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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
May 2014**

Salvation in Christ

Titus 3:5-7

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Jesus asked, “For what will it _____ a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in _____ for his soul?” Today we’re looking at what it means to be _____. We turn to the Bible, because we know the Bible is truly from _____. We can’t _____ feelings, opinions, or the speculations of men. We want to build our house upon the rock by listening closely and obeying the _____ of Jesus. These words are found in Scripture.

Some think of the Bible as _____ a book of morals and stories that teach us good lessons, but they don’t take God or sin seriously. Nearly forty percent of Americans say that “_____” is an obsolete word and they don’t _____ God. But what if the Bible reveals the _____ about sin, about our accountability for sin, and God’s merciful plan to save us. Romans 6:23 says, “the wages of sin is _____.” God will _____ sinners who reject Him, but He sacrificed His Son to _____ us. First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the _____.”

Everyone needs the forgiveness of _____ and eternal _____. These are the only things that really have lasting _____. Our salvation came at a great _____. The apostle Peter said, “you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19). Salvation is the _____ of God, but we must never cheapen that gift or take it for granted.

Our reading today comes from Titus 3:5-7.

Whether you _____ Jesus Christ affects your eternal destiny. Without Christ, people are in great _____. Paul described the peril of the Gentiles _____ they became Christians. He told them to “remember that you were at that time _____ from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no _____ and without _____ in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). Eternal life, a home in heaven, and the favor of God come in _____. In fact, we possess _____ spiritual blessings in Christ, according to Ephesians 1:3, so whether we follow Christ is the single greatest _____ of life.

Once we become Christians our whole lives _____. Paul describes the Gentiles once they come in to Christ. “Now, therefore, you are no longer _____ and foreigners, but fellow _____ with the saints and _____ of the household (or family) of God”

(Ephesians 2:19). When we become Christians, we _____ to be people without God and without hope and _____ members of the family of God!

Becoming a Christian is a new _____. **Read John 3:3-7.** Becoming a Christian, being born again, brings _____ of life. Paul said, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (that is, a new creature); old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). In Christ, people can _____ and start fresh new lives, freed from the _____ ways of sin. Christ gives us _____; we don’t have to be trapped in _____. The old things can _____ _____!

We ask, “When is a person saved? When does he have this newness of life? When are his sins forgiven?” First, we must recognize that salvation comes by the _____ of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus _____ himself on the cross so that we might have this change. Paul explains, “In Him (that is, in Christ), we have redemption through His _____, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7). Revelation 1:5 says the Lord Jesus “loves us and _____ us from our sins by His blood.”

This redemption opens the _____ to our salvation. Revelation 22:14 says, “Blessed are those who _____ their robes, so that they may have the _____ to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.” How did they wash their robes? Revelation 7:14 says, “they have washed their robes and made them white in the _____ of the Lamb.”

When and how do people come into _____ with the blood of Jesus Christ? Romans 6:3 answers that question. “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into His _____?” Jesus shed his blood on the _____. First Peter 2:24 says, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might _____ to sin and _____ to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” Baptism is the time when we _____ with Christ in His death, and that’s the time when His blood washes us _____ from sin.

Some say they are freed from sin _____ baptism. They say Saul of Tarsus was _____ on the road to Damascus. **Read Acts 9:3-6.** This passage doesn’t say the Lord saved Saul; instead Jesus _____ Saul into the city, where he would be _____ what he must do. Saul went into Damascus and did not eat or drink anything for _____ days. Acts 9:11 says that he spent his time there _____. But Saul was _____ in his sins. How do we know? Acts 22 answers that question. God sent Ananias to Saul to _____ him what he must do. Ananias said in verse 16, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and _____ _____ your sins, calling on His name.” Wash away your sins? Yes! People wash because they’re dirty; Saul wasn’t clean and holy; but was still in his _____. Saul was in sin on the _____ and even

during the three days of _____ and _____. Seeing Jesus didn't save Saul; praying and fasting didn't save Saul. Saul had to be washed, and Saul was washed in the blood of Jesus _____ he was baptized. When people suggest one can be saved by _____ a sinner's prayer, they have to face the fact that Saul was still in his sins until he was washed in baptism.

When we come to the Lord, our baptism is always accompanied with _____ (Hebrews 11:6). The gospel _____ our faith with baptism. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:15-16.** Baptism into Christ and His death must _____ faith. One who loves the Lord will be happy to _____ his faith to everyone.

The New Testament describes baptism as a _____ (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). In fact, the word baptism (baptizo) in the New Testament refers to an _____ in water. The New Testament never describes baptism into Christ as _____ or _____. The New Testament uses _____ words for those actions. According to Mark 1:9, "Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." John immersed Him in water. John 3:23 says, "John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was _____ water there." Sprinkling and pouring water on someone doesn't _____ much water, but immersion does. Clearly, the baptism that makes a Christian is an immersion in water.

When we come to the Lord, our baptism must be accompanied with _____ (2 Peter 3:9). When the guilty Jews who had crucified Jesus asked the apostles what they should do, Peter responded in Acts 2:38, "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."

Faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism are all loving _____ to the grace of God, who gave Jesus for our sins. They're not works of _____, those things that earn salvation by themselves, but are how the Lord _____ us to respond to the gospel of grace. These are what the Lord expects those who follow Him to do to _____ Him. They are the _____ that He gave for how we are to respond to the gift of His grace. They do not _____ grace; they receive and accept it.

Read again what Paul said in Titus 3:5-7. Paul's "washing of regeneration" is a _____ to baptism. Baptism is that washing that _____ new life in Christ that _____ us to be born again. God exercises His mercy and His grace _____ baptism, so that we might be justified and have the hope of eternal life.

Galatians 3:26-27 teaches that when one is baptized, he becomes a _____ of God. When a person is baptized (that is, immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ upon his repentance and the confession of faith, and he does that for the forgiveness of his sins), the Lord then washes away his sins; the Lord _____ him to the church; the Lord causes him to be born again;

the Lord makes him His child; the Lord buries him with Christ (that is, God buries him with Christ), and raises him up with Christ, and gives him _____ of life. God _____ on us in baptism. God is the _____ one, and we _____ His blessing. When someone says one doesn't have to be baptized to be saved, they're actually saying this person doesn't have to have _____ working on his soul to be saved. Baptism is necessary to salvation!

In responding to the grace of Christ we come to Him on His _____, not ours. It's presumptuous to think that we can develop our _____ way to God without a thought to what He requires of us. Grace is not a _____ to pursue our faith any way that we please. His grace and love calls us to _____ Him and to _____ Him. Throughout the New Testament, people treated their need to become a Christian with great _____. **Read the examples in the accompanying transcript.** In each of these cases, those who heard and believed the good news were baptized into Christ that _____. They realized being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus was necessary to _____ the gospel and to _____ the forgiveness of their sins. They didn't _____ for a more convenient season. They obeyed immediately because they wanted to be _____ right there and then. We pray you'll do the same. Today's the best day to get right with God.

Please stop for a moment and _____ about the sins that you have committed in your past. "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). A person sins when he has _____ or _____ God's commandments and laws and does as he pleases. Our sins have not only offended God, they're also the reason Jesus endured the agonizing pain of the cross. Jesus bore the _____ that we should have received. Consider what _____ your sins have done to Him, to yourself, and to others. It's _____ that you come to the grace of God to deal with your sins.

Jesus endured an agonizing crucifixion and shed His blood so we might have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He went to great lengths to show His utterly amazing love for us, hoping that we would respond to His love and His grace with a commitment to follow Him. The Lord doesn't _____ us to obey Him; He allows us to _____ whether to follow Him.

Will you say no to the Lord and reject His offer of love and grace? Some people say no to the Lord again and again through the years, and they eventually harden their hearts altogether. Will you remain in sin? Will you wait until another day? Or, will you _____ to God's love by _____ of those sins, _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by being _____ into Christ. I say to you what Ananias told Saul in Acts 22:16, "And now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Come to the Lord today; don't let anything keep you from serving the Lord.

Staying Right with God Hebrews 2:1-4

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

When we become Christians, we take up our _____ for life. There is no _____ back. Today we're exploring _____ to stay right with God. The all-sufficient Word of God gives us the _____ and the _____ of God. The written Word grants "to us _____ things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). God gives us the instruction and the assurance that we _____ in order to take up our crosses and follow Jesus in this life and to inherit eternal life in heaven. God's Word contains His precepts and principles that transform our lives from _____ to _____ and it gives us hope. We thank God that He has _____ His will to us in Scripture.

Salvation is God's gracious _____, but we must never take it for granted. God's love is undeniable and precious, but we can _____ that love even as Christians. If we aren't _____ to remain close to God, we can become apathetic or even _____ our hearts against the Lord. The Lord Jesus complained against the church in Ephesus that they had _____ their "first love" (Revelation 2:4). Paul wrote, "for Demas, having loved this present world, has _____ me and gone to Thessalonica" (2 Timothy 4:10). Our enemy, sin, can cause our hearts to grow _____ toward God and toward other people. **Read what Paul warned in 1 Timothy 4:1-2.** We must not _____ to evil.

Our reading today comes from the epistle to the Hebrews 2:1-4.

Some theologians in the sixteenth century began to tell people that once they were chosen for salvation by God, they could never be _____. This new and strange doctrine was certainly a _____ from the Scriptures. Does the Bible _____ that a Christian once saved can lose his salvation? We want to know what Scripture says.

The answer is clear and abundant that a Christian can _____ from the grace of God and _____ his salvation. **Read Hebrews 3:12-14.** Clearly a Christian brother can fall away from his faith, can be hardened against God by the deceitfulness of sin, and can _____ believing. Christians must _____ to their assurance firm to the end, if they wish to be saved.

Read what 2 Peter 2:20-21 says. People who have _____ the defilements of the world by knowing the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are _____ people. But if they get entangled and overcome by sin, they are in a _____ condition than before they were saved.

God expects His children to _____ faithful and involved in the church. When Christians abandon the _____ of assembling with other saints and involving themselves with other Christians, they _____ against God. How do we know that? Hebrews 10:26-27 says, “For if we go on sinning _____ after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.” Here are people who willfully keep on sinning against God and they will face the _____ of God. We’re speaking of people who willfully _____ the Lord, not of sick folks who can no longer go to church but still love and serve the Lord. We don’t want to sin against God; we _____ Him and we want to _____ Him. What we’re asking is “how can I _____ losing my faith and my soul by hardening my heart against the Lord?” This is basically what the book of Hebrews is all about. In chapter 11 the Hebrew writer gives a list of believers who _____ to God in spite of incredible challenges. Read **Hebrews 12:1-2**. These witnesses _____ us to remain faithful and to stay close to God. They’re saying it’s worth it to _____ Jesus. If we fix our _____ on Jesus, we’ll run with endurance the whole race. Christianity isn’t a hundred-yard dash; no, it’s a marathon, lasting _____ of our lives. We can’t let anything or anyone or any sin _____ us from God. We can’t _____ in rebellion or apathy and expect that at the end all will be okay anyway.

If we hope to _____ saved, we must _____ faithful. **Read what the apostle John said, in 1 John 1:6-10.** Walking in the light means walking with the Lord according to His _____.

Sometimes people _____ themselves into thinking they can live according to the world’s standards and still be close to God. But John said, they are _____ to themselves. Walking in the light means living according to God’s _____. All Christians are imperfect, and even those who walk in the light still need the _____ of Jesus to _____ them. There’s a difference between a Christian who purposely walks in the _____ and one who purposely walks in _____. One sets his heart on doing what is right but occasionally sins; he _____ his sins and he _____ of them. The other sets his heart on pleasing _____ and doesn’t intend to follow Christ. He sins and he doesn’t _____. He may do some good things, but his life is _____ on pleasing himself. How you deal with your sin _____. John promised, “If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and righteous to _____ us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We can find forgiveness as we keep the Lord _____ and we confess our sins to Him. It’s when we abandon God, that we abandon His _____.

Read what the Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 10:23-25. God knew that Christians _____ each other. We need that time to _____ with each other, which helps us to stay strong

spiritually. Those who quit church are like those who quit attending _____. They _____ nourishing themselves. We need the _____; we need to worship with others. We need their _____ and their encouragement.

We assemble together to stimulate one another to love and good works, to encourage each other, to _____ from each other, to _____ each other, and to _____ with each other. When _____ times come, there's no better place than the church to find that strength and encouragement. There will always be someone there who _____ what you're experiencing and what you're going through, and they can _____ you. Staying _____ to God means staying close to His people, staying close to prayer, to singing hymns, to communion, to the Word of God, and to the hope that we share. We do that _____ we assemble together. We don't need to face life alone without the _____ of brothers and sisters who will stand beside us.

Jesus said to the troubled church in Smyrna, "Do not fear what you are about to _____. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be _____, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be _____ until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). The promise of Jesus is for those who won't give _____, who won't give _____, who won't give _____. The promise is the "crown of life," which is _____ in heaven with Him. Staying faithful is worth it. Those who quit the church and quit the Lord _____ it, but the faithful won't have any regrets. They'll _____ forever that they stayed close to God, that they loved God more than their own lives. They would suffer again and again if they had to do it over; because they _____ they made the right choice.

I think about Paul and how he _____ greatly for his faith; he was willing to give up everything to _____ Jesus Christ. **Read what he revealed in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.** Even with all this, Paul could say, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be _____ to us" (Romans 8:18).

If we want to stay saved, we must remain willing to _____ the Lord even if it costs us. People go to heaven because they _____ themselves, take up their crosses daily, and follow the Lord. Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always _____, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own _____ with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). Many people will lose their souls because they've hardened their _____ against God, saying what they will and what they won't obey in His Word. They end up rebelling against God, because they _____ to follow their own experiences or their own will or their own thinking, rather than follow His will.

Whatever we might _____, God is still God. He _____ us and _____ His Son for us. If we rebel against Him we must pay the _____ for our sins. We cannot remain in His grace and favor while we live in opposition to His _____. Jesus will only be our Savior if He is also our _____. It's foolish to think we can have all the _____ of God and eternal life while we serve ourselves or we serve our own desires. Jesus is the author of eternal life to those who _____ Him (Hebrews 5:8-9). There's no _____ of life for those who rebel, or are unwilling to obey His teaching. Romans 8:12-13 says, "So then, brethren, we are under _____, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, then you will live." Have you _____ yourself before God?

If one is to stay saved, he must _____ himself in the love of God (Jude 20-21). God loves us and _____ can separate us from God's love. But we can _____ the love of God by our own choice. Love never _____ and doesn't quit when things are hard. That means forgiving others, it means going the second mile; it means loving others the _____ that Jesus loved us. Without love in my _____, I'm just like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Without love, everything I do "profits me _____." Keep yourself in the love of God. Keep your spiritual _____ strong. Don't ever give up.

To become a Christian, one must _____ with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that He is Lord. In faith and love, one must _____ of his sins, turning away from sin and to the Lord. He must _____ the name of Jesus before others, must be _____ (that is, immersed) in water as a penitent believer for the remission of his sins. Peter's instructions to the lost people on the day of Pentecost is still the _____ today. Acts 2:38 says, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your _____; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." When you're baptized, the Lord _____ away your sins and _____ you to His church.

It's not how you _____ your walk with God that matters; it's how you _____. Decide in your heart that you'll never give up on God; you'll never give up your _____ in Christ, and never give up on your conviction that His words are the words of _____. Jesus the Lord and Savior said, "the one who _____ to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13). The devil will _____ you with sin and he'll _____ to you. The devil is not your _____. He wants to cause you to _____ your soul and endanger the souls of people that you love. Don't let the devil get a foothold in your _____. Stay with the Lord Jesus; don't quit on God. Never, never, never give up! Keep _____ your Bible; keep _____; keep going to _____; and keep staying free from sin. Stay with the Lord who loved you enough to _____ on the cross for your sins. You'll never regret staying close to God.

“Ask, Seek, Knock”

Matthew 7:7-11

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

A friend asked me to _____ him learn to pray more effectively. As I thought about it, I realized that I too need to _____ my prayer life. The _____ always gives us the help and the encouragement that we need, and that’s why we turn to Scripture for answers. We speak to God in _____, but God speaks to us today through the _____ word. God gave the Scriptures for all _____ for all _____.

In Luke 11:1-4 the Bible says, “Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to _____, as John taught his disciples.’ And he said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’” Jesus was trying to _____ the disciples a prayer, not a ritual; but a prayer that they could say, helping them to know what to pray in addressing God, the Father. Like the disciples, we all need to know _____ to pray to our Father.

Most of us have heard the Lord’s Prayer. Luke’s version is a little _____ than the one we read in Matthew 6, but there are many of the same points. Let’s go to the Bible to find what Jesus, our Lord, _____ from us. Our task is to _____ God and to pray in the way that He desires. Worship to God takes place when holy people _____ a holy God in a holy way. We should be such people.

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:7-11.

Prayer is not a useless ritual; it’s the personal means by which we lay our _____ out before God. If we want our prayers to be meaningful, we must first realize that we’re praying to God, our _____. God is occasionally called a father in the Old Testament. He’s called the Father who _____ us in Isaiah 63:16 and Malachi 2:10, but the Old Testament rarely speaks of God as a Father the way that _____ does. The Lord Jesus teaches us to pray to God as “our Father who is in _____.”

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus refers to God as “our Father who is in heaven.” When we pray, we’re not _____ to a peer, or an acquaintance, or even a boss. We’re speaking someone _____ than a governor, a king, or the president. We’re speaking to

the God who _____ us, who _____ the universe, and who is in heaven. We should _____ ourselves in prayer and give Him our utmost respect.

Jesus was indeed the Son of God, and He called the God of heaven “My Father.” The relationship of father and son is _____. God is not some strange and _____ “Force” out in the universe; He is _____ like a father to his children. When we become Christians, we also become _____ of God. **Read what John said about Jesus in John 1:11-13.** Through Christ, we can _____ the Almighty God of all creation, “our Father.” He is indeed “_____” Father in Christ.

Second, we need to consider the phrase, “Hallowed be Thy _____.” The word “hallowed” is an old word that _____ to make holy or to consecrate as sacred. I fear we’ve _____ the sense of the sacred in our day. We’re speaking to our God, who _____ all things, who is all-wise, all-loving, and entirely pure and holy. When Isaiah came into the presence of God in Isaiah 6, he saw the Lord sitting upon a _____, high and lifted up. The seraphim called out, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His _____!” When you pray, do you _____ of the holiness of God? Isaiah then said, “Woe is me! For I am _____; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” (Isaiah 6:5). When we consider the _____ of God, then look at our own _____ lives, we realize that on our own none of us can stand righteous before God. We’re all _____ without Christ. We too are a sinful people living in a sinful land; but because of Jesus and His blood, we can be _____ from sin. God’s _____ should encourage us not to take God for granted but to appreciate Him even more.

When Nadab and Abihu offered up “unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not _____ them,” Leviticus 10:2 says, “fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.” They presumptuously took the incense pans and got fire from a _____ or unauthorized place. They acted on their _____ without any _____ from God. By acting on their own rather than listening to God, they _____ to give God His rightful place. In Leviticus 10:3, Moses told Aaron what God said about the matter. “By those who come near Me (that is, near God) I will be treated as _____, and before all the people I will be _____.” God wants us to worship Him according to His _____; and that’s how we honor and treat Him as holy. When people today act on their own authority and _____ God in ways that are not commanded by Scripture, they dishonor God. For this _____, we don’t use instruments of music in worship in the church; we don’t dance or burn incense; and we don’t turn our worship into entertainment. Why? Because we have _____ authorization in the New Testament. Our God is holy; and we must _____ to Him.

Furthermore, holy worship must be accompanied by a holy _____. Approaching God in prayer has much to do with _____ we live. God wants us to pray to Him with reverence in our _____ and in our _____ (James 1:26). Reverence isn't merely to be in our tone of _____; but it must also be in our _____.

Third, Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy _____ come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The kingdom of Jesus, of course, is the _____. Paul said, "He (speaking of God) has _____ us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom, or the church, is where the King Jesus _____. Jesus taught us to pray that the _____ of God be done on earth as it is in heaven. How I wish that were true! Can you imagine how much _____ this world would be if everyone followed God's will? This would be a world _____ crime or war or violence, that honored father and mother, honored Biblical marriage, and valued children. People would treat _____ the way they wanted to be treated. People wouldn't be so selfish and self-centered, but would _____ for the poor and the downcast. We'd give much _____ and stop complaining, we'd _____ much and not deceive; we'd be genuine and not phony; and we'd _____ God up rather than tear Him down. It's easy to want everybody else to live out the prayer "Thy will be done"; but what about me and you? Are we willing to live by the will of God?

Fourth, Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us each day our daily _____." Have you considered how _____ we are on God? All that we possess comes from His _____. Many forget what God has done for them, that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from _____, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). God gives us the _____ we eat, the _____ we drink, the _____ we breathe, the _____ we enjoy. **Read what the Psalmist David reminds us in Psalm 103:1-5.** We must never _____ his benefits. Prayer reminds us of our own weakness before God.

Fifth, we should pray, "forgive us our _____, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us." Many today _____ their sins, and yet the Lord calls us not only to _____ our sins but to ask God to forgive us. Some say there is no such thing as sin, but our consciences tell us differently, and they tell us when we've done _____. We're asking God not to _____ the things that we've done wrong against us. None of us want to be enemies of God, because God one day will hold our _____ in His hand. We want the grace and love of God, but sin _____ in the way. We need forgiveness, _____ from sin. Christians must _____ and _____ of their sins and _____ God's forgiveness. **Read 1 John 1:9-10.** Confession of sin takes away the deceitfulness. We're no longer _____ from God but revealing to Him not only that we've sinned but also our _____

for our sins. Our godly sorrow should _____ us then to repentance. Repentance is a change of _____ that leads to a change of behavior. Just because we _____ to God that we've sinned doesn't mean that we have repented. Repentance turns _____ from sin and it turns _____ God's ways. It's self-deception to ask God to forgive our sins and then just keep on _____ those very sins. We must both _____ and _____ our sins.

Forgiveness is not just _____ way. God expects us to forgive _____ who sin against us. If we're unwilling to forgive others, we can't _____ God to forgive us. If God's _____ hasn't touched our lives enough to make us open to others, how can we expect God to remain open to us? **Read what Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-15.** Really meaningful prayer comes from hearts that are _____ to live what they pray. God knows our _____. When our hearts and our lives _____ our words, God hears our prayers; but when we rebel against God's will, God closes his _____ against us. **Read what Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 59:1-2.** The most important step in praying effectively is to get our souls _____ with the living God. Remember what James said, "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16). God will hear our prayers if we put Him _____ in our lives, if we love Him, and if we stay away from what is sinful. God _____ us to pray and He wants to hear from us. But let's live for the Lord and take our requests to His throne out of _____ lives.

Many people _____ themselves by failing to pray. They cheat themselves out of a relationship with God, out of the _____ of God, and out of the _____ of God. We can never be good at praying if we never take _____ to pray. Jesus prayed at the _____ moments of His life. He knew how much He needed His Father. We need God as _____ as we need air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat.

Many Christians wonder why God seems _____, why He doesn't answer their prayers. They don't consider whether they are _____ in a way that pleases and glorifies Him. When people _____ to live for the Lord, they shouldn't be surprised that God might not hear their prayers. When Christians quit the Lord, quit the church, and quit living righteously, they push God out of their _____. The Lord would love to have you come back to Him. He wants to be close to you, but you have to be _____ to draw close to Him.

If you're not a Christian, I hope you'll not waste another day _____ to become one. If you _____ Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; if you _____ of your sins; if you _____ the name of Jesus before others; and if you'll be _____ in water in the name of the Lord, and do it for the forgiveness of your sins, you'll become a Christian. When you're baptized, the Lord will _____ your sins (Acts 22:16). The Lord will add you to His _____ (Acts 2:41); and God will make you His child (Galatians 3:26-27). You'll be able to enjoy the grace of God and know your Father in heaven hears your prayers.

Hope Psalm 33:18-22

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

As a fish without water or a man without air, so is the _____ without hope. Today we're going to explore the great hope that we have in _____. The Lord gave us His _____ so that we might have hope. He gives us the truth so that we might put our hope in the truth and not be _____ by half-truths or lies. We can't separate hope from the truth, any more than we can separate faith from the truth. False hope cannot save our souls and assure us of eternal _____. That's why we need to know the truth of God's Word and to _____ and _____ it.

Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our _____, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." When I consider how morally _____ this world is, I remember Noah was righteous and saved his family. When I have a giant _____, I remember David defeated Goliath. When I think I'm _____, I remember that God told Elijah seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal. When I hear "people can't _____," I recall Nineveh and how they repented at the preaching of Jonah. When I think things can't get worse, I remember the book of Job had an _____. When I walk through a valley, I remember Psalm 23 and the _____ is "with me." When I wonder why I'm here, I remember _____, and God had a plan for his life. I remember _____ both as a baby and as a shepherd; God had a plan for him. God also has a plan for you and me.

Our reading today comes from Psalm 33:18-22.

Let's examine the word "hope." Hope is the confident expectation or belief in the fulfillment of something that God _____ and we _____. Present hurts and uncertainty over the _____ create the constant need for hope. We long for something _____ than what we have now. In trouble we hope for _____; in war we hope for _____; in sin we hope for forgiveness; in death we hope for _____ life. Hope is not merely expecting something; it is a confident, trusting expectation in God's _____. Faith and hope intertwine. Because we believe, we hope. We believe, because we have the assurance of _____. We have it in black and white in His Word, the _____.

Read what Paul said in Ephesians 1:18-20. We need to _____ the eyes of our hearts. As Christians, we have _____ to our Father; we can enjoy the surpassing greatness of His

power and His blessing. We can hope in our calling as Christians and confidently _____ to live forever, because our Father in heaven raised Jesus from the dead.

First Timothy 1:1 says, “Christ Jesus is our _____.” In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul speaks of some who were _____ the resurrection. Paul explained in verses 17 and 18, “if Christ has not been raised, then your _____ is worthless; you’re still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have _____.” Without the hope of Christ in the resurrection, we will perish in our sins and have no hope of life beyond the _____. So, Peter urges us, “Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, _____ your hope completely on the grace to be brought about to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13). Let being with the Lord and the Father in heaven _____ your heart each day. Let hope motivate you to _____ as a Christian should live.

Read what the apostle John declared in 1 John 3:1-3. Hope for heaven and eternal life _____ us to put away sin and to serve the Lord in holiness. If you hope for heaven, are you letting _____ grow in your life? Purify yourself; get right with God.

When life becomes difficult and painful, we _____ hope. Jeremiah is known as the _____ prophet. Throughout his _____ people opposed and ignored his prophecies. Israel abandoned the _____ of heaven and became more and more idolatrous. They brought devastation upon themselves by _____ God. God promised through the _____ prophet Jeremiah to destroy Jerusalem, but the people believed the _____ prophets who prophesied peace. They thought they could continue in sin and God wouldn’t _____. They were wrong, and God permitted Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon to _____ the city and even the temple. How could evil _____ and righteousness _____? Here we need to see two lessons.

First, though Jeremiah watched the destruction of Jerusalem, his relationship with the Lord remained _____. The _____ was falling down around his shoulders; Babylon had set the city on fire, killed and enslaved his fellow-citizens, and destroyed the house of God. He said his peace and his strength had perished; he felt so _____; and he had forgotten happiness. It was at this low point in his life, that he recalled the _____ and the _____ of God. **Read what Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:21-24.** If we set our hearts on the Lord, we’ll see more than _____ circumstances. We’ll remember all the _____ that God does for us each and every day.

Second, Jeremiah learned the _____ isn’t all there is; it isn’t the end of the story. When God was about to allow the destruction of Jerusalem Jeremiah bought a _____ belonging to his cousin Anathoth and he sealed the deal in an earthenware jar so that it would last a long time. The Bible says, “For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields

and vineyards shall _____ be bought in this land” (Jeremiah 32:15). Seventy years later, just as the prophecy said in Jeremiah 29:10, the Jews _____ to Jerusalem. God _____ His promises in His time. The apostle Paul, even with all his suffering, knew too that God would _____ for him in the future. He said, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not _____ comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). God is utterly and ultimately good to us; but He _____ in His own time. **Read the question Paul asked and the answer he gave in Romans 8:35-39.**

Hard times _____ to everybody and some things we’ll never understand. We shouldn’t imagine, however, that hard times mean God has _____ or abandoned us. I treasure a _____ of God that I’ve seen fulfilled frequently. “And we know that God _____ all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). Paul says, “we know!” It’s not “we think,” or “we feel,” or “we imagine”; but “we know.” Not everything, of course, is good; but God is able to make our most _____ circumstances “work together for good.” Tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, and hurricanes aren’t good; but the devastation they bring touches the _____ of people and calls them to do good to ease the misfortunes of others. We’re called as Christians to “love our _____.” Galatians 6:10 says, “So then, as we have _____, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Many do loving acts of kindness for people they don’t even know, because their hearts of compassion, _____ by the love of God and the cross of Christ, lead them to act. God’s love _____ people to demonstrate their love. “We love, because He _____ loved us” (1 John 4:19).

We can have hope even when we have _____. We have hope because Jesus Christ came to _____ His people from their sins. Sin is _____ and it’ll cost you your soul. If you try on your own _____ to overcome you won’t succeed; you’ll have no hope because you can’t _____ salvation. The Lord must save us because we cannot save _____. Some, looking at their sin, begin to imagine they are _____ saving. Remember: the Lord came to earth to save us. The apostle Paul was once Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the _____. He was “formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.” The blood of the Lord Jesus, however, _____ him from sin because he “acted ignorantly in unbelief.” **Read what Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15-16.** Those who _____ their hearts and _____ the Lord can have hope, because of the abundant grace of Christ, which is greater than our sins.

When I consider the brevity of _____, I have hope in the Lord. The Lord’s love is not only for today; it lasts _____. We are more than _____ and _____, and the Lord wants us to live with Him through eternity. Jesus has made the _____. **Read what Jesus said in John 14:1-3.** Because God _____ Jesus from the dead, we can have true hope in eternal life.

Hope is a great _____, but we must exercise our hope in the Lord by taking our faith and _____ to Him seriously. Peter said, “Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10-11).

I’ll never forget my first ride on a commercial airplane. It was bitterly cold and icy at the airport in Memphis, Tennessee. Dark gray _____ filled the skies. A friend told me about a new airline that had great prices so I booked a flight over the phone. When I got to the airport I discovered the plane was quite _____. The workers were de-icing the plane which caused me some _____. When we finally boarded the plane, there was no heat inside, and the plane was shaking. That was no _____. I was feeling down as we waited to take off since everything seemed so _____. When the plane took off I gripped the armrest as we ascended. I didn’t _____ what I was about to see. We entered dark clouds; but when we burst through them, the _____ was shining brightly! I had never been above the clouds. No matter how dark and dreary it is on the ground, the sun still shines above the clouds. God is still in _____.

We humans are _____ by space, time, and intelligence. We see what’s happening around us and we _____ there is a greater sense of reality. It’s so easy to lose sight of _____. An unchanging and unchangeable God created us and made us some unfailing _____. When you think all is dreary and lost, _____ the Father is still on his throne; the Holy Spirit is still speaking through the written word; Jesus is still coming again; the gospel still has power to save; and prayer still reaches the ear of the Father.

No matter how _____ life becomes, don’t give up on God. Fix your _____ completely on Him! Serve Him! Love Him! Wait for Him! (Psalm 43:5). Why should we hope in God? Because God is _____ on the throne of heaven, and nothing can _____ that. No army can conquer Him, and no group can vote Him out of office. Jesus is Lord over all!

We must _____ our hearts and our lives to Him. We must take up our crosses daily and _____ Him. We do this by placing our utter _____ in Him and in His Word, by _____ of our sins, by _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by being _____ in His name. We’re baptized into Christ and into His _____ according to Romans 6:3. While the disciples baptize people in water, God at the same time _____ them with the Lord in His death, burial, and resurrection; and that takes place in baptism. When God unites us with Christ in His death, the _____ of Christ does away with our sins according to Romans 6:4-7. Put your trust and your hope in the blood of Christ by being baptized and following Christ for the rest of your life!