

Program Transcripts

For March 2018



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

March 2018

Topics subject to change without notice

MARCH 4 – WITHOUT GOD

When people remove God from their lives, they encounter confusion, lawlessness, and chaos. The Scriptures reveal that people forgot or rejected God to their own destruction. We need God if we wish to find what is good and what lasts.

MARCH 11 – WHY DO WE SUFFER?

Suffering is a universal problem, and people wonder how a loving and all-powerful God could allow them to suffer. The Scriptures teach, however, that some suffering is loving and has value.

MARCH 18 – JESUS UNDERSTANDS

Have you ever felt misunderstood, that no one knew what you're going through? We're happy to say there is Someone who understands our temptations trials and struggles. Because He has been there, He can help us.

MARCH 25 – THE BATTLE FOR YOUR SOUL

You may not realize it, but you—yes you—are in a serious spiritual battle. You are fighting for your soul with a formidable opponent, the devil. How are you doing in the battle for your soul?

Without God

If you remove God from the picture, it changes everything; and those changes are not good. We all need to know God, and we need to know what He has done, His will, and His plans for the future. His plans include you. One day we'll give an account to Him, even if we don't believe in Him. We can deny Him, but God cannot deny Himself.

In the nineteenth century Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher and cultural critic, said, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives; who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there to clean ourselves?"

Nietzsche was not so much saying God doesn't exist as he was saying that society had treated Him as if He were dead. Nietzsche lost his faith. God isn't dead; Nietzsche merely banished him from his heart; and so have many. When society thinks that it can live without God, it ends up replacing His truth, His beauty, His morality, and His order with substitutes that cause confusion, disorder, emptiness, and immorality. There's good reason to know, to love, and to serve God.

First John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and it reminds the people to whom he was writing that they were once pagans without God, and how Jesus brought them near.

Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-13).

Without God people have nothing lasting, nothing pure, nothing holy, and nothing true. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). That was true in the first century, and it's true today!

We have good in life, because of God. If there were no God, we couldn't live. James says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (James 1:17). Every good thing that we possess finds its source in God who created this world with the design necessary to meet our needs – the air, the plants, the animals, water, sunlight, and the soil. Romans 1:20 says, "For His (speaking of God's) invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made."

Some reject God, because God is absolute and teaches absolute truth with concepts and morals that cannot change. God's absolute nature provides order in our world. God's Word says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he

who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:14-16). That's God speaking. Without absolute truth, without the Word of God, we're left with relative truth; and this causes confusion, uncertainty, and chaos.

The Scriptures point to an absolute God with absolute truth. Romans 11:33-36 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him, and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

Many arrogantly think that they're wiser than God, but our society is filled with falsehoods and confusion. The Oxford Dictionary's 2016 Word of the Year was "post-truth." They explain, "objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." For many, emotions and assumptions manufacture what they believe rather than reality or the Word of God. Some no longer believe that God revealed moral truth in Scripture so they manufacture their own moral logic and justifications. Have you noticed how morally confused our society has become? Our society doesn't know when life begins, or what marriage is, or what makes people male and female.

When people stop fearing God, they feel free to lie and to follow something that's not true. We've been inundated with lies, and fake news, and false charges, misrepresentations, and exaggerations to the point that we're confused and questioning everything from the news and politicians. Thankfully, we have a source of spiritual truth in God and in Christ that cannot be changed or stopped. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Titus 1:2 says the Father is the "God, who never lies." Hebrews 6:18 says that it's impossible for God to lie. God's honesty and integrity give us a reason to place our trust in all that He says as true.

Without God, society is left in moral confusion. When we no longer think God matters, we can't decide when life begins, or what marriage is, or whether a person is male or female. The theory of evolution is actually failing. Much of what Darwin supposed in his theory has been shown false by the fossil record and by DNA. We know far more today than Darwin knew in 1859. Evolutionists assumed but they never proved that non-living things gave rise to living matter in spontaneous generation. That's never been proved. They assumed but never proved that a one-celled animal evolved into multi-celled animals. They assumed but never proved invertebrates, that is animals without a spine, gave rise to vertebrates, that is animals with a spine. They assumed but never proved that fish gave rise to amphibians, and amphibians gave rise to reptiles, and reptiles gave rise to birds and mammals. They assumed time allowed these things to happen, but there is no proof among the fossils of one linking to another.

Without God people assume that they are the result of unplanned and unintended events that have no reason or purpose. The difference between a person who sees God's design in this universe and believes God created him for a purpose, and a person who sees no design and has no reason for his existence is huge! One has a direction in life, while the other just exists.

When you disregard God, you must also disregard His moral teaching. Without the moral teachings God provides, we would live in a tragic and disorderly world. According to the Pew Research Center, "virtually no atheists turn to religion for guidance on questions of right and wrong." In fact, atheists have great difficulty establishing a basis for their moral lives. The Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, has one of his characters say in the book, *The Brothers Karamazov*, "If there is no God, everything is permitted." We pay attention to morals and our

behavior because we know as Christians that we're accountable to God. But what happens when you're not accountable? But they are accountable. Hebrews 4:13 says, "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." When there is no accountability, there is no reason to remain moral. We must remember, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

God's morality is wise and good because God is wise and good. He sees and knows everything about humanity, and He gave every commandment in the Word of God, in the Bible; and He did it for our good. So we can't thumb our nose at God's ways and not pay an awful price. Moses saw the superiority of God's commandments. He wrote, "Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). Moses knew!

Sadly, many nations have abandoned God's ways, thinking they have outgrown Him or know more than He does. Paul knew the condition of the pagan world when he was preaching the gospel in Ephesus. He wrote, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:17-24). Without God, there is no path to holiness and righteousness; there's only selfishness and impurity.

When people rid themselves of God, they also rid themselves of hope. First Peter 1:3-5 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." God wants to bless us for all eternity; and He gives us living hope through Christ's resurrection.

The resurrection is no small matter. First Corinthians 15:16-19 says, "For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied." But, of course, God did raise Christ from the dead; and that fact gives us hope! We have assurance because of what God has done for us. Romans 8:11 says, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

More than that, God's Word gives us hope that God will bless His people. Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance

and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” With God’s help, Noah and his family survived the flood; Moses brought Israel out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea; Joshua conquered Palestine; David slew Goliath; Elijah raised the dead; Josiah restored the temple; Daniel revealed Nebuchadnezzar’s dream; the three Hebrews survived the fiery furnace; Daniel came out of the lion’s den; Ezra led the people back to Jerusalem; Nehemiah built the wall; and Jesus rose from the dead. You cannot deny God’s power!

In Christ, we not only can live forever; we have the best life now. Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). He realized that Jesus came to give us an abundant life! It’s a life filled with the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23). The love and the teaching of God lead us to be our best, our wisest, and our strongest. They have their minds and hearts, those who follow Christ, on something better than selfishness, greed, and lust. They love because Christ loves. They serve because Christ served. They bless others because Christ blessed them. In Christ, whatever is good and excellent just multiplies!

We should give thanks that we have a God who loves and cares for His people! The ancient pagan gods had little concern for the people. Their followers never thought they could grow close to their gods; they offered sacrifices to keep the pagan gods from getting angry and sending evil upon them.

We often quote John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only (or only begotten) Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” God loved a world that couldn’t save itself, an ungodly world that never gave Him a second thought, and a world that sinned against Him and was His enemy. God, because of His great love and mercy, was willing to sacrifice His Son, Jesus, in spite of it all. No one will ever love you to the same extent that the Father and the Son love you!

In 1939, the submarine *Squalus* sank. Its crew sat helpless at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean off the shore of New Hampshire. The *Squalus* was two hundred and forty feet below the surface. Nobody had ever attempted to rescue a submarine if it were more than 20 feet below the surface. The crew sent up smoke flares, hoping to be found. Rescuers lowered a ten-ton diving bell several times and brought the thirty-three surviving members of the crew to safety. Not one of those thirty-three men said to their rescuers, “I’ll think it over,” or “I’ll wait for a more convenient time,” or “I’m in good condition as I am,” or “Look, there’s too much to give up.” Each one of them instantly and gratefully accepted his opportunity to escape the sunken submarine.

Sin puts your soul into a helpless condition; you cannot save yourself by your own doing. Without the Lord to rescue you from condemnation, you have no hope. This is why it doesn’t make sense to ignore or put off coming of the Lord Jesus for salvation. It also makes no sense to forsake the Lord Jesus and His teaching to live a sinful life.

To be saved, you must believe and confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God; you must repent of your sins and turn to the Lord Jesus; and you must be baptized or immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Being saved means the Lord will remove the sins and make you His servant. The Lord will add you to His church, and make you His child. God wants to save you, but you must let Him by obeying His instructions. What’s preventing you from becoming a Christian or remaining faithful to Christ? Whatever it is, it’s not worth it!

Why Do We Suffer?

Why would a loving, all-powerful God allow us to suffer. A close look at Jesus Christ helps us to see another side to suffering. The Lord's way is the right way to deal with every hurt, every problem, and every disappointment in life. The Bible is God's Word and has the spiritual answers that we need to deal with life's greatest problems. It opens for us God's heart and God's way.

The problem of suffering is universal. Everyone has either faced it, is facing it now, or will face it in the future. For some this is a real stumbling block to their faith, but it doesn't have to be. As a minister, I've spent time at hospitals, nursing homes, and funeral homes with hurting people. I know how difficult it is to suffer illness or to lose a loved one. It's natural to say in our hearts, "If there is an all-powerful God in heaven that loves me, why did He allow this to happen? Why couldn't He have stopped this and kept me from so much pain?"

The Lord knows the deep pain that we feel and loves us. We may not know why this particular event has happened, but we do know that God has not forgotten or overlooked us. We often assume love means preventing anything that might hurt a loved one. We assume suffering cannot be compatible with love, but is that always true? Could love and suffering coexist? Can suffering somehow be a blessing to us? If it can be shown that suffering is not all bad but can lead to a greater good, we might see our suffering as a building block rather than a stumbling block to our faith.

Our reading today comes from Romans 8:37-39. The Roman Christians at this time were enduring terrible persecution and it would get worse. But, Paul wants to reassure them of God's love.

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This should reassure our hearts of God's love. Let's pray together. O, Father, we're thankful that even in the hardest times of our lives that You have not forsaken us. Love us each day. Father, be with us and help us and may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Suffering is hard. We hate to hear about cancer, heart disease, hurricanes, or fires. Sometimes people assume that the only way God can be "good" is to prevent what hurts us, but we question that. Isn't God's love and power seen just as clearly in how He helps us through a struggle as in whether He prevents it? Paul said, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose" (Romans 8:28). Not everything that happens is good, but God is powerful enough to take the hurtful things in our lives and turn them into something that leads to good.

The rough bumps in life can give us the courage and determination to make life smoother for others. You can't have lemonade without lemons. There are many things of comfort and good in this life because somebody had suffered and then felt the need to make things better. Good arose out of hurt and disadvantage. When people are challenged, they learn to rise above the challenges. I think of Joseph, whose brothers cruelly sold him into slavery in a foreign land. Later Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and spent many years in Pharaoh's prison.

But through it all, “the Lord was with Joseph” (Genesis 39:2). You may be going through tough times, but God can help you, too.

Years later, Joseph’s brothers moved to Egypt along with their father. When their father, Jacob, died, these guilt-ridden brothers were afraid and they begged for forgiveness. But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” (Genesis 50:19-21), So, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Joseph didn’t take vengeance; he didn’t blame God, he didn’t lose faith, and he grew into a spiritual giant in spite of all of his suffering. Life going sour doesn’t mean God has abandoned you.

In our pain, we often focus only on what has happened to us, not knowing that God may have a greater plan. Joseph had had dreams, but he didn’t know how God would work out that dream. Becoming a slave and then a prisoner seemed to be exactly the wrong direction for a person who was to be exalted. The Lord did not exalt him until He was ready and until Joseph could do the job. Slavery and imprisonment actually prepared him for service to the Pharaoh. He suffered for years before God acted. He didn’t know it at the time, but he later understood that God meant it for good—slavery and imprisonment. Yes, even slavery and imprisonment!

Joseph never grew bitter as some people do. He never got angry at God but found the grace that he needed to forgive his guilty brothers. Rather than wonder why bad things happen to us, perhaps we should set our focus on what value this suffering has for us. Our suffering may be shaping and equipping us for some greater purpose that we may not now understand. It’s an assumption on our part that ease and happiness are the greatest good in life. Rather than doubt God’s love, we should ask what God is shaping you and me to be and what He wants us to do in His service. Suffering, though it’s painful, may have a value to our lives and may be the very thing that leads to life.

Some "good things" can only be brought about in our lives by suffering. The pearl, for instance, exists as a result of suffering. Suffering can actually bless us. It can help a person know himself and learn what is really important or valuable. It can build character by challenging one to stretch and to grow. It can also help him understand what he can do to bless others. Suffering teaches us to be thankful for our blessings and for others who helped us through a tough time. It teaches compassion. Walking the road of sorrow helps a person guide another who may find himself forced down the same road.

Paul said, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:3-5). This passage encourages me. Paul is not bitter toward God, not angry for all his burdens, but maturely understands that God’s comfort in his affliction equips him to comfort others when they are afflicted. God’s people help others when their lives are filled with pain.

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 Paul says that he had been in “far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I *have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers

from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I *have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

If anyone had a right to complain about his sufferings, Paul certainly did. Yet he didn't complain. He was suffering not for doing something wrong, but for doing what was right, for preaching the gospel! God wanted him to share the good news with the Gentile world, and all Paul found was insults, and persecution, and problems. Why didn't God keep him from any suffering, so he could work? God didn't prevent the devil's hindrances. In fact, Paul faced just about every problem that anyone could face; but he never gave up; he never got angry at God; and never took it out on others. What did he do? He drew closer to the Lord.

Paul knew this life is not all there is. Though he suffered much, he did not give much weight to his suffering. In Romans 8:18, he said, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” When we get to heaven, we'll not be so concerned with all the aches and pains of this life. Our suffering will be over. The glory of being a child of God, of being in heaven, and of the love of God will be so wonderful we'll say “it was worth” every sacrifice. This life is brief, and eternity is forever and ever and ever. One simply cannot compare with the other. No one will feel cheated in heaven.

Someone says at this point, “Phil, you just don't understand. I'm hurting. If God really loved me, He wouldn't let me hurt like this.” Are you sure? Is the only way God can love you is to remove your struggles? Some lessons and advantages of life only come through pain. How can I protect my children from disease painlessly? Do I love them the more by refusing to give them the vaccinations they need, just because I don't want them to cry over a shot? The little pains we suffer today may keep us from the big pains we could suffer tomorrow. Is all pain really bad? Would the Marine Corps follow that rule of preventing pain in order to make a better soldier?

One way that we grow stronger, more patient, more compassionate, and more steadfast is by going through struggles which challenge us. Paul found that even the worst pains could teach him something. Paul said, “Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I'm well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

God used Paul as a great evangelist and apostle; but to keep him humble, God sent a messenger of Satan to be a thorn in his flesh. That thorn was sharp and painful. There was no aspirin in those days, no Tylenol, no Ibuprofen, and no relief. Three times Paul implored, entreated, asked God to take it away; and God said no. Paul didn't get angry and quit on God. He learned God's grace was sufficient. God's grace helps us through our struggles, too. He didn't take Paul's thorn away, but God taught him to rely on the strength and comfort of His power. Paul was tempted to become proud. He had to learn that the power to do his work was not in his keen wisdom or intellect, but in God. It was God's Word, not Paul's ability that won people to Christ and made the difference in people's lives. Paul needed to know that along with

this thorn was also the power of God to continue in spite of it. God's grace really proved sufficient.

God won't allow Satan to "buffet" or beat us up beyond our ability. Paul said, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, 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 endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Our problems and sufferings aren't stronger than God who stands beside us. He knows how much we can bear and He provides His grace to help us bear it. If it becomes stronger than we can stand, even our suffering as well as the temptations, God will provide a way of escape so that we can endure. I'm really thankful for this promise of help in hard times. Our loving God does indeed stand beside us to help us.

To understand love and suffering, nothing is more valuable than recalling the cross. Jesus despised suffering and He begged the Father to "let this cup pass from me" at Gethsemane. In the end, Jesus prayed that the Father's will be done. Peter said that while He suffered, He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23). Trust gave Him the power to endure what He suffered on the cross. His last prayer was, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Jesus never got angry with His Father for commanding Him to go to the cross. Jesus willingly suffered to free us from sin.

Jesus had the confidence and the courage to yield to His Father in times of suffering. He endured the agony of the cross by entrusting Himself to the Father. We can also put ourselves into the Father's hands with confidence. Peter said, "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (1 Peter 4:19). Our souls are His, regardless of what may happen to our bodies. The Lord will give us the endurance to bear any burden, to live with any affliction. Remember we belong to Him, and He will keep our souls. Let's pray together. O, Father, we're thankful through the good times and the hard times that Your love never vanishes. But that You can help us to bear up under the burdens. Help us to do Your will always. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

God demonstrated His great love in the death of His Son, Jesus. Jesus demonstrated His amazing love by suffering an agonizing death on the cross for our sins. Suffering and love are not incompatible. Jesus himself said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:12-14). Giving love to others may cost us dearly too, if we love as Jesus loved us. Taking up our cross and following Him will mean that we too will suffer.

Jesus' death on the cross, however, teaches us that suffering doesn't last forever; and death is not the end. When God's people suffer, the Father is near them, sharing their pain, and holding them in His hands. Whether a Christian lives or dies, he never leaves the love of a caring Father in Heaven. He will always be with you. God will strengthen you for whatever problems may come your way.

I hope that your soul is right with the living God. If you want God to take care of you, then devote yourself to Him. Believe Him and His Word, repent of all your sins, confess the name of Jesus before others, and be baptized (immersed in water) in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins just as Acts 2:38 teaches. When you're baptized, the Lord will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16); the Lord will make you His child (Galatians 3:26-27), and the Lord will add you to His church (Acts 2:47). We hope that you'll be obedient to Him today.

"Jesus Understands"

Have you ever felt misunderstood, believed that no one knows what you're going through? Today, we're going to think about the One who understands. God has spoken to us in the Bible, and we want to hear what He says.

A farmer had just relaxed on the front porch when a newsboy delivered the evening paper. The boy saw the sign, "Puppies for Sale." He got off his bicycle and said to the farmer, "How much for a puppy, mister?" "Twenty-five dollars, son." Well, the boy's face dropped. "Sir, could I at least see them?" The farmer whistled, and in a moment the mother dog came bounding around the corner of the house followed by four cute puppies, wagging their tails and yipping with joy. A little later another puppy came straggling around the house, dragging a hind leg. "What's the matter with that puppy, mister?" the boy asked. "Son, that puppy is crippled. We took her to the vet and the doctor took an X-ray. She doesn't have a hip joint and that leg will never be right."

The boy dropped his bike, reached for his collection bag, and took out a fifty-cent piece. "Mister," the boy said, "Please, I want to buy that puppy. I'll pay you fifty cents every week until the 25 dollars is paid. Honest I will, mister." The farmer replied, "But Son, you don't seem to understand. That puppy will never, never be able to run or jump. That puppy is going to be a cripple forever. Why in the world would you want puppy like that?" The boy paused, and then he pulled up his pant leg, exposing that all too familiar iron brace and leather knee strap, holding a poor, twisted leg caused by polio. The boy said, "Mister, this puppy's going to need someone who understands and loves him." My friend, we all need somebody, too.

Our reading today comes from The Letter To The Hebrews 4:14-16. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Let's pray together. O Father, when we're tempted and we have problems, we pray that we'll come to You for the help, the mercy, and the grace that You can give to us in a time of need. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Have there been times when you wished someone, just anyone, would understand and love you with all your faults and troubles? There is someone who does! He understands you and loves you. You may be hurting inside or outside; He understands. You may be tempted, but He understands. Your life may be hard, you may feel like quitting. He understands. You may have been offended and have reason to be angry. He understands. He knows all about you. He knows what you've been through. He knows how you think. He knows what you've done. He understands and loves you in spite of it all.

The Bible describes Jesus as one who understands all our struggles. As we've read, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16). Jesus experienced in his short life all the struggles and temptations that we face. He knows what it is to be human; and He also knows what it is to be Divine. He knows what it is to suffer and to be tempted. He knows how hard it is to do what is right when things are difficult. He knew the pain of the world turning against Him.

The Bible says that Jesus “knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for He himself knew what was in man” (John 2:24-25). As a human, Jesus understood hunger and thirst. Matthew 4:2 says, “And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” While hanging on the cross, Jesus, “knowing all that was now finished, He said to fulfill the Scriptures, ‘I thirst.’” We also know Jesus got tired at times. In John 4:5-6, the Bible says, “So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as He was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.” Yes, Jesus understood what it’s like to have the basic needs of life.

Jesus never had a wife or any children. No doubt He understood what it was like to be lonely. His father probably died before his ministry began, leaving Him with a mother and several siblings to support. Isaiah 53:3 says, “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

He had a hard life as an itinerant preacher. He was loved by some and hated by others. He never owned a home, walked everywhere He went, and knew what it was like to be rejected. Can you imagine from the time of your birth people saying that you were illegitimate? Can you imagine the soldiers of King Herod the Great hunting you to take your life? The Bible says, “Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were under two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men” (Matthew 2:16).

Can you imagine your family thinking that you were crazy? The Bible says, “And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his mind’ (Mark 3:21. The people who were supposed to know Him, and know Him best, didn’t understand how He could work miracles and teach such great things?

Can you imagine your own family and friends that you grew up with refusing to believe you? John 1:11 says, “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.” The people of his home town, Nazareth, rejected him and even tried to kill him. Mark 6:2-6 records this: “And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?’ And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.’ And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.”

Can you imagine your disciple and friend betraying you for money? The Bible says, “Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?’ And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him” (Matthew 26:14-16). Thirty pieces of silver? Exodus 21:32 says that this is the price of a slave. What treachery! Beyond that, can you imagine being betrayed with a kiss? That happened to Jesus.

Can you imagine being asked by your Father to be crucified? The Father sent his Son into this world to sacrifice Himself as an act of love and to deliver us from our sins. It was most difficult for Jesus to face the cross. He understood how utterly painful and humiliating crucifixion was in the first century. In Matthew 26:38 Jesus said, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death.” Have you ever been so sorrowful that you wished you could just die that very moment?

The Bible describes His prayer in the garden in Luke 22:42 this way: “And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.”

Can you imagine your close friend and disciple lying three times about knowing you? The Bible describes the boast of Peter, “‘Although they all fall away because of you, I’ll never fall away.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.’ Peter said to him, ‘Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!’ And all the disciples said the same” (Matthew 26:33-35). But when the pressure came upon him, he buckled under the pressure as Jesus said he would. Peter denied Him not once, not twice, but three times; and the last time in the very presence of Jesus.”

Can you imagine having been bound and brought into court where people falsely accused you with lies? Can you imagine people purposefully twisting your words to condemn you? Can you imagine dying on the cross, bruised and bleeding, while the people around you were mocking you? Matthew 27:41-43 says: “So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He’s the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we’ll believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Can you imagine remaining silent during all their ugly mockery? Can you imagine being in excruciating pain at the hands of very wicked men and never striking back?

Jesus understands the good and the bad, the easy and the hard, and the fair and the unfair. He knows everything about His people and His churches. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 Jesus spoke to each of the seven churches of Asia. To each of the seven he said, “I know your works.” He knew the positive and the negative. He praised them for the good and rebuked them for the bad. He praised them for their toil, their perseverance, their sound doctrine, their faithfulness in tribulation, their willingness to suffer poverty and even blasphemy for the name of Christ, and for how they lived, and how they showed love, their faith; He loved that about them, and their service to the Lord. But He rebuked them when they left their first love, when they compromised, when they supposedly were alive but had died, when they were distastefully lukewarm. Jesus knows about your spiritual life too, whether you’re growing or dying or lukewarm. He knew churches sometimes failed to be what they should be; and He rebuked and warned them because He loved them.

He knows when you’re tempted. I love God’s faithful promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13. The Bible says: “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation also will provide a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” God understands your limits and He will not let temptation and trials so overwhelm you that you can’t endure them. When you can’t stand the temptation, the Lord will make a way of escape so that you don’t fall into sin. He’ll bless you and be there for you. He promises, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5). The God who understands is also the God who stands by us to help us through all the struggles that we face.

Jesus knows when life has filled you with fear or heartache. He knows life can be overwhelming, but not one cause of your anxiety escapes His attention. First Peter 5:6-11 says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the

God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Jesus knows your victories and your defeats. He knows your heart. If you love Him, He knows it. If you have ignored or forgotten him, He knows it too. If you've let sin come into your life, He knows it; and if you're overcome by that sin, He knows it and He grieves. In spite of all He loves us anyway and wants us to repent and to come to Him. He loves us even in our sins and weaknesses. To the lukewarm church at Laodicea, that He was ready to spit out of His mouth, the Lord Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and I knock. And if anyone hears my voice and opens that door, I will come in to him and I'll eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Though Laodicea was lukewarm and so offensive that Jesus would spit them out of His mouth, still Jesus took the initiative to restore a relationship with them. He knocked at the door and He told them they needed to repent. The Lord wants a relationship with you. He wants to be your friend. He took the first step in building that relationship by offering Himself on the cross to atone for your sins, our sins. Won't you respond to His love and His grace? Won't you let Him into your life? Put your trust in Him and obey Him today! Let's pray together. O Father, we're so grateful that You do know all about us and love us, and were willing to give Your Son, Jesus, for our sins. Father, help us to come to You and to do Your will always on this earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen!

No matter who you are or what you've done in the past, the Lord's heart is big enough and open enough to forgive you and welcome you into his family if you're willing to come to him humbly and penitently. Saul of Tarsus was the chief of sinners, but God forgave him. The apostle Paul said, “I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:12-16). If God could forgive Saul of Tarsus, he can forgive you, too!

Won't you humbly come to Jesus? Come in love and faith by repenting of your sins, confessing Him to be the Lord and Christ, and by being baptized in water? The Lord is longing for you to come to Him in love and obedience. “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). When you're baptized, He'll add you to His church. You'll be His child.

Sometimes Christians drift away from the Lord. If you've forgotten Jesus, you've built a spiritual barrier between the Lord and yourself. Come back to the Lord today by repenting. Get back to church. Just as the Lord forgave Peter, He'll forgive you.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. It might be that you've have a spiritual problem or something that you just need to talk to somebody about. We'll be glad to help you find somebody in your area that you can talk to.

The Battle for Your Soul

You may not realize it, but you—yes you—are in a serious spiritual battle. Today we're going to talk about the battle for our souls. We pray that the Lord's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. This means we must take the time to learn the will of the Lord by a serious and sincere study of the Word of God, and we must practice what it teaches. Psalm 119:1-3 says, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!" We want God to bless us, and we know that we must listen to God if we're to please Him.

We live in a chaotic world with many conflicting voices calling us to believe this or to do that. The voice of God in Scripture will tell us the truth, while the world's many voices will try to lead us away from God. Some voices encourage us to leave our faith and follow the world. Some will tell us "there is no God," or "the Bible isn't true," or "we're the products of evolution," or "Christians are mean." Others will tell us that our sins don't matter. If we believe the lies that the world tells, we can be led astray just as Eve was in Genesis 3. We're facing an ideological battle and a moral battle for our souls. I hope this gets your attention! Whether we believe and follow Christ or believe a lie and follow the world will determine how God will deal with us in eternity. Are you committed to Christ? Are you listening to His Word? Are you winning or losing the battle for your soul?

Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 6:10-13. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." Let's pray. Father, we're grateful that You have outfitted us with the equipment that we need to fight in this great battle for our souls. Father, help us to be strong in the Lord and in His might. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen!

We're at war with the devil; and he's a formidable opponent. He's had many centuries to exploit human weaknesses so that he can lead us into sin and defeat us. This battle is a personal one, like hand-to-hand combat between two soldiers. At the end of such a fight in ancient times, one soldier was standing and the other was dead. This battle is like a wrestling match where two people are personally involved eye to eye. You cannot pass this battle off to somebody else; you must face the devil yourself. He has watched you and he knows your strengths and weaknesses. He'll use every trick he knows to defeat you. He has no qualms about cheating, lying, or using dirty tricks to win. He's serious about defeating you and he intends to win.

This spiritual battle isn't just for your life; it's for your soul and the souls of your loved ones. It's the most important conflict that you'll ever face. If you're not aware that you're in a fight, you will surely lose. If you don't have the will to fight, you will most certainly lose. If you're not prepared to fight, you cannot win. If you fight but you don't give it all that you have, you can still lose your soul. Your enemy, the devil, will do anything, anything, to capture your soul. If that means trickery, he'll lie and he'll twist God's Word to suit his purposes.

The apostle Paul particularly warned Christians to hold to the truth. Paul said, "But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with

God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it's veiled only to those who are perishing. In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2-4).

The devil blinds people to the truth, so they'll believe a lie and be lost. When people leave the Word, they leave the truth. So, the devil twists and tampers with the Bible. To tamper with the Word of God is to distort it or make it appear false by deception. Satan tampers with the Word to make it teach something that it doesn't actually say. The person who uses God's Word cunningly just to advance his agenda is in Paul's eyes disgraceful and underhanded.

Scripture reveals how Satan's schemes follow a common pattern. If we understand the way that he operates, we can prepare for Satan's challenges. Satan, first, loves to ask questions that create doubt in the Word of God. You remember that in the Garden of Eden, the devil asked Eve, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:2). Satan knew what God had said; he wasn't asking the question to learn the truth or to do the will of God. Rather he asked the question to create doubt in God! He wanted Eve to question God. Doubting the truth is the first step to apostasy. The devil will always give you all the reasons you should not do the will of God. He wants you to forget doing things God's way, and to think for yourself, and to do what you think is best for you. By urging you to do what is self-focused, he gets you to go against God. He wants you to think you know more than God.

Satan, second, contradicts what God says. When Eve told Satan that she would die if she ate of that fruit or even touched it, the devil said, "you shall surely not die" (Genesis 3:4). The devil has no qualms about lying to achieve his purpose. Satan always wants people to place their confidence in him, not God. Satan claims that God has deceived you, but he knows what is really true. This desire to know Satan's secrets and to be one of the elite has led many unfortunate souls down the path to perdition. He appeals to the worst in people: their flesh, their eyes, and their pride. He makes them feel God is holding them down and cheating them out of some pleasure or some knowledge.

The Lord Jesus told some Jews who followed Satan, "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn't stand in the truth because there's no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). All you have to do to promote a lie is to tamper with the truth just a little. Take rat poison, rat poison is 98 percent corn meal and only two percent poison. If it weren't mostly corn meal, the rats wouldn't eat it; but two percent of poison is enough to kill the rat. A little lie can still keep you out of heaven. Buy the truth and do not sell it.

Satan appeals to what you want to hear and he makes you feel so good. Eve was deceived by Satan's lie. The devil likes to turn things upside down. He makes what is evil appear good and appealing, and he makes what's good appear evil and ugly. God said, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). Have you noticed how our world has labeled anything righteous as being wrong, while things that are evil are all of a sudden made attractive and enticing? That's the devil's scheme.

Satan, third, produces an alternate version of "truth." He enticed Eve with these words, "For God knows that when you eat of it (that is, of this fruit) that your eyes will be opened, and

you'll be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). The devil's alternative mixes truth with error. There is enough truth to sound persuasive, but his message is full of misrepresentations and distortions. Add it all up and the bottom line is that it's just a big lie. Satan wants everyone to believe that he has a better way, that God is trying to fool you, and that God is not your friend but is cheating you out of something really good. His strategy is to get people to rely upon him for real "progress." His alternative ways sound appealing, but, of course, in the end what they do is to destroy those who follow it.

Satan, fourth, despises and persecutes anyone who exposes him. Jesus explained, "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and doesn't come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:19-20). Jesus knew that if the world hated Him, it would also hate his disciples too when they preach the truth about sin. The devil loves to put down the church and the truth of the Bible. Peter said, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, then you're blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" (1 Peter 4:14). The devil is a bully, but God sees everything and rewards those who follow Him. If you hold to the truth and righteousness, be sure the devil will despise you and speak evil about you.

Satan, fifth, pretends to be holy. Paul spoke about some deceivers in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. They pretended to be men of God, but they actually served Satan. "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it's no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds." In order to deceive Christians and lead them into his "alternative" churches, the devil pretends to be a Christian leader. There are religions today that pretend to follow the Lord Jesus, but the more you observe them, the more you realize they're not God's people.

With high-sounding phrases, Satan tries to persuade people that Christianity is like a smorgasbord of ideas, from which you can pick and choose whatever doctrines you like, and throw away the others, of course. There are thousands of denominations in America, each teaching different doctrines and wearing different names. It's become popular to follow some man's ministry rather than listen to the Word of God. This is the devil's work. He's the one who provides heresies. Heresies are divisive false teachings that lead people astray and divide the church.

If you listen to the devil, you'll come to believe that there's no such thing as heresy, that every view is equally good. When you believe that, you've fallen into the trap of the devil. He tried to convince Eve to quit listening to God and to trust her own reasoning. When people ignore the Bible, the Word of God, and start listening to the beliefs of men, they fall prey to the devil's schemes. Their eyes become blind to the truth. God's ways and man's ways are not the same. You can't ignore God's Word and build your house upon sand, and expect everything to be all right between you and God. Eve was deceived; she lost sight of God and did what she wanted to do. If we're deceived and lose sight of God and do what we want to do, then we too will have to face the consequences of sin.

Number six, Satan preys on the weak and the ignorant. Peter said, "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9). The devil is looking

for gullible people who will fall prey to his immoral lifestyle and his disobedience to God. He uses false prophets and false churches as alternatives to the truth. He whispers to our consciences that we can sin and not be hurt by it. He is deceptive!

No matter how appealing his message is, the devil's goal is your spiritual death. So... resist him, firm in your faith. Pay close attention to the Word of God. Keep your eyes focused on the cross. God hasn't left us alone to fight the devil. Paul said, "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-17).

These things will help you in your struggle for righteousness. Whenever you have this righteousness, the gospel of peace; when you have faith; when you have salvation; and when you have the Word of God, this armor will protect you from the devil's weapons; the sword of the Spirit, God's Word, is a formidable weapon. It has the truth that pierces hearts and souls. The best thing that you can do is to fight Satan, and to do it you've got to know the Word of God. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Oh how we need the Word of God and nothing else, nothing else will do. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we're so thankful that as we fight this great battle we don't have to fight it alone, that we have the strength of Your Son, and that we have that full armor that can protect us. Father, help us to fight Satan, and his lies, with everything that's within us. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen!

When people follow their own desires rather than listen to and obey God, the devil wins and they lose. My friend, what about you? Is the devil tricking you? If the Lord and His Word doesn't rule in your life, you'll have a master who lies to you to take your soul away. If you follow the devil, he'll take you where you don't want to go. Let Jesus be Lord of your life. To get right with God and to overcome the devil, you need the Lord's help. You can't win by your own strength. When Christ is in you and you are in Him, He'll give you the help and the strength that you need to overcome Satan. Ephesians 6:10-11 says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

To become a Christian, believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior and the risen Lord. Out of love, repent of every sin and start living as God teaches. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Be baptized or immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Live the Christian life. Get involved at church. The closer you are to God, the easier it becomes to resist the devil. Do it for yourself, and do it for those that you love. Your strong faith will lead others to place their faith in the Lord as well. Don't let another day go by till you have made your life right with the living God. Why not be obedient to Him today?