



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
January 2019**

January 6, 2019

Why Listen? Matthew 17:1-5

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

Few skills in life are more _____ than the skill of listening. Today, we'll explore the _____ why we should listen to Jesus. When Jesus speaks, are you listening? The Lord Jesus has the Words of _____ life, and you can find them in no other place. This is why it's so vital to _____ the Words of Jesus and His apostles found in the New Testament. We rejoice in sharing with you the teaching of our Lord and pray that it'll make a difference in your life.

Today, is a special day for me. Ten years ago, in 2009, I moved to Edmond, Oklahoma to be with Mack Lyon and begin speaking for In Search of the Lord's Way. These ten years have passed quickly. For a couple of years brother Lyon and I shared the duties of the program. I have so many fond memories of Mack Lyon, who passed away in 2015 and whom I knew for 40 years. These have been exciting years, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We've doubled the number of local broadcast stations since 2009 and moved to WGN America every Sunday. I've met many viewers in my travels and call them friends. Search can now be seen or heard throughout the US and in more than 30 other countries. Our website, searchtv.org and our YouTube channel, "SearchTVMinistry," reaches the world. Thanks for making these ten years so blessed. Your prayers, kind words, and encouragement strengthens all of us who work together in this ministry. I'm grateful to my co-workers Chris Lyon, Jerry and Kerry Campbell, Craig Dodgen, Brian Berry, Donna Demas, and Colleen Hendrix, who labor with love and faith. We also rejoice in dozens of volunteers from the Edmond church and surrounding congregations who bless this ministry.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to Matthew 17:1-5.

Recently I was visiting with my friend, Randy Duke, an elder and the publisher of the Gospel Advocate. He asked me a thought-provoking question that every Bible teacher ought to ask himself. He said, "Why should I _____ to you?" To be honest, I'm far more concerned with people listening to Jesus Christ and the _____ of the New Testament than in listening to me. I'm fallible, but God's Word isn't fallible. I'm ignorant about many things, but the Word of God gives us all spiritual _____ that's necessary for life and godliness. I won't hesitate to ask people to listen to Christ and the Scriptures. Because the Scriptures are God's Word, we must listen.

As the various biblical books of the New Testament became available, God wanted His people to hear and _____ what these books said. Paul wrote to the church at Colossae, "And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16). His letter was not just for that _____ church, but for _____ the churches. He was insistent that the church in Thessalonica also read and obey. He said, "I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers" (1 Thessalonians 5:27). Paul regarded what he said under inspiration as that important! The book of Revelation, written to the seven churches of Asia, opens with a blessing: "Blessed is the one

who _____ aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who _____, and who _____ what is written in it, for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3).

It’s no surprise that Paul urges the young preacher Timothy to _____ the Scripture aloud. Paul said, “Until I come, _____ yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). The church, in the first century, slowly _____ the various inspired writings of the apostles and the prophets. They treasured them and spent many hours listening to a speaker read the words of the inspired books of the New Testament. Early Christians listened, paying close attention to the _____ they heard. They were the words of Jesus and His apostles, the words of _____. No matter what role you have in life, you must _____ to listen and listen well. The teachers of our youngest children emphasize the need to listen and _____ directions, and we never outgrow that need.

Stephen Covey in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, suggests that there are five _____ of listening. First, we may be ignoring another person, not really listening at all. Second, we may be _____ to listen. Third, we may be practicing _____ listening, drifting in and out of the conversation and paying attention to only parts of what the other person is saying. Fourth, we may be listening attentively. Very few practice the fifth level, the highest form of listening—empathic listening, listening with intent to understand, to get inside the other person’s frame of reference, seeking to understand them emotionally as well as intellectually.

When you’re reading or listening to the Bible, _____ to understand. Occasionally people tell me I had said something, but what I actually said and what they heard were _____ different things. They sometimes missed important points or assumed that I said something I didn’t say. It’s _____ to read the Word of God a second time or third time. Read in context. Ask who wrote it, to whom was he speaking, when was it written, and what circumstances surrounded the writing.

I had my hearing tested twice a few months ago and found that I wasn’t hearing certain consonants correctly. The word that the tester said and the word that I thought I was repeating weren’t the same word. This is a common problem for those with moderate hearing loss. This is what makes having an _____ Bible while we listen so valuable.

Humans make mistakes, but God’s Word is without _____. If there is misunderstanding of Scripture, it comes not from _____ God said but from _____ we grasp what He said. We all have communication challenges. We can filter out what we don’t _____ to hear. Some pay attention to the Scriptures that they like, but _____ the ones they don’t like. Others pick _____ Scriptures and focus only on them. They hear only _____ of the truth. When they hear someone teach the rest of what God says, they assume the teacher is _____. Solomon said, “If one gives an answer _____ he hears, it is his folly and shame” (Proverbs 18:13). If we only get half the message, we’ll _____ part of what God wants us to know. Proverbs 15:31-32 says, “The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. And whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.”

Something can be true, but not be the _____ truth. We’re saved by grace, but it’s a grace that’s with conditions, not grace _____. We’re saved by faith but it’s not by faith alone. It does

little good to hear only what we _____ to hear and to ignore all the rest. We haven't really heard God if we do that. Proverbs 3:5-7 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil." When people start reasoning _____ they hear the whole truth, they usually end up in error. Proverbs 19:27 says, "Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will _____ from the words of knowledge."

People like to _____ themselves and their moral choices. They sometimes reason that some passage that they don't like doesn't _____ to them, so they can do as they please. Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a _____ man listens to advice." When people stop listening to God, they _____ themselves and others. Proverbs 19:20 says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may _____ wisdom in the future."

Some choose to listen to the _____ people. Proverbs 17:4 says, "An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue." If you get your counsel from a wicked _____, don't be surprised that you will act wickedly. Proverbs 29:12 says, "If a ruler listens to falsehood, all his officials will be wicked." If you get your counsel from a source that doesn't _____ God, don't be surprised when you violate the will of God. God has spoken to _____ us in the right way, the true and pure way. When you get your counsel from people who do not know God, you'll miss out on the wisdom of God.

Jack Lewis, one of my professors, used to advise us to use discretion when we're reading books about the Bible and theology. He said, "Eat the _____, and throw the _____ away." Just because you hear something on television or read it on the internet doesn't mean it's _____! If you listen to the babble of the world and those who scoff against God, you'll lose _____ of the truth and end up in error. Paul warned Timothy, "But _____ irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have _____ from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:16-18). Some false teachers who reasoned that the resurrection was past, began spreading that lie and upset the faith of some. Sadly, some people are spreading that same _____ today.

When you want the truth about any _____ matter, go to the Scriptures. Seek your _____ from Jesus and His apostles. Let them teach you, reprove you, correct you, and train you in righteousness. The Scriptures are more _____ than gold, yes, than much fine gold. If you fail to listen to the Scriptures, you'll _____ yourself of the most precious treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Proverbs 25:12 says, "Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear."

Let the Scriptures build your _____. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." Let the Scriptures build your _____. Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our _____, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Let the Scriptures renew your love for God. The more we listen to God, the more we'll love Him. The psalmist said,

“I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love; And I will meditate on Your statutes” (Psalm 119:47-48). No matter who you are or what your role in life is, learning to listen well is a skill that you must master if you wish to _____ God and people.

Many people find time to listen to everything and everyone _____ the Lord Jesus Christ. We all have busy lives, but I wonder if we’re spending our time on things that _____ matter. We waste so much _____ on frivolous and earthly things, forgetting the heavenly and eternal things. We seek to gain every advantage on earth and forget we have a _____. On Judgment Day, the Lord Jesus won’t ask how much money you saved or what kind of car you owned. He won’t ask if your team won or what was your favorite television show. He’ll ask about your attitudes, your words, and your actions. I fear we’re so concerned with the cosmetics of the outside that we miss the need to purify the heart and the spirit, preparing to live with God.

Read in Luke 10:38-42 the story of two sisters who loved God but focused on different things. Martha was anxious and troubled about many things, while Mary _____ on listening to Jesus Christ. Are you listening to Jesus? Have you focused on what affects your eternal destiny?

The psalmist appealed to God, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18). Shouldn’t we _____ to hear what the Lord Jesus says? That’s why all we’ve said today matters. The Lord Jesus has the answers to your spiritual _____, the guidance you require, and the hope you need to live eternally. Don’t miss the _____ of the gospel. Don’t spend eternity _____ you had listened to and learned from Jesus.

James 1:22-25 says, “But be _____ of the word, and not hearers _____, deceiving yourselves....But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be _____ in his doing.” Listening to God is essential to eternal life, but you must do _____ than listen. You must _____ what you’ve heard to your heart, to your thinking, and to your life. Commit yourself to paying _____ attention in order to understand what God says and do it.

Jesus once asked, “Why do you _____ Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not _____ what I say?” (Luke 6:46). When people don’t _____ on what they hear, it’s as if they never heard! Failing to _____ the Lord is as dangerous as ignoring the Lord altogether. If we do as God says and truly “Listen to Him,” we’ll never ignore what He says. We’ll take His words to heart and obey!

If you’ve heard what the Lord says, trust Him! Love Him! Come to Him! Obey Him! Do what He says without disputing with Him or trying to change His words. Believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Make Him your Lord by repenting of your sins. Tell everyone of your faith by confessing Him. Be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you’re buried and raised with Christ through faith in the working of God, God gives you new life and forgives all your transgressions (Colossians 2:12-13). He makes you His child (Galatians 3:26-27).

It may be that you were once faithful to the Lord but you’ve wandered away from the Lord and the church. Why not start listening once again? Come back to God, repent of your negligence, and ask God to forgive you. You’ll never regret doing the right thing and being right with God. Take Christ and His Words to heart once again.



January 13, 2019

Why Pardon You Titus 2:11-14

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

God once asked the Israelites, “Why should I pardon you?” (Jeremiah 5:7). Today, we’re exploring the wonders of the _____ of God. We _____ by the grace of God. James 1:17 says, “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from _____, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” Your life, air, food, water, clothing, shelter, and every spiritual blessing _____ from our Father in heaven. In Christ, we have faith, hope, and love. God gives us joy, peace, and salvation through Christ. In the future, we have an inheritance in _____ because of the sacrifice of Jesus. Because of the grace of God, in Christ, we are most _____.

John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace, said many years ago, “I am not what I _____ to be — ah, how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I _____ to be — I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good! I am not what I _____ to be — soon, soon shall I put off mortality, and with mortality all sin and imperfection. Yet, though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was, a _____ to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am.’”

God loves us more than we can measure, and has provided through the death of Christ and the message of the gospel our _____ from sin and its consequences. All this comes by grace as the gift of God; but this grace _____ that we lovingly receive and trust Him, turn our lives around, and obey Him.

Our reading today comes from Titus 2:11-14. Yes, we need to be zealous for good deeds and leave the old way of life.

All we are and all we possess _____ from God. We’re able to enjoy _____ life because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who suffered for our sins. Some people have the mistaken notion that God _____ them eternal life and must answer every prayer, whether they are devoted to Him or not. They think God should let them into heaven, whether they have paid any attention to Him or not. We go to a funeral, and sometimes the minister will make a _____ out of a rascal, who had no intention of serving God. Does God think like that?

God has no desire for anyone to be _____. He went to great lengths so that we might be _____. Sometimes we _____ the most basic teaching of God. John 3:16-18 says, “For God so _____ the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to _____ the world, but that the world might be _____ through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” God doesn’t want to condemn anyone, but some people _____ to

believe and obey the Lord. Sadly, some Christians never quite deny themselves or take up their crosses to follow Jesus.

I fear we think too lightly of God's grace and tend to _____ ourselves from the consequences of sin. Have you considered how _____ sin really is? Ephesians 2:1-3 says, "And you were _____ in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." To be a "child of wrath" means that God will one day _____ you for the way that you have lived. This is sad, but Ephesians doesn't stop here.

Ephesians 2:4-7 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us _____ together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God knew we needed to be saved, and He was willing to pardon and save us so that we could live with Him eternally. But God wants more than merely to save us; He wants to transform our lives to be what He created us to be.

Ephesians 2:8-10 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the _____ of God; not as a result of works, (you can't earn it) so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for _____ works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Our salvation is a gift. We can't _____ about saving ourselves, because no one can save himself. God must save us by grace through faith. We're saved in order to be _____ than we were before.

Paul explains with a before and after _____ of this change that grace works in our lives; and so we change morally, and spiritually, and practically. Let's think about Titus 2:11-14 again, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all (people) men, instructing us to _____ ungodliness and worldly desires and to _____ sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us (why?) to redeem us from every lawless deed, (get us away from those things) and to _____ for Himself a people for His own possession, (that we are) zealous for good deeds." We deny the worldly and the ungodly so that we can live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

An ungodly person never gives God a second _____; he's selfish and lawless. A godly person, on the other hand, realizes who God is and seeks to _____ Him. He recognizes what Jesus did for him on the cross and knows that he _____ to Jesus Christ. He wants to live _____ from sin and is zealous to do what is right, to serve the Lord, and to do good to others. He is truly born again, living a _____ life that's different from the one he used to live. That's why God wants to pardon us, so that He can _____ our lives.

Someone objects that he doesn't want _____ telling him what to do or how to live his life.

God has given you freewill to make up your mind whether you'll live by your _____ ways outside of His laws, or whether you will _____ Him. What you choose, friend, will determine your destiny in the hereafter.

Read what Paul wrote to some Jewish Christians who judged Gentile Christians for not keeping the Law in Romans 2:3-11. Attitude matters; where we place our priorities matters. Whether we listen to God and _____ His teaching makes a difference in our salvation. If you choose to disbelieve and disobey you can hardly blame God for rejecting you at the end of time.

Give yourself to the Lord Jesus, and Jesus will _____ for you from that day forward. We're fallible creatures who sin and need the _____ of the Lord Jesus. When we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all _____ (1 John 1:7) Walking in the light is not sinless perfection. No one can live a perfectly _____ life except Jesus. Even when we walk in the light, we need the _____ of Jesus and His help. As our high priest, Hebrews 9:24 says that He has entered heaven in the _____ of God for us. What is He doing there? The Lord Jesus has three _____ in heaven; His work is with the Father on behalf of Christians.

First, He is our _____. First Timothy 2:3-6 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who _____ all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also _____ God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." Jesus is doing what no one else can do; He _____ is mediating for us with the Father. A mediator stands between God and us and reconciles us with the Father, so that we can be right with God.

Second, He is _____ for us. Hebrews 7:24-25 says, "Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is _____ also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Jesus earnestly _____ our case, formally making requests to the Father on our behalf. Perhaps you remember how Peter boasted about never falling away or denying the Lord, but Peter was _____. He denied the Lord _____ times. I mention this to point to how Jesus _____ with weak Christians when they sin. Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked permission to sift you like wheat, but I have _____ for you" (Luke 22:31). I find great _____ in knowing that Jesus not only prayed for Peter; He is also praying for me in my weaknesses. That humbles me and makes me want to love the Lord even more.

Third, the Lord Jesus is our _____. He stands by our side _____ our case with the Father. First John 2:1-2 says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." The word "propitiation" refers to an atoning _____. Jesus gave His body and His blood on the cross to atone for our sins so we could be reconciled to God. We couldn't be _____ with God or even approach God were it not for the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Consider this: the very person who was the atoning sacrifice is the very person who is pleading your case and advocating for you with the Father.

Romans 8:32 speaks of the Father's great love and kindness toward us, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him _____ give us all things?" If God would not withhold His Son from us, we can be sure that He will not withhold anything that will _____ us, but will freely give us all things that will lead to our salvation and living the Christian life. That's what the Lord is _____ for us in heaven. What a marvelous God and a great salvation we have in Christ.

God's grace _____ the body and blood of His Son, Jesus. For this reason, we must never presume upon the grace of God. God doesn't _____ us grace; it's His gift. Gifts are free, but they aren't _____. Hebrews 10:26-31 says, "For if we go on _____ willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. And anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will _____ his people.' It's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." We should all _____ ourselves and consider God's question, "Why should I pardon you?"

When we look at our past, we see things that we _____ we hadn't done. Have we _____ or have we continued with our foolish ways? Titus 3:3-4 says, "For we also once were _____ ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." Before we knew Christ, we lived in a sad state; but we don't have to _____ living foolishly, causing all kinds of problems for ourselves and the people we love.

Titus 3:5-7 says, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of _____ which we've done in righteousness, but according to His _____, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

We are dependent upon the grace of God for our _____. We cannot _____ it; but God does expect us to _____ His conditions in order to receive His grace. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without _____ it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must _____ that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." The Lord Jesus said, "unless you _____, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Jesus said that if we confess Him before men, He will confess us (Matthew 10:32-33). None of these things _____ salvation, but you can't be saved _____ them. Titus said that God saves us through the washing of regeneration. That's _____! That's the time that God causes us to be born again and God _____ away our sins (Acts 22:16). God wants to pardon you. Will you let Him? Will you meet His conditions? Do it today!

January 20, 2019

Why Pray James 4:1-3

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

Most of us grew up _____ prayers at church or before we eat. Today, we're exploring the _____ that prayer makes. God's Word teaches us the _____ that we most need. The Bible is God speaking to us today, and prayer is when we tell God all that is in our _____. As our Father in heaven, God wants to _____ us through His Word the most important lessons, but He also wants to _____ from us. God cares for us and wants to hear what we have to say.

In a crisis, we pray _____ fervently than usual. We want God to hear our _____. Does prayer really work? Does God really _____ what I have to say? Abraham Lincoln once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day." Perhaps you too are driven to your _____. You call upon God to _____ you through your struggle. Will prayer matter at all?

I've heard people speak of praying for something and not getting what they _____ for. They assumed God was supposed to do whatever they _____. God, however, is a good parent and doesn't give His children _____ they ask for. He gives them what they _____ and what will bless them spiritually and physically. Romans 8:32 assures us that, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us _____ things?" We can trust God to do what is _____ and to meet our needs. How is your prayer life? Does God know your heart?

Our reading today comes from James 4:1-3. James is dealing with some people who were quarrelling and fussing and couldn't get an _____ to their prayers, and he's telling them why.

When you can do nothing else, you can pray! Prayer is God's _____. In hearing our prayers, God is giving Himself, His ear, His heart, and His love to pay attention to us! Ask, seek, and knock! He will answer, help you find an answer, and open the _____ at any time.

First, prayer will bring you into the _____ of God! Prayer is communicating with God. In prayer, we _____ our hearts and our souls up to God. In Exodus 3:2-5, Moses saw a burning _____. The Scripture says, "When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is _____ ground.'" Prayer is like that experience—we come into God's presence.

God also said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was _____ to look at God" (Exodus 3:6) We don't have to be afraid like Moses was because we're praying to our Father in heaven, who _____ us. In our prayers, let's be _____ to God because He is holy.

The Hebrew writer describes the Lord, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold _____ our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been _____ in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence (boldness) to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to _____ in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16). We should pray with reverence, but with confidence, approaching our Father and God who is to be honored but who is also one that understands us and is willing to give us mercy and grace to help us in the time of need. God is God, but He is compassionate toward us.

Second, prayer will unleash the _____ of God. Prayer is God’s idea. He wants us to pray. The Lord Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is _____ to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:7-8). God is a good Father who loves us and wants to _____ our lives and meet our needs.

I believe in the power of prayer because I believe in the power of God to _____ my prayers. Prayer works because God works. Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer except that which is outside the will of God. Prayer doesn’t need proof; it needs _____. James said, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish _____. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit” (James 5:16-18). James challenges us to _____ God when we pray. James 1:5-8 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom [this is daily wisdom, not revelation], let him _____ of God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in _____, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” God will bless us if we will have faith in Him and believe that He can help us to find the _____ that we seek. God does not always answer prayers the ways that we _____ Him to, but God answers prayers the way that is _____ for us. We don’t always know what is best for ourselves.

Sometimes God says _____ to our prayers. He did so for Elijah, a man like us, and God may bless our lives as well. God wants and expects His children to _____ asking until we receive. “Jesus told a parable to the effect that one ought _____ to pray and not lose heart. He said, ‘In a certain city there was a _____ who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a _____ in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will

not _____ give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he _____ long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:1-8). There are times when what we _____ most is to believe that God will hear us and answer our prayers.

Sometimes God says _____ to our prayers. A negative answer may be the answer of a _____ God. No parent would give his four-year-old son a brand new car. God didn't _____ Paul's thorn in the flesh, even though he asked him to do so three times! Paul learned some things from this experience. Paul said, "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for _____ is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. And therefore I am well _____ with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am _____, then I am _____" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Christians should pray, "God's will be done," and respect the wisdom of a loving God.

Sometimes God says, "Wait a while." Though Israel suffered much in Egyptian slavery and cried out to God, God didn't answer their prayers until Moses was _____ years old (Exodus chapters 1 to 3). Jesus also responded _____ to Mary and Martha when they asked that Jesus come and heal Lazarus. Jesus didn't heal Lazarus quickly. In fact, He didn't heal him at all from the illness; He, instead, raised him from the _____. By waiting, Jesus did a _____ work than if he had merely healed His friend. It's not easy to be _____. Just because something doesn't happen as quickly as we wish doesn't mean God isn't at work. Psalm 147:11 says, "The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who _____ for His lovingkindness." Don't give up on God; He may be doing _____ than you know to answer your prayer.

Sometimes God gives us something _____ from what we ask. The thief on the cross only wanted to be remembered when Jesus came into His kingdom, but Jesus said to him that he would be with Him in Paradise (Luke 23:43). We don't always know what is best for ourselves, or _____ we should pray (Romans 8:26). We can be assured that our loving Father will do what is _____. God will give us the things we need even when we cannot _____ our own needs. God sees what we cannot see and He knows what we don't. Let's trust His wisdom to _____ us through our struggles.

God often does _____ than we ask or think. Paul had great faith in God's ability to answer prayer. In his letter to the Ephesians, he said, "Now to him who is _____ to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). You and I have limits, but God isn't limited. We serve a great God who is able—we must remember that.

God gave Solomon the opportunity to pray for anything he wished. **Read what Solomon prayed, and how God responded in 1 Kings 3:9-13.**

God blessed Solomon _____ his expectations. Thankfully, God has blessed us, too. Who knows how many blessings we have received from His hands? He's likely been far _____ to us than we realize. Jesus said that our heavenly Father knows our needs even _____ we ask. He knows our _____ needs of food, clothing, and shelter. He knows our _____ needs of

love and respect. He knows of our _____ needs of instruction, encouragement, and even correction. When children of God come to Him humbly, and sincerely, and fervently, He will bless them _____.

It is in prayer that we _____ how much we need our Father in heaven. It's a great day when a person realizes that however wise and strong he thinks he is, he _____ needs a Father in heaven to help him and to bless him. Many Christians _____ to pray. They fail to take their sorrow, heartaches, and worries to the only One who can help them—and that's God! Paul said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

In ancient Persia, King Darius signed a law making it a crime punishable by _____ to pray to anyone but to himself. The prophet Daniel, though a high official in Persia, refused to _____ the edict. He prayed _____ to the one true God. Daniel 6:10 says: "Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he _____ kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously." The king had no _____; he regrettably cast Daniel into the lions' den for the night. God kept Daniel _____ from the lions. Daniel was willing to _____ rather than give up praying to the God of heaven.

My friend, I hope you won't _____ praying; keep on talking to God. Keep on asking God for what you _____. Keep on asking him to _____ you from the evil one. Keep on praying His _____ be done. Keep on depending on God for comfort, for forgiveness, and for help. God _____ prayer!

John said, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His _____ He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (1 John 5:14-15). We must _____ to His will in our thinking, our behavior, and our prayers. When we live and ask according to His will, He will readily grant our requests.

To live according to His will, we must know Him and His Word. Some fail in prayer because _____ lives in their hearts. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not _____." People need forgiveness to have a close relationship with God. If you're not a Christian, _____ in Jesus, love and trust Him, _____ of your sins, _____ His name, and be _____ (immersed in water) for the forgiveness of your sins.

I believe strongly in prayer, but prayer won't make up for failing to become a Christian or for failing to repent. Make sure you're right with God. There's a time to pray, yes, but there's also a time to act. Act today. Don't waste your life, your soul, or your eternity by putting off doing the will of God. God wants to forgive you and give you eternal life; but God won't twist your arm. He wants you to love Him enough to come to Him and to obey Him. When you obey the gospel in faith, repentance, and baptism, the grace of God washes you clean and causes you to be born again as a child of God. Please act today, so that you may enjoy the wonderful blessing of a relationship with God. God hears His faithful children's prayers. Are you a faithful child of God?

Believing Jesus
Hebrews 11:1-6

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

Do you believe that Jesus is _____ the Christ, the Son of the living God? Today, we're exploring what it _____ to believe, truly believe, in Jesus Christ. We believe God, so we believe what He _____ in His Word, the Bible. God has shown us the _____ to eternal life in Scripture. We've learned that God will keep every _____, but we also realize that God makes a distinction between those who will _____ Him and those who won't. So, we _____ the Scriptures and strive to follow the Lord. If you wish to be _____ with the living God, faith is a necessity. You probably recall the verses that we all heard in Bible classes from our childhood. The Lord Jesus said, "For God so _____ the world, that he gave his only (some versions say only begotten) Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). But do you recall the next two verses, verses 17 and 18? The Lord also said, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be _____ through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

Believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God is necessary if we are to have eternal _____. It's not just believing God exists; it's also believing in Jesus as God's only Son, that is, His only begotten Son. We must put our faith in Christ. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the _____, and the _____, and the _____; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). The way to God is through faith in Jesus. We must put our faith in Him.

Our reading today comes from the Letter to the Hebrews 11:1-6 where the author defines, illustrates, and then talks about the importance of what it means to believe.

We will look at faith from God's perspective. Many look at God and Christianity through the eyes of popular _____. Salvation isn't an entitlement that God _____ us. It's a _____ to those who believe. We should believe what God _____ and not read into our faith what we think it should mean. Let's listen to God, asking what kind of faith God wants from us. We seek to _____ God.

Throughout the Bible, God distinguishes those who please Him and abide in His _____ from those who don't. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God _____ believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." We must believe in God, but we must also know about the God that we believe. We must know that He only _____ those who seek Him. Many people believe a God exists, but the God they _____ is not the God of the Bible.

Our postmodern society thinks it should _____ its own god and tell its god what to believe rather than hear the God who created them. Some manufacture a god that fits the _____. Faith in a culturally-correct god is not the same as faith in a _____ God who made the world and will one day judge us according to His Word. We must believe in God as He reveals and defines Himself in His Word, not in the naïve and non-judgmental god that's popularized by our culture.

Our culture thinks of God as one who winks at sin, who never condemns anyone, and who believes everything that we believe. Many think the God of all grace doesn't _____ about righteousness or truth. Others have _____ that God is not just holy, but utterly holy. Habakkuk 1:13 says of God, "Your eyes are too _____ to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor." Some think God doesn't care what we believe or do, but God is vitally interested in our living holy lives devoted to the _____, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot speak of having faith in Jesus Christ, but then believing anything that we _____. Nor can we speak of having faith in Jesus Christ and living any _____ we want. When a person comes to Christ as a believer, He _____ to Jesus. Paul told the Christians at Corinth, "You are not your own, for you were bought with a _____" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). If we wear the name Christian and believe in Jesus Christ, we can never forget that. We are not our own; we belong to Jesus. He is our Lord and Master, and we are His servants.

Moses wrote, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2). The eternal God stands _____ our changing culture. The Lord is not _____ to the changing whims of humanity. His holiness, His righteousness, His purity, and His justice do not _____ with popular opinions. We must accept Him and His revealed _____ as He gave it to us instead of trying to remake Him in our own image. Faith in God doesn't mean that we can believe whatever we _____. How can anyone say that He trusts in God when he doesn't believe what God _____? Faith means we believe what the Lord teaches. Why? Because He is Divine and we're not. He knows all things and has all authority and we do not. He gives us His _____ in the Bible, because He loves us and wants us to know the truth.

Believing in the God of the Bible _____ necessitates trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. The Old Testament prophesies of Jesus as the _____ Messiah. The New Testament tells _____ He fulfilled dozens of prophecies. Believing in Jesus means you believe the _____ that He made to be God's Son. Jesus said that He would _____ from the dead, and He did! Jesus said Jerusalem would _____, and the Romans destroyed the city in 70 A.D!

The Bible says, "He came to his own, and his own people did not _____ him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). Many people approach Christ with preconceived _____. If Jesus fails to _____ up to what they want or what they imagined, they're not willing to believe. Some will only believe if Jesus never _____ anyone or never calls for moral change. That kind of Jesus doesn't exist. To know the real Jesus, we must read _____ that the New Testament says about Him, not just pick out certain passages and then ignore the rest.

The Lord Jesus doesn't play games. He came to His own people but they didn't receive Him. The Lord Jesus blesses _____ those who believe in His name, who believe that He is the Christ, and who believe what He teaches. Jesus loves you, but He's not obligated to _____ you unconditionally. Jesus isn't your _____; He's your creator and Lord.

Faith stands between being accepted and being rejected. God made that decision, and we can't _____ God. The Lord Jesus said, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God"

(John 3:18). On another occasion, Jesus _____ the Jews that He had come from the Father in Heaven. He said, “I told you that you would die in your sins, for _____ you believe that I am he you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). Believing in Jesus means believing that He truly is the Christ, the Son of God. It means believing that He is the fulfillment of God’s prophecies of the Messiah.

Saving faith isn’t simply believing in the act of believing; it’s believing in the _____. Believing in the Person Jesus means that you believe that what He claims, says, and promises is _____. If I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I’ll recognize His authority over my _____ life. Faith includes _____ and responsibilities. The Lord Jesus said, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I _____?” (Luke 6:46). If I regard Jesus as Lord, I cannot pick and choose which of His commandments I will _____ and which I won’t.

There are times when we wonder _____ God asks the things that He asks. But trusting faith means we _____ even when we don’t understand. Hebrews 11:8 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not _____ where he was going.” Abraham didn’t _____ with God. Because he trusted God, he simply _____. He showed his confidence in God though he didn’t _____ what would happen. We trust God in things we don’t know because we find Him trustworthy in what we do know. We know God is true and loving.

The apostle Paul said, “For this reason I also _____ these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is _____ to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). Paul could face the _____ with peace and confidence because He knew God and how God kept His _____. We can trust God in what we don’t know because God has _____ Himself worthy of our trust in what we do know!

Hebrews 11:3 says, “By faith we understand that the worlds were _____ by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” By faith, we can understand that God _____ this world in six days just as He said in Genesis, chapter one. While no one was around to witness the creation, we can _____ God’s Word about the creation. Why? Because we know God is trustworthy, and worthy of our faith.

The early disciples were willing to _____ for their faith for two reasons. First, they were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus “presented Himself _____ after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days” (Acts 1:3). They saw Him, heard Him speak, and touched His body. They were so convinced that when they were threatened by the Jewish council they replied, “we cannot _____ speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). They were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Second, they believed in Jesus because they saw _____ He fulfilled the many Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. If you’d grown up as a Jew in the first century, your Bible studies at the synagogue would constantly include prophecies about the _____ Messiah. Jesus was born in the right place, Bethlehem; at the right time, during that forth kingdom; in the right tribe, the tribe Judah; with the right family lineage; and with the right kind of mother—a virgin. A star announced His birth, and wise men came from the East looking for Him. The apostle Philip said to his brother, Nathaniel, “We have _____ Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). As you read the book of Acts, the apostles and evangelists

repeatedly _____ that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah.

What we know is true about Jesus is that He is the _____ Messiah who arose from the dead. For this _____, we call Him “Lord” and “Christ.” Since we have confidence that He is the Son of God, we can _____ what He says about creation, about Adam and Eve, about the flood, about Sodom and Gomorrah, and every other story found in the Old Testament. When Jesus spoke of the Old Testament, He _____ what He read there as true, historical events. For this reason, we can believe the Old Testament is trustworthy and true. We trust Jesus Christ!

Because we have a living Savior, we want a living _____ and not a dead one. James 2:14-18 says, “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no _____? Can that faith _____ him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not _____ them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is _____, being by itself. But someone may well say, ‘You have faith and I have works;’ show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith _____ my works.” Dead, inactive faith is _____. It doesn’t reveal that one truly believes in Jesus Christ. It doesn’t save.

Saving faith is always _____. The Lord Jesus said, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not _____ the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36). You can _____ to believe, but unless your faith _____ to obedience, you cannot be right with God. When the Bible speaks of saving faith, it is always an _____, obedient faith. Galatians 3:26-27 says, “For you are all sons of God through _____ in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were _____ into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” James said, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” Are you a doer of the Word or merely a hearer?

After Lazarus _____, Jesus visited his sisters, Mary and Martha. In John 11:23-27 the Scripture reveals a conversation between Jesus and Martha. Jesus told Martha, “Your brother will _____ again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I _____ the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

We need to ask ourselves, “Do you believe this?” Do you believe God _____ the world in six days? Do you believe the _____ is true? Do you believe Jesus _____ from the dead and is Lord? Do you believe Jesus’ death on the cross can atone for your _____? Do you believe that you will one day be _____ from the dead? Do you believe in the _____ Day? Do you believe in Heaven and Hell? Faith in Christ means believing what He _____ and what He _____ to give us eternal life.

If you really believe, put your faith into action by repenting of your sins; confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and by being baptized into Christ. Baptism is an immersion in water of a penitent believer. It’s done in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the time when you become a child of God, free from sin, and added to the Lord’s church, and that’s all of God’s doing. The Lord Jesus said, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). We hope you’ll become a Christian, today.