



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
February 2020**

Longer quotations do not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

The Lord's Resurrection

The Christian faith _____ on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Did Jesus _____ rise from the dead? Let's look at the evidence! We love the Lord and are determined to show that love by examining the Scriptures to see what God _____ of us. God regards searching the Scriptures to find the _____ as noble. Whether Jesus arose matters. If Jesus arose, there is life _____ death. If Jesus arose, He has fulfilled the ancient prophecies and _____ Himself to be the Son of God. If Jesus arose, then His _____ are true. If Jesus arose and is the Son of God, He is Lord of all and has authority over our _____. If the Lord Jesus arose, then He will one day come again and _____ you and me by His Word.

Since what we're studying today affects each of us and has eternal consequences for our souls, we need to pay _____ attention. If Jesus arose from the dead, we can't _____ Him or what He requires of us. We can't hide our heads in the sand. **Read what the Bible says in Hebrews 4:12-13.** One day you and I will give an _____ of ourselves to Jesus Christ.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to Matthew 28:2-7.

The Lord Jesus _____ His death and resurrection. Jesus said, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will _____ Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up" (Matthew 20:18-19). This is an amazing and specific prediction! Jesus not only predicted He would be scourged and crucified at the hands of the chief priests and the Gentiles but also that He would _____ from the dead the third day. Only the Son of God could make such a _____ prediction about His death and resurrection and see its fulfillment just as He predicted.

Before we speak of a resurrection, we must first examine the evidence that Jesus actually _____ upon the cross. All four gospel accounts _____ of the beatings and His scourging. A Roman scourging led many men to _____. The whip they used lacerated the skin with sharp objects and caused the loss of much _____. Scourging left a person so _____ that they couldn't fight being crucified. The Romans, unlike the Jews, did not _____ their stripes to 39. The cross killed a person _____ and very painfully. While the nails through the hands and the feet were not of themselves fatal, the physical position of a crucified person, on a cross, created tremendous _____ on the heart and lungs. A person had to pull himself up to breathe in and out. The cross gradually wore a person down so that he couldn't breathe. In the case of Jesus, fluid surrounded his heart until it failed.

The reason soldiers would break the legs of a crucified person was to _____ their death. A person with broken legs couldn't _____ himself up to breathe and would die more quickly. They broke the legs of the two thieves; but these experienced soldiers found Jesus was already dead, so

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they didn't break His bones in fulfillment of Psalm 34:20 that "not a _____ of Him shall be broken." Instead, a soldier pierced His side with a _____, "and immediately there came out blood and water" (John 19:34). This flowing of water and blood is a sure _____ that Jesus was indeed dead. If Jesus had not died from the crucifixion, He could not have survived this spear.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, but Pilate wouldn't release the body until he had _____ that Jesus was already dead. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus _____ his body for burial in a new tomb a short distance from where he was crucified. John reveals that they _____ the body in linen wrappings with myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight, that's at 12 ounces to the pound. This burial process would have _____ Jesus in a mummy-like wrapping with the spices sealing the cloth together. Bound up like this, Jesus—even if He by some remote chance survived—could not have breathed and lived. Jesus was _____ in the tomb.

The Pharisees and priests requested Pilate to put a _____ at the tomb. Matthew 27:62-64 records what they said. "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and _____ Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." They went and made the grave secure, and they set a _____ on the stone. They were determined to not let anything happen to that tomb. They didn't merely post a couple of guards at the tomb. Some scholars suggest that there were as many as 28 guards there, and they would have been particularly watchful on the third day, when the _____ was greatest. The governor's seal meant that it would be _____ to mess with the tomb.

The Scriptures tell us that women came very early on the first day of the week to the tomb to _____ the body of Jesus. This was their first opportunity since the Sabbath had passed. They wondered, "Who will _____ away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" They realized that the stone was "extremely large" according to Mark 16:4. Scholars suggest that this stone weighed between one and a half and two tons. They knew moving this stone was far _____ their ability and that it would require several strong men to move it.

Coming to the tomb, they saw an _____ had rolled the stone away. The stone sat in an inclined track. To open the tomb they had to roll this stone up the _____. Apparently it was picked up and moved out of its track _____ from the sepulcher. How could a group of _____ tiptoe among some sleeping soldiers, pick up an extremely large stone, maybe as much as 2 tons, and then move it away from the tomb? How could they break this official seal, move the stone, and remove the body of Jesus undetected by the soldiers?

When the women reported to the apostles that the tomb was _____, many of the apostles laughed and doubted their word; but two apostles wanted to find out for themselves. Peter and John ran to the tomb. John 20:5-7 says that they _____ in the tomb and saw the linen wrappings lying there. They saw "the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but _____ up in a place by itself." This is curious. Why would the disciples, if they

stole the body, unwrap him and fold the face cloth, and leave the wrappings in the tomb, knowing that the guards were just _____?

Whatever understanding you have of this event, you must _____ who moved the stone, how the tomb became empty, who took the linen wrappings from the body of Jesus, and folded the facecloth and left them there. The eyewitnesses who examined these events _____ without hesitation that Jesus arose from the dead. According to Matthew 28:11-15, the soldiers reported all these events to the chief priests, who paid the soldiers a large sum of money to _____ and promised to keep them out of trouble with the governor. But down deep these soldiers and the chief priests _____ the truth.

Knowing this is the testimony of Scripture, let's ask whether the testimony about the empty tomb is _____. Can we test the credibility of the report of the resurrection? Is it believable? First, let's remember that Jesus believed and taught His people to be _____. The Lord _____ hypocrisy and deceit. Jesus praised Nathanael for being a person in whom was no _____ (John 1:47). Jesus spoke of the devil as a _____ and condemned it in John 8:44. How could His disciples abandon everything that they had been _____ and spread a lie throughout Jerusalem. By the way, all the Jews had to do to _____ that Jesus had not resurrected was merely to produce the body of Jesus. If the Jews produced the body of Jesus they could _____ Christianity. They never tried because they knew they couldn't. All they could do was _____ the soldiers to lie and try to punish the disciples.

Let's look at the _____ in the disciples. Before the disciples knew for sure that Jesus had been raised on the third day they _____ in the upper room with the door locked for fear of the Jews. They _____ and laughed at the women's testimony. Their doubting hearts kept them from believing until Jesus _____ Himself to them. One apostle, Thomas, persisted in his disbelief even when the others insisted they had _____ the Lord. Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not _____" (John 20:25).

Read the story of Thomas in John 20:26-29.

Jesus appeared to the disciples and proved Himself to them in a variety of ways. **Read what Luke 24:36-39 says.**

Acts 1:3 tells how Jesus "presented Himself _____ after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God." So strong did He convince them that we see a very _____ group of men at Pentecost than we do on the day that Jesus arose. At first they disbelieved, hiding themselves as cowards, and doubting the prophecy of Jesus; but Jesus showed Himself alive with many convincing _____.

At Pentecost, they were bold and unrelenting in their _____ of the gospel. They told everyone that they were eyewitnesses of the resurrection. They called the people to _____ of their sins, because they crucified Jesus whom God had made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). The

early disciples _____ beatings and imprisonment, but they wouldn't stop preaching Jesus as the Christ resurrected from the dead (Acts chapters 3 through 8).

When the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the _____ of Jesus, Peter and John answered, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot _____ speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). They were convinced that they must _____ God and continue preaching the gospel.

In Acts 5, the Council arrested the apostles, flogged them, commanded them to _____ preaching in the name of Jesus, and then released them. But the apostles rejoiced "that they had been considered _____ to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:41-42). They later suffered imprisonment, beatings and even death for their faith, but _____ kept them from continuing to preach Jesus as the Christ, risen from the dead.

The disciples didn't become _____ or find life easy from their preaching. They _____ much to tell the story of Jesus. They stoned Stephen in Acts 7 and beheaded James the son of Zebedee in Acts 12. Not one of the disciples ever _____ the resurrection. They _____ for preaching it. According to tradition, they were all martyred for their faith except John. Let me ask you, would you die for preaching something that you knew was a lie?

The disciples gained no _____ advantage by preaching Jesus Christ. The only reason they spoke out so boldly about their faith was they believed Jesus _____ was the Christ, the risen Son of God. Their bold faith assures us that we too can place our faith in Jesus as Lord.

Saul of Tarsus was originally devoted to Judaism and a persecutor of the church, but He _____ Christ on the road to Damascus. His conversion is especially important in view of his earlier _____ against Christianity. He gave up everything to become a Christian. What he wrote about in the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 is the earliest documentary evidence that we have. No one can satisfactorily explain the conversion and later life of the apostle Paul except in the way that he himself explained it. He had _____ the risen Christ.

Some say Jesus fainted on the cross and revived in the _____ of the tomb; but this doesn't explain how Jesus survived the linen wrappings, how He moved the stone, or how He frightened the guards to get away. Others say the apostles only _____ that they saw Jesus after His resurrection, but this doesn't explain why there were linen wrappings in the empty tomb, or how the stone was moved before the women arrived, or how the guards were frightened. Nor does it explain how they were able to touch Jesus.

Though we have barely discussed the evidence surrounding the resurrection, we've seen enough to say confidently that Peter and the apostles showed how God had raised Him from the dead whenever they spoke about Him and that He is the Son of God and the Lord of all. According to John 12:48 and Acts 17:31, He will one day judge you and me according to His Word. To become a Christian, believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, turn from your sins in repentance,

confess Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins as the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38.

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The New Testament is Reliable

Why should we _____ the Bible? Are the events and messages described in the New Testament _____? Yes, we can believe! We want to _____ your faith, give you hope, and deepen your love for God and for others. Throughout the centuries, the Bible has had its critics and skeptics, yet the Bible _____ the best-selling book of all time. It contains within its pages God's _____ to all people for all time. Scripture has given hope, comfort, and encouragement to millions who've _____ its pages and believed them. We hope you haven't set your Bible aside and forgotten it.

Some think the Bible is just an ancient book written by _____ and filled with myths and contradictions. Others think the Bible is just one sacred book among _____. Is the Bible really _____? Can you trust it to give you _____ information? The Bible _____ to be the Word of God, and what will judge us in the last day. If this is true, we need to _____ to everything the Lord has to say!

Jesus Christ said, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not _____ what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Many people say they love the Lord and follow Christ but have never taken the _____ to read the New Testament. A person who doesn't read the New Testament is no better off than the person who doesn't _____ a New Testament. I hope you're paying close attention to the teaching found here and examining your _____ by its teaching. Let the written Word of God work in your heart and soul; let it _____ your life. If you love and serve God in this life, you'll be able to serve Him in the ages to come.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to John chapter 20:30-31.

What a wonderful blessing that is, to know about Jesus and to have life in His name.

The Bible is a unique book, _____ any other book in all of history. It's the best-selling book of all time. It's made more _____ on American culture and society across the world than any other book. Can we believe the Bible's _____ about Jesus the Savior? Is He Lord and will He _____ us at the end of time? If we believe this book, the answer is yes, so this question is most serious.

Occasionally, someone says that we don't _____ whether Jesus Christ ever really lived or not. When I hear someone say that I wonder if they are merely repeating what they've _____ or if they've examined the evidence for themselves.

If Jesus were not historical, the New Testament is certainly an untrustworthy book; but since other sources corroborate the _____ we know about Jesus, the Bible has credibility. Gary Habermas, a recognized university professor and historian, in his book *The Historical Jesus*, recorded and examined 45 ancient sources for the life of Jesus _____ the New Testament. Some were Christian but many were non-Christian, and some were archaeological. He found _____ reported facts revealing the life, person, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Dr. Habermas concluded, "While some believe that we know almost nothing about Jesus from ancient, non-New

Testament sources, this is plainly not the _____. Not only are there many such sources, ... Jesus is one of the persons of ancient history concerning whom we have a significant amount of quality _____. His is one of the most mentioned and most substantiated _____ in ancient times.” Yes, Jesus really lived, and when you add the books of the New Testament, we see how Jesus has _____ the world!

The New Testament _____ tells about Jesus, His teaching, His kind acts, His miracles, His death, and His resurrection. You may ask, “Did that _____ happen? We weren’t there and we didn’t _____ those things for ourselves; we can only _____ on the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses. Did Jesus really _____ from the dead?” What we’re asking now is whether the New Testament documents written by eyewitnesses and people who investigated, told the _____ about Jesus.

Dr. Harvey W. Everest, in his classic book, *The Divine Demonstration*, lists seven criteria used to _____ historical evidence. He notes that we can _____ testimony to be the truth when it meets these criteria. First, the evidence is _____ when the witnesses are honest, competent and have opportunity to know. The accounts written shortly _____ an event are usually more reliable than accounts written hundreds of years later. We want to know the truth from those who were _____ and heard it firsthand. We can’t _____ guesses or opinions. Someone has said opinions are merely guesses in the absence of evidence.

The apostle Peter, who was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ from his baptism to His resurrection said, “For we did not follow cleverly devised _____ when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well- pleased’— and we ourselves _____ this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:16-18). The Father wanted Peter to _____ to Jesus, and He wants the same from us. We must _____ the messages Jesus brings.

Though Luke came on the scene later, he revealed the _____ that he used to write his account of the gospel. Luke wrote, “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having _____ all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been _____” (Luke 1:1-4).

If Peter or Luke or any other writer of the New Testament had written something untrue there would be hundreds of brothers and sisters who would have _____ their writings. Instead, the early church from the earliest times regarded the four gospel accounts, Acts, and the epistles as trustworthy _____ of what really happened in their day.

Second, evidence is credible when the witnesses _____ in the general statement, although they may differ on minor points. What some say are contradictions in Scripture are not really contradictions but different perspectives of the _____ event. Investigators of crime scenes will frequently find witnesses who _____ to disagree with each other but are actually speaking the truth. In fact, though they may emphasize and focus on different points, they actually _____ important facts in their reports of the events. Facts do not really contradict one another but rather provide their perspective.

In some cases, similar passages are actually talking about _____ events. Matthew 5 provides a list of beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount that _____ from Luke’s version. In

Matthew 5, Jesus was sitting on a _____; but Luke 6:17 says that Jesus stood on a _____ place. These were different occasions, even though the material sounds similar.

On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 the apostles stood together in proclaiming the _____ as eyewitnesses of the Lord's death and resurrection. When Paul defended himself to Agrippa, he noted in Acts 26:26 that the things that Jesus did were well known and "not done in a corner."

Third, evidence is credible when there is no known _____ for imposture or faking. The apostles and preachers of the first century didn't become _____ or honored by men because of their testimony. Peter told the man that he healed at the gate of the temple, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" (Acts 3:6). When they healed this lame man, they certainly didn't do it for _____.

Fourth, the testimony is reliable when the facts recorded are strongly _____ the well-being or interest of the narrator. The book of Acts records the persecution of the church and those who suffered for their _____. It records the opposition from the leading _____. The apostles and early Christians were beaten, imprisoned, and some killed; but they never _____ their Lord. They lived difficult lives in order to _____ Jesus as the Christ and risen Lord. History records numerous persecutions by the _____ for centuries, but Christianity survived and grew. In the second century, it was commonly said that "the _____ of the martyrs is the _____ of the kingdom." One may question many things, but there can be no doubt the apostles and early Christians were _____ believers!

Fifth, the testimony is reliable when such witnesses are _____. Jesus made several appearances in the forty days after his resurrection and He demonstrated himself to be the Son of God by many convincing _____ (Acts 1:1-3). The New Testament records at least fifteen appearances of Jesus to various people. Paul said that Jesus appeared to more than _____ brethren at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). He knew what he wrote could be tested by others.

Sixth, the testimony is reliable when the recorded facts and the existing facts are _____ as cause and effect. The places, people, culture and circumstances recorded by the authors of the New Testament accurately represented the _____ things really were. The New Testament is not filled with nameless, mythical people, who could never have lived. Rather, archaeology and secular historical records support the _____ found in the New Testament. The _____ of the New Testament match historical and geographical realities in the world of that era.

Seventh, the testimony is reliable when the _____ recorded are sustained by existing monuments, coins, games or other public institutions. The fact that the _____ itself exists is a marvelous testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to the truth of the apostles' teaching. There would never have been a church had the apostles not _____ in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact that churches, after twenty centuries, still _____ on the first day of the week to have the Lord's supper is a testimony to the fact that the events of the New Testament are _____.

People have criticized the Bible through the years, but the enduring nature and the power of the Bible itself is a _____ evidence. Though men have done everything in their power to _____ the Scriptures, they survive stronger than ever! You can find copies of the whole Bible translated into 670 languages, the New Testament alone into 1,521 languages, and portions in another 1,000, other languages. The United Bible Society estimates that more than 5 billion copies of Scripture are currently in print. If you add the audio and digital copies found on computers, phones, and tablets, nobody knows how many copies exist throughout the world.

Wherever the influence of the Bible is _____, morality flourishes; wherever it's _____, selfishness and evil flourish. In any and every age, Scripture has made an _____ on the morals and

the happiness of the people. According to John Richard Green in *A Short History of the English People*, “No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the Long Parliament. England became a people of the book, and that book was the Bible. It was read at church and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm.”

He continued, “As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest _____ of the English tongue. But far greater was the effect of the Bible on the _____ of the people. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits, but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the Book. The whole temper of the nation felt the _____. A new moral religious impulse spread through every class.”

How can Scripture have such a great impact? It’s powerful because Scripture is from _____ Himself. The Bible is sacred; it’s _____ than a human product. **Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** Wherever Scripture goes, people _____ the teaching that leads to life eternal. They learn what is good and right. They learn how to love, how to treat other people, and how to serve. Scripture teaches the most important _____ of life.

The Scriptures also _____ us; they tell us what sin is and how sin will destroy us. They warn and admonish us to keep us from hurting ourselves and hurting those we love. You might think reproof is a negative thing, but Jesus told the lukewarm church in Laodicea, “Those whom I _____, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19). Parents who love their children lovingly reprove them to keep them safe.

The Scriptures _____ us in order to bring us spiritual healing and make us whole. It’s only when a person has been taught and he makes _____ to correct his life that he is ready to be trained in righteousness. God will use him to do _____ to all people. Have you let the Word of God be a mirror to your soul, so that you can become what God created you to be?

There are other reasons to trust your Bible that we’ll explore another day. For me, the Lord Jesus settled the _____ of the reliability of the Bible. He considered events of the Old Testament to be real _____. Jesus understood Jonah’s three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish as historical. Jesus used the punishment of Lot’s wife as a means to _____ his disciples not to turn back (Luke 17:32). There is no evidence that He ever regarded the creation, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, or any other story of the Bible as a myth or fable. As the Word who lived from the beginning, Jesus is an eyewitness in the position to _____. We can _____ Him to tell us the truth!

The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself” (John 7:17). If we’ll listen to God, hear His Word, and obey it, our lives will change! We’ll know God speaks the truth. We need to believe, to repent of our sins, and to come to the Lord for answers. Perhaps we have great problems because we’ve tuned out the Bible and listened to our lusts and desires. We got what we wanted but not what we needed. Read the Bible, meditate on it, memorize it, love it, obey it, and share it! It can change your life.

And if you are not a committed Christian, become one. Believe with your heart, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of the Lord. God will forgive your sins, He’ll give you a new life, and make you His child.



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Love One Another

Tremendous _____ seems to face our country, and anger over differences troubles our unity and ability to communicate. How can we love one another? Looking to the _____ and the love of God can transform our lives. What we know about God's love comes from a thoughtful _____ of the Scriptures. With the love of God comes peace and forgiveness, things necessary for people to live in _____. Without a knowledge of that _____ shown on the cross, people continue to fight and hate. This book gives us _____ to love, and we must love one another and even our enemies.

What is the greatest _____ in your life? Many say family, job, or achieving some goal. A religious lawyer once asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the _____ commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your _____ with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and _____ commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your _____ as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophet'" (Matthew 22:36-40). Our first _____ is to love God fully in every way. Another priority like it is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Some think they can love God but not love their brother or neighbor, but they may not be _____ clearly. First John 4:20-21 says, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and _____ his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen _____ love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God _____ also love his brother." We all need reminding to love even those who are hard to love.

Our reading today comes from 1 John 3:16-18. John talks about what it means to love.

That's how God _____ us to love. In deed and in truth. Love is at the _____ of all Christianity. We're _____ to love God and to love others. If we fail to love, we have failed at the _____ important task of life. First Corinthians 13:1-3 says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have _____, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am _____. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing." A loveless Christianity is no Christianity at all.

God distinguishes those who love others from those who don't. First John 3:10 says, "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not _____ righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the _____ that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." When

people fail to love others, they will also fail to _____ the Lord's commandments. Being a child of God means loving others the way that God has loved you.

Love is the motivator for _____ that we do as Christians. Second Corinthians 5:14-15 says, "For the love of Christ _____ us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their _____ died and was raised." The cross of Christ moves us not only to love Jesus but also to _____ our hearts and our lives totally to Him. That means we must _____ to ourselves and _____ for Him.

Jesus wants us to love _____ the way that He loved us. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in John 13:34-35.** We're to love as Jesus loved. If we _____ love the way some people do, we'd hardly love anyone at all. We must outgrow our self-centered ways and put others _____, just as Jesus did. Philippians 2:3 says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in _____ count others more significant than yourselves."

You might ask, "How did Jesus love people?" First, Jesus cared for those who are in _____ physically. **Read 1 John 3:16-18.** Jesus led the way! He healed the sick, He fed the poor, He showed compassion to all who were in _____. The Lord Jesus _____ honestly to us about feeding and clothing the poor and visiting the sick and those in prison. "Truly I say to you, to the _____ that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even to the least of them, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40). When we give to _____ others today, we're giving love to them and to the Lord Jesus.

Second, Jesus cared for their _____ as well as their bodies. Luke 5:31-32 says, "And Jesus answered them, 'Those who are _____ have no need of a physician, but those who are _____. I have not come to call the righteous but _____ to repentance.'" Jesus, by leading a perfectly sinless life, leads us to _____ more righteously. He forgives our past, which allows us to _____ and become people who have a good conscience. Jesus helped people change by the life that he lived and by His preaching and teaching. In Mark 1:38 Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may _____ there also, for that is why I came out." He wanted everyone to be spiritually _____.

Third, He _____ his body and his life for them. First Peter 2:24 says, "He Himself bore our sins in His _____ on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Jesus sacrificed Himself so that we could _____ with Him forever. He died so that we might _____; He suffered so that we could be _____ and enjoy everlasting life. He bore whips and nails, and beatings and spit, and mockery and humiliation. He didn't fight back, but He _____ it for your sake and for mine. He loved us.

Fourth, Jesus suffered for their _____ to bring us to God. First Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might _____ us to God." He was not content to _____ us where He found us. He wanted something grander for us. He wanted to give us an opportunity to _____ our Creator, the One who made and sustains us and the One to whom we pray. To Jesus, God was not merely "my Father"; He's "_____ Father." Because of Jesus

we can be His _____. He wanted to be in our lives now and forever. There's no greater _____ in life than to have God as our Father.

Fifth, Jesus forgives and wants _____ to forgive. First Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of _____." Jesus loves us and is willing to _____ a multitude of our sins. He taught us _____ to forgive. We forgive because of what God has _____ for us and because we are God's children. The Lord Jesus said, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will _____ forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will _____ forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:14-15).

People will always _____ us. If we don't learn how to react to offenses, we'll spend our lives in _____. Revenge doesn't _____ the heartaches; it keeps anger alive. Anger will not achieve the righteousness of God but spreads to _____. Anger breeds anger, and hatred breeds more hatred. If we let anger _____ in our hearts it will destroy our soul and it will ruin our life. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the _____ an opportunity." We live in a cruel and violent world because people have never _____ to forgive as Jesus did.

Ephesians 4:31-32 says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be _____ from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Recently I've seen where members of the church have forgiven others even when someone has killed a family member. This is how Christ lived and how He wants His people to live.

The Lord Jesus taught, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and _____ your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and _____ for those who persecute you, so that you may be _____ of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what _____ do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48).

Jesus practiced what He preached. The Lord Jesus said, "Father, _____ them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:33-34). Jesus was willing to forgive those who were hurting and killing Him, nailing Him to a _____. Stephen also showed the same love. When they were stoning him to death, Stephen cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this _____ against them" (Acts 7:60).

Sixth, Jesus confronted those who were thinking wrongly and those who sinned. Matthew 16:21-24 says, "From that time Jesus began to _____ his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be _____. Peter took him aside and began to _____ him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your _____ on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"

You might wonder how a _____ like this is loving. We're so easily offended these days, and we've decided that anyone who criticizes another is somehow _____, or mean-spirited or judgmental. Unwarranted criticism, slander, and judging is certainly wrong; but rebukes that _____ to righteousness can be the most loving things that one can do. Proverbs 27:6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a _____, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." Agreeing with and approving sin doesn't help anybody to _____. The Lord Jesus said, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent" (Revelation 3:19). Leaving a soul in sin is the most _____ thing that one can do.

Love is a verb; it reveals itself by what it _____. We all want to hear those precious words, "I love you." However, we want love to be _____, not just be told. Love is not only an emotion; it's a way of life; it is evident by what it does. God demonstrated His love in giving Jesus to us, and God wants us to demonstrate our love by loving Him and loving others.

Read how Paul described love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. When a person acts like this you don't have to wonder if they love you, you see it in their _____ and know it's in their _____. First Corinthians 13:8 simply says, "Love never fails." Jesus never stopped loving us! John 13:1 says, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the _____." Jesus washed the disciples feet, knowing they'd _____. He washed Peter's feet, knowing that he would _____ Him three times. Jesus even washed Judas Iscariot's feet. Jesus endured the trials, the beatings, and the cross; and through it all He never _____ sacrificing Himself or loving us! He was not a fickle, fair-weather friend. When we love _____, we should love Him to the end. When we love the _____, we should love it to the end.

Read 1 John 2:3-6. Loving God means _____ His commandments, and loving others the way that He loved us is a big part of that!

Do you love the Lord? Of course you do. Can people see that by the way that you _____ His commandments? Can they _____ you walking like Jesus walked and living like Jesus lived? Do you love others? If you miss doing this; you miss what it takes to be a Christian. When God's love is in your heart, you'll _____ life beautiful and glorious. When God's love is in your heart, you'll _____ to do what's right and you'll treat others the way that you want to be treated. When God's love is in your heart, you act kindly to those in _____. When God's love is in your heart, you'll _____ fighting with God. You'll simply _____ and _____ His commandments.

Love moves us to place our trust in the Lord Jesus, to give up our sins and live in righteousness, to confess Jesus Christ as God's Son, and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Whatever God in Scripture asks of us, we'll do. We'll listen to Him rather than human sources that may lead us astray. Love means focusing our close attention on Jesus Christ and being like Him.

February 23, 2020

Out of Darkness

It is better to light just one little _____ than to stumble in the dark. Light is so precious! Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a _____ to my feet And a _____ to my path.” God’s glorious Word is such a blessing to our lives. It opens up the _____ for us to see the things that God wants us to know, things that will guide us safely and bless us. God wants us to be _____ and to know the truth, so He sheds light on the things that matter most. He opens the way for us to live with Him eternally in _____. God is light, and we can be _____ for all that He has done for us.

Have you ever gone down into a _____ on a tour when the guide turns out all the lights? Total darkness is frightening. I’m always grateful when the _____ come back on. When you can’t see anything you feel _____ and vulnerable. You don’t know what _____ lurk around you. The Lord struck Egypt with a plague of darkness that could be felt. According to Exodus 10:22-23, the Egyptians could not see one another and did not rise from their places for three days. This darkness plagued and punished them, and it separated them from one another. It must have been a frightening, long, and lonely three days.

Spiritual darkness has some of these same frightening _____. The Lord speaks of hell as being _____ into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8-12). Spiritual blindness is a form of darkness and leads to certain judgment, but the Lord shows us the way out of darkness into His marvelous light. I think, what a blessing!

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter 2:9-10.

We sometimes speak of being “in the dark” to mean someone simply doesn’t _____ what’s going on. We lose much when we don’t know Christ or the _____ that can set us free. Knowledge is not some small _____. God’s teaching prepares us to _____ worthy of our calling in this life and prepares us for eternity. When people don’t know the Lord they fall into many _____ ways. What we know and how well we follow the Lord’s teaching measures our _____. The Lord wants to _____ us in righteousness so we can live with Him forever. When people don’t know the Lord or take Him seriously they end up in a spiritual and moral darkness that _____ everybody.

God left _____ of His infinite power and wisdom in the universe. Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world His _____ attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” Some men, even when the evidence is before them, do not want to acknowledge God or _____ from Him.

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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Read Romans 1:21-23. The ancient, pagan cultures didn't know God and were _____ with cruelty, lust, and greed. Their foolish _____ were darkened morally and spiritually. Spiritual darkness ruins _____ and ruins societies. Ignorance of God threatens the _____ and welfare of any nation. Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the _____ whose God is the Lord." The more any nation pushes God out of its thinking and its morals, the more it _____ itself. The more families forget God and live for themselves, the more bitter their lives become. The Lord's way is not simply one choice among many; it's the only way to true and lasting joy and peace. Every other choice will ultimately lead to darkness.

The Bible describes the hopelessness of life _____ God. **Read God's Word in Ephesians 4:17-19.** Knowing God _____ morally, spiritually, and practically.

Spiritual darkness comes from attitudes and _____, whether we serve God or we serve material and fleshly things. The Lord Jesus said, "The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Then _____ that the light in you is not darkness. If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the _____ illumines you with its rays" (Luke 11:34-36).

The Lord Jesus understood that people often turn to _____ and aren't willing to do what is right. He said, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men _____ the darkness rather than the Light, for their _____ were evil. For everyone who does evil _____ the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the _____ comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

When we focus on God and following His way we _____ in the good light of life; but when we focus on selfish desires, we _____ in evil darkness. We _____ our actions from others. We can even get to the point that we despise what is good and right and we _____ what is evil and wrong. In darkness, people would rather believe a _____ than love the truth. Evil people despise those who want to do what is right because they don't want their evil ways to be _____. A godly person who seeks to do right is never _____ of being exposed. He wants his deeds to glorify God.

The apostle Paul _____ light with darkness. He clearly shows how immorality, impurity, and greed will _____ people out of heaven. **Read what the Bible says in Ephesians 5:6-12.** God has called us to live _____ lives in all goodness and righteousness and truth!

How do we move out of the darkness and get into the light? We must be rescued; and we need God's _____. Colossians 1:13-14 says, "He (that is, God) has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the _____ of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." I'm thankful that we have a Savior who was willing to sacrifice Himself to _____ us from sin. Christ rescues us by redeeming us with His innocent _____ and grants to us the forgiveness of sins. The Lord Jesus "gave Himself for our sins so

that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the _____ of our God and Father” (Galatians 1:4).

The grace of Christ is not designed merely to _____ sin. The Lord wants new people who _____ their ways. Titus 2:11-14 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all 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 _____ Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” This is the light of life!

When the Lord called Paul to be an apostle, He revealed to Paul _____ He had chosen him to preach to the Gentiles. The Bible says that Christ sent Paul, “to open their eyes so that they may _____ from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18). Faith in Christ makes a difference. That faith comes by _____ the Word of God (Romans 10:17), and the power of God to save still works through the _____ (Romans 1:16). The power to change comes from hearing the gospel. God sent Paul to preach. His message about Christ can open their _____ to what’s right and good. It can tell them the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. It can _____ Satan’s power over their lives so that they can live for God. It’s no wonder that Paul said, “For I determined to know _____ among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). There’s _____ in God’s Word to touch our hearts, to free us from the hold of sin, and to motivate us to serve God and love others. God’s transforming power will not leave you where it found you.

When you come to the Light you come to a marvelous light. Peter describes it in 1 Peter 2:9-10 and tells what it means to be a Christian. He said, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his (that is, God’s) own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who _____ you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

People who were formerly _____ and godless become very different once they become Christians. Before they were not a people and didn’t have the mercy of God; but in Christ they become God’s people with God’s _____. God’s people are a chosen race. They are people for God’s own possession. God’s people make up a royal priesthood. They are kingly priests offering up _____ sacrifices to God. They are a holy nation, and their _____ is to proclaim the excellencies of God! God has _____ them out of darkness into the light, and it is a marvelous light!

The Lord Jesus said, “I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and

does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:46-48). The Lord doesn’t want His people to _____ in spiritual darkness. He gave them His Word to open their eyes to an _____ life filled with goodness and blessing.

The same Word that is a blessing will also be the _____ of our judgment. God gives light in the Word to _____ us. If we ignore that light, we put our _____ in danger. The Lord Jesus pictured the Pharisees who were blinded by their commitment to _____ traditions. The Lord said, “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will _____ into a pit” (Matthew 15:14). People blinded by human ideas frequently fail to see the glory and the beauty of the _____. They reject the very thing they most need.

God’s light is not weak or dim; it’s a marvelous light. First John 1:5 reminds us that “God is Light, and in Him there is _____ darkness at all.” The Lord Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of _____” (John 8:12). The marvelous light is life itself. This life is abundant, and it is _____. The Lord said to the Father, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). Our eternal life begins with knowing the only true God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Read 1 John 2:3-6. The marvelous light shines on those who know Him, love Him, and obey Him. Do you?

First John 1:6-7 says, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we _____ and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” There are only two paths, one leads to life and the other leads to destruction.

Because people choose their path, they choose their _____. God, however, graciously gives us the opportunity to change our path and to change our relationship with Him. We can always leave the dark path and come to the light. There’s no greater blessing than to have fellowship with God and to be cleansed from all sin by the blood of His Son.

First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” God gives us the light of the gospel to _____ us to heaven and avoid the dark destruction that evil and ignorance brings. God opens the _____ to knowledge through the Word. When we _____ the Word, God grants us life.

To respond to the gospel, believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Repent by changing your heart and your life; leave the old way of sin and follow the teaching of the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ before others, and be baptized into Jesus and His death. When you’re baptized, the Lord applies that cleansing blood to your soul (Romans 6:3) and He washes away your sins (Acts 22:16). Why not come to God’s light today and make a difference in your eternal destiny? You won’t regret doing what’s right.