jesus to fulfill the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Jesus rebuked Peter for thinking about \_\_\_\_\_ and his own desire to be with Jesus on earth. He didn’t fully realize that God’s \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus was to die upon the cross. Peter would eventually \_\_\_\_\_ all of it. When Peter \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus’ way at this point, Jesus said, “Get behind me, Satan!” I don’t know of any other time that Jesus calls someone “Satan.” But Peter had become a stumbling \_\_\_\_\_ to the will of God and was acting like Satan. It’s always a failure when someone \_\_\_\_\_ the will of God; but even with such a sin, Jesus did not completely forsake Peter.

**Read Matthew 17:1-5.** God chose this mountain top to reveal the glory of Jesus, a \_\_\_\_\_ glory than that of Moses or Elijah who are servants of God. Jesus, however, is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. We are to \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus, to \_\_\_\_\_ Him always. Many people listen to the \_\_\_\_\_ sources. Moses was God’s \_\_\_\_\_; and Elijah was God’s \_\_\_\_\_. Each of them had a \_\_\_\_\_ to Israel in their day. God used them to do \_\_\_\_\_ things. Up until Peter met Jesus, Peter would have regarded Moses and Elijah as his great \_\_\_\_\_. That’s why he wanted to show them \_\_\_\_\_. But God now \_\_\_\_\_ to us through His Son Jesus. Jesus isn’t just \_\_\_\_\_ lawgiver or prophet. Jesus is God’s Son, and God wants us to \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. If you put your preacher up on a pedestal, you’ve made the same \_\_\_\_\_ that Peter made. If you put a human denomination before Jesus, you’ve made a \_\_\_\_\_ mistake. Jesus is our \_\_\_\_\_ authority! God corrected Peter, expecting Peter to \_\_\_\_\_ and to become different. When we’re mistaken, we too should \_\_\_\_\_ our thinking. Today, people need to \_\_\_\_\_ from man-made religion and start listening to Jesus. Even people with the best intentions can be \_\_\_\_\_; and they need to listen to the Lord.

**Read Matthew 26:31-35 and Matthew 26:69-75 that tell the story of another sin of Peter.** Although Peter \_\_\_\_\_ that he would give his life for Jesus, he still \_\_\_\_\_ being a disciple of the Lord three times. Peter allowed his \_\_\_\_\_ to overcome his \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ when Peter denied him the third time. Luke 22:61 says Jesus turned and \_\_\_\_\_ at Peter. Then Peter went out and \_\_\_\_\_ bitterly. Have you ever committed

such a sin, that you wept bitterly for it? Sin brings such guilt and regret; it makes a man hate what he's \_\_\_\_\_ and even hate \_\_\_\_\_. Sin is the single greatest destroyer of \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_.

As for Peter, the Lord can see beyond the \_\_\_\_\_. Luke reveals the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus toward Peter (Luke 22:31-34). Jesus also knows when you and I \_\_\_\_\_. Have you ever thought that the Lord may be \_\_\_\_\_ for us, for you and for me? Jesus knew Peter would come back after his \_\_\_\_\_. He said, "Once you have \_\_\_\_\_ again, strengthen your brothers." God knows our weaknesses; but because He loves us, He is willing to forgive and give us the \_\_\_\_\_ to change. Let me suggest some things that you can do if you fail.

First, admit and \_\_\_\_\_ your failure. Don't try to \_\_\_\_\_ others or ignore your failure. Sin won't \_\_\_\_\_ away on its own. God remembers. Being honest with yourself and with God is the first step to overcoming any \_\_\_\_\_. John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the \_\_\_\_\_ is not in us. If we \_\_\_\_\_ our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9). The blood of Jesus can \_\_\_\_\_ Christians from every sin. Let me suggest that you talk to trusted friends, Christian friends, to gain their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. James 5:16 says, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and \_\_\_\_\_ for one another so that you may be healed. The effective \_\_\_\_\_ of a righteous man can accomplish much." God can heal our bodies, our souls, and our lives. Pray that God will help you to use your failures as a \_\_\_\_\_ ground for your spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.

And so second we say, \_\_\_\_\_ from your failures. Learn what you did wrong and then \_\_\_\_\_ from it. Peter denied Christ three times before the cock crowed. His failure is recorded in all four of the gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The best-selling book of all time tells about his failure. Maybe there are times when you \_\_\_\_\_ like Peter did – that you've failed and you are \_\_\_\_\_. But don't lose hope. Failure doesn't have to be the \_\_\_\_\_ for the believer. Don't give up. Take your failure seriously, but not hopelessly. Consider what you did wrong; realize that sin offends God; and then determine never to \_\_\_\_\_ that behavior again. Commit yourself to \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord's steps and not let sin overcome you. God is \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive the penitent and the contrite person. Psalm 34:18 says, "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." God loves people, \_\_\_\_\_ when they sin; and He wants to help us overcome that sin. When we humbly and penitently \_\_\_\_\_ to Him with contrite hearts, He opens His heart towards us.

Third, turn to God for \_\_\_\_\_. God loves you. He is \_\_\_\_\_ with us in our weaknesses. We all need the \_\_\_\_\_ of God in our lives. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Therefore let us draw \_\_\_\_\_ with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to \_\_\_\_\_ in time of need.” The Scripture promises, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is \_\_\_\_\_, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to \_\_\_\_\_ it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). We need to \_\_\_\_\_ God will be with us to help us with the strength that we need or He is going to make a way of escape. The one thing that we must never, never \_\_\_\_\_, even if we have failed in the past, God is still on our side and loves us.

The Lord is ready to forgive, if He knows you \_\_\_\_\_ for your sins and are \_\_\_\_\_ to repent. If Jesus could forgive Peter for denying him three times, He can forgive you. David said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken \_\_\_\_\_; a broken and a contrite \_\_\_\_\_, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17) A contrite heart and godly sorrow will \_\_\_\_\_ a person to repent. One is not \_\_\_\_\_ obedient to the Lord merely by being sorry or even by wishing he hadn’t sinned. He must also \_\_\_\_\_ his ways. Peter turned again; David turned again; and so must we.

When Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost, his words pierced the \_\_\_\_\_ of those who were listening. They felt deep \_\_\_\_\_ and wanted to know what to do to \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness. Peter said, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself” (Acts 2:38-39). That’s the same \_\_\_\_\_ that we bring to you; if you’re not a Christian, we want you to become one today. That’s the message for all \_\_\_\_\_ in all \_\_\_\_\_ for all \_\_\_\_\_. It’s a message of hope and deliverance, of joy and salvation. You can go to \_\_\_\_\_ and live forever with the Lord if you will come to Him. No matter what you’ve said or done; no matter how much pain you’ve brought to yourself or others, there is hope for you when you believe, repent, confess, and are baptized. Your sins will all be washed away, and you’ll become a child of God and be added to the Lord’s church. Won’t you obey today?

## Grace Titus 3:3-7

Every \_\_\_\_\_ we possess comes to us by the grace of God. God not only \_\_\_\_\_ us, He also \_\_\_\_\_ us how to live. Today we're going to look at the \_\_\_\_\_ that God's grace teaches us. We follow the Lord because we \_\_\_\_\_ that the Lord is good and every law He gives us is for our good. God's ways bless us with \_\_\_\_\_ and with \_\_\_\_\_. God is not only good \_\_\_\_\_ us; He is also good \_\_\_\_\_ us. So we search the Scriptures to find that strait and narrow path that \_\_\_\_\_ to the abundant life and to eternal life.

We rejoice greatly in the grace of God. We realize that without God's grace we would have no \_\_\_\_\_ in this life or in the life to come. God didn't give us His grace merely to \_\_\_\_\_ us; He was also interested in transforming our \_\_\_\_\_ so that we might become like Him. Grace is not merely a gift; it's also a \_\_\_\_\_. A teacher? Yes, a teacher! It trains and equips us for a whole \_\_\_\_\_ life in Christ, much different from the ways of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul explains, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, \_\_\_\_\_ us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:11-14).

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to Titus 3:3-7.**

There is nothing sadder than a person who has been blessed greatly but \_\_\_\_\_ nothing from it. The grace of God is given to us at a great \_\_\_\_\_; the price was the suffering and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who endured the cross so that we might be \_\_\_\_\_ and live eternally. It would do us all great good to take a very long look at the cross of Christ and to \_\_\_\_\_ what He was willing to do for us. Without the grace of God, we would each one be \_\_\_\_\_ and without \_\_\_\_\_. We could only expect an eternity without the blessing of God. Because of this, we must never take the grace of God for \_\_\_\_\_. It's a gift, a \_\_\_\_\_ gift, but not a cheap one or one to abuse. Since God paid the price of His Son Jesus for our salvation, we must not act like we can live anyway that we want to and still \_\_\_\_\_ the love and grace of God to be ours. Grace is indeed a teacher, and here are some of the things that grace teaches us.

First, the grace of God teaches us \_\_\_\_\_. The person who understands what grace is all about will live with \_\_\_\_\_ and with \_\_\_\_\_. He knows God has \_\_\_\_\_ him



with salvation and new life. Paul said that Jesus “gave Himself for our sins so that He might \_\_\_\_\_ us from this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4). We live in an \_\_\_\_\_, where sin is rampant. Crime, war, deception, sexual immorality, addictions, anger, greed, selfishness, and violence \_\_\_\_\_ our world. There are times that I long for a world that is \_\_\_\_\_ than this one, a country in which righteousness dwells. I long for a world where people keep their word, live without violence, live with justice, where love rules, where peace is common, and houses are safe. Jesus came to rescue us from this present evil age by transforming the hearts of \_\_\_\_\_ people into hearts that are \_\_\_\_\_ with love and goodness. Jesus said, “I came that they might have \_\_\_\_\_ and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Wherever the love and the grace of Jesus has impacted \_\_\_\_\_, there is joy and peace and love beyond our imagination. I’ve seen desperate people come to the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ their lives. God’s love and grace can \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts and \_\_\_\_\_ hope. Grace ought to make us thankful.

James said, “Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from \_\_\_\_\_, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow” (James 1:17). You can count on God to keep His \_\_\_\_\_. Gratitude is one of the great \_\_\_\_\_ of life. If you’re God’s child, I pray that God sees how His grace has made a \_\_\_\_\_ in your life. Paul could say, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in \_\_\_\_\_. On the contrary, I worked \_\_\_\_\_ than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10). You could \_\_\_\_\_ grace in his life by what he \_\_\_\_\_. Can God see that kind of grace in your life? People who receive the love of God \_\_\_\_\_ in thankfulness to give \_\_\_\_\_ to others. People who receive forgiveness learn in thankfulness to \_\_\_\_\_ others. People who receive \_\_\_\_\_ from God in answer to prayer learn how to help others with their \_\_\_\_\_. Gratitude changes a man from the inside so that he is \_\_\_\_\_ and he’s \_\_\_\_\_ to bless the lives of other people.

Second, the grace of God teaches us godly \_\_\_\_\_. Anyone who thinks long and hard on what Jesus suffered at the cross for our sins begins to look at sin in a \_\_\_\_\_. While we are grateful for grace, grace makes us sorry that we sinned against God and that our sins brought punishment to Jesus who was \_\_\_\_\_. To realize that Jesus died a cruel, cruel death and was punished so severely for our sins helps us to \_\_\_\_\_ how utterly offensive our sin truly is. No \_\_\_\_\_ person would ever want to \_\_\_\_\_ an innocent person the way they hurt Jesus. Paul said, “Or do you \_\_\_\_\_ on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to \_\_\_\_\_ you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4). At some point in our lives, as we look at the cross, we must come to the awful realization that \_\_\_\_\_ Him there by our specific sins. It wasn’t just that the world tells lies; \_\_\_\_\_ of us tells lies. It wasn’t just that the world is filled with greed and lust; \_\_\_\_\_ of us has been greedy and has lusted. When I think of God’s kindness in spite of

my sin, I can't \_\_\_\_\_ at the sins that I've committed the same way. I'm so \_\_\_\_\_ that my sins punished him and brought him \_\_\_\_\_. For that reason, I \_\_\_\_\_ what I have done in sinning against God; I'm sorry for my sin and my guilt in this matter. I'm no \_\_\_\_\_ than those on Pentecost. Peter spoke to them of Jesus, "whom \_\_\_\_\_ crucified", and he pointed a finger at them. But my sins \_\_\_\_\_ led to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Paul said, "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is \_\_\_\_\_; hold fast to what is \_\_\_\_\_" (Romans 12:9). If I love God, I will \_\_\_\_\_ or abhor what is evil. Loving God means hating the things that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ God. I can't \_\_\_\_\_ sinning and then pray to God as if I had done nothing wrong. Godly sorrow brings about repentance; it brings about a change in my \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to a change in my \_\_\_\_\_ and my life. **Read how Paul spoke of this change in Colossians 3:5-10.** Putting a practice to \_\_\_\_\_ is a radical change. It means that one doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ that behavior ever again. That sinful way of life is in the \_\_\_\_\_. Grace gives us a second chance to live a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ life – a life like the Lord Jesus lived. The saved person can say, "I'm not all I want to be; I'm not all I ought to be; I'm not all I am going to be; but, thank God, by His mercy and grace I'm not what I used to be."

No Christian lives a perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ life like Jesus did. Only the Lord was perfectly sinless; and we'll never measure up to that on \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. But when we do find ourselves in sin, that godly sorrow still \_\_\_\_\_ us to repentance. As soon as we realize that we've done something wrong, we determine \_\_\_\_\_ to do it again. Some sins are \_\_\_\_\_ to give up and others take some \_\_\_\_\_. We're all a work in \_\_\_\_\_. God will continue to bless us as we continue to \_\_\_\_\_ sin. But some people think of grace as a \_\_\_\_\_ just to keep on sinning, since they believe that the love of God will cover it anyway. **Read what Paul said in Romans 6:1-3.** In baptism we \_\_\_\_\_ to that old man of sin. We don't need to bring him back; we need to leave him \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We cannot presume upon the grace of God by \_\_\_\_\_ to live in sin. We must \_\_\_\_\_ our lives. Grace is not \_\_\_\_\_ and we cannot presume upon the grace of God.

Third, grace teaches us to do \_\_\_\_\_ to other people. Jesus gave Himself for us to \_\_\_\_\_ us from this present evil age. If we're to become like Christ, shouldn't we also \_\_\_\_\_ to do good to others? Paul said to Titus that Jesus "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 \_\_\_\_\_" (Titus 2:14). God not only wants us to do good but to be zealous about it! Paul said, "And let us not grow \_\_\_\_\_ in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have \_\_\_\_\_, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:9-10). Christians are \_\_\_\_\_ for their love and kindness to those who need help. James said, "Religion that is pure and undefiled

before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (James 1:27). Some folks clean up their lives but they don’t do \_\_\_\_\_ to help other people; while other folks are very kind but keep their lives in a \_\_\_\_\_ mess. God wants us to do \_\_\_\_\_, to live clean and holy lives while we care for those in need.

Paul said, “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). If we love Christ and we realize what His grace has done for us, we will want to live in such a way that we \_\_\_\_\_ our love towards other people. **Read the parable Jesus told about a man who was very selfish in Luke 12:16-21.** Wouldn’t you hate to be called a \_\_\_\_\_ by God? How sad it is that many people live their lives for \_\_\_\_\_ and what they can gather together financially. They forget that they can’t keep anything \_\_\_\_\_ this life. The Bible says, “we brought \_\_\_\_\_ into the world, and we cannot take \_\_\_\_\_ out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be \_\_\_\_\_” (1 Timothy 6:7-8). Some folks are never \_\_\_\_\_ to give to others or to do for others, because they’re like this man, consumed with themselves. This man \_\_\_\_\_ he was successful, but God called him a fool. When God calls someone a fool, we should take \_\_\_\_\_. Let God’s grace \_\_\_\_\_ your heart and your life. Let it move you to separate from sin, to be thankful, and to do good to others who need your love. The \_\_\_\_\_ you get to God, the more you’ll \_\_\_\_\_ like Him. Paul said, “For I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in \_\_\_\_\_. On the contrary, I \_\_\_\_\_ than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). How sad people have the \_\_\_\_\_ to know God’s love and to be saved by the blood of Christ but do \_\_\_\_\_ with it. Paul wasn’t going to let the grace that God had given to him be in \_\_\_\_\_. He determined to live a life that said “\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_” to God, that showed love to people, and that kept him free from sin. He understood what God did for him, and it motivated him to \_\_\_\_\_ harder than any of them. What about you?

To become a Christian, you have to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. You do that when you \_\_\_\_\_ with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ of every sin, \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ as Lord and the Son of God, and then be \_\_\_\_\_ (immersed in water) into Christ. Being baptized into Christ means being baptized into His death, where His \_\_\_\_\_ was shed. Being buried with Him in baptism and being raised with Him to walk in \_\_\_\_\_ of life is being born again. Jesus, the Savior, gives us an opportunity to live a new life, to start over fresh and pure. Don’t put it off. Make a start today.