



IN  
**SEARCH**  
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*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
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## When You Are Tempted

Each of us \_\_\_\_\_ temptation every day. Will Jesus really \_\_\_\_\_ us overcome our sins? The Lord God \_\_\_\_\_ each of us, and He knows all about us, and He knows all about \_\_\_\_\_. He knows the good and the bad. His Word was given to \_\_\_\_\_ us. Proverbs 2:6-8 says, “For the LORD gives wisdom; from his \_\_\_\_\_ come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; and he’s a \_\_\_\_\_ to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.” We do well to \_\_\_\_\_ to God’s wisdom.

From the moment that we’re old enough to understand right from wrong and good from evil, we face the temptation to please our \_\_\_\_\_ and sin rather than please God. Temptations come in many \_\_\_\_\_. Some are tempted to tell a lie, some to steal, some to sexual sin, some to take revenge, and some to gossip. When we’re afraid or hurting, we may be tempted to get angry and strike back at someone. When we’re selfish, greedy, or jealous, we may be tempted to take what is not ours or to put down other people.

Paul spoke of the \_\_\_\_\_ that he had faced with wanting to do good but giving in to sin. Paul said, “For what I’m doing, I do not understand; for I’m not practicing what I would like to do, but I’m doing the very thing I \_\_\_\_\_. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but \_\_\_\_\_ which dwells in me” (Romans 7:15-17). That problem faces us all, but the answer to temptation and sin is found in Christ.

**Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.** In this passage Paul mentions his determined attitude toward doing his best to serve the Lord.

First John 2:15-17 describes the three kinds of appeals that Satan uses to \_\_\_\_\_ us toward the world and away from God. “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the \_\_\_\_\_, the lust of the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is \_\_\_\_\_ away, and the lust of it; but he who does the \_\_\_\_\_ of God abides forever.” Every temptation known to man comes in one of these three \_\_\_\_\_ or in a combination of them. The devil is very cunning and uses our desires to \_\_\_\_\_ us astray from God.

James 1:13-15 reveals to us how temptation \_\_\_\_\_ to us and what it will do to us. “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God \_\_\_\_\_ be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he’s \_\_\_\_\_ away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it’s full-grown, brings forth death.”

Satan used these appeals to the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life when he tempted Eve to \_\_\_\_\_ of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 3 tells the story of how Satan led Eve to \_\_\_\_\_ God, to believe a lie, and to desire eating the fruit. Genesis 3:1-5 says: “Now the \_\_\_\_\_ was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God \_\_\_\_\_ said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman

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said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you \_\_\_\_\_.’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will \_\_\_\_\_ surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you’ll be \_\_\_\_\_ God, knowing good and evil.’”

The devil first tries to get us to \_\_\_\_\_ God’s Word and to make us think that God is trying to withhold some \_\_\_\_\_ from them. Once Satan gets people to be self-centered rather than believing God, he tells them what they \_\_\_\_\_ to hear, lies that contradict God.

Jesus told some Jews who wouldn’t \_\_\_\_\_ to Him what the devil is really like. The Lord Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the \_\_\_\_\_, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a \_\_\_\_\_, he speaks from his own resources (or from his own heart), for he’s a liar and the father of it. But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me” (John 8:44-45).

The devil wants people to trust in their \_\_\_\_\_ judgment rather than listen to God. Of course, people who rely solely on their own judgment will \_\_\_\_\_ to their feelings and desires. When the devil tempted Jesus, he first tried to take advantage of his \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 4:1-4 says: “Then Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had \_\_\_\_\_ forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become \_\_\_\_\_.’ But He (Jesus) answered him and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every \_\_\_\_\_ that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

Jesus was able to \_\_\_\_\_ the devil because He knew the Father and He also knew the Scriptures. Jesus knew what mattered! God helps us overcome temptation by making us His \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ. We belong not to ourselves but to Jesus Christ, who died for us on the cross. God also helps us by giving us His Word to \_\_\_\_\_ us how to live and how to avoid sin. The more we \_\_\_\_\_ on God’s teaching, the more we can \_\_\_\_\_ temptation and sin.

Solomon advised his son, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and \_\_\_\_\_ not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall \_\_\_\_\_ your paths. Do not be \_\_\_\_\_ in your own eyes; fear the LORD and \_\_\_\_\_ from evil” (Proverbs 3:5-7). The Word of God can give you \_\_\_\_\_ and help you through the struggles that you face with the devil and with the world. The Word is a great \_\_\_\_\_ in times of trouble. The psalmist said, “Your word I have \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11).

Sometimes the devil appeals to the \_\_\_\_\_ desires inside of us to get us to do things that are wrong. Jesus warned the people in the Sermon on the Mount to be careful what they \_\_\_\_\_ at. The Lord Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to \_\_\_\_\_ for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:27-29).

Our society unfortunately glamorizes \_\_\_\_\_. Our \_\_\_\_\_ emphasizes and glamorizes sexy talk, and dress, and behavior. The \_\_\_\_\_ for sex has led many young men and women into sin and away from God. The consequences of sin are always greater than people think. Sexual immorality can \_\_\_\_\_ to unwanted pregnancy or disease, which can \_\_\_\_\_ a great loss of respect. People who

get involved in sexual activities outside of marriage often feel great \_\_\_\_\_ for what they've done; they wish they had never violated God's will.

Christians must \_\_\_\_\_ what they see. They must learn to look away from the things that may attract them sexually, so that they may remain \_\_\_\_\_ in their thoughts. Young men who love the Lord learn to \_\_\_\_\_ their eyes and not keep looking at things that tempt them. Young women need to be \_\_\_\_\_ how they dress, so that they won't tempt young men or send the wrong message. A young woman who dresses in a sexually provocative way says to the boys that she's \_\_\_\_\_ to be sexy.

First Timothy 2:9 says Christian women, "should \_\_\_\_\_ themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control." When young people, male or female, dress modestly they \_\_\_\_\_ many embarrassing situations and temptations. The devil loves to appeal to the eye; and this explains why Christians should pay attention to how they appear to others. Our clothing and our appearance do reveal our \_\_\_\_\_.

The apostle Paul lived for a time in Corinth in the first century, a place where the culture was \_\_\_\_\_ with sexual immorality. He gave them this instruction, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is \_\_\_\_\_ the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his \_\_\_\_\_ body. Or do you not know that your body is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your \_\_\_\_\_, for you were bought with a \_\_\_\_\_. So glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

We need to know that God is \_\_\_\_\_. He sees and knows what we are \_\_\_\_\_. The father of a small boy would occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ into a neighbor's orchard and pluck some of the choicest fruit. He always made \_\_\_\_\_, however, that "the coast was clear." One day with his son tagging along, after carefully \_\_\_\_\_ in every direction and seeing no one, he crept through the fence. He was just about ready to help himself when the youngster startled him by crying out, "Dad! Dad! You didn't look UP! You forgot to see if \_\_\_\_\_ is watching." When temptation comes upon you and you're inclined to yield because no one else seems to be around, \_\_\_\_\_, God is always watching. Proverbs 15:3 says, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping \_\_\_\_\_ on the evil and the good."

Learning to \_\_\_\_\_ in times of temptation is a great strategy for avoiding sin. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ around sin usually get caught up in it. Paul warns us, "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts \_\_\_\_\_ habits (or good morals)" (1 Corinthians 15:33). What you watch, what you listen to, what you associate with can \_\_\_\_\_ your thinking as a Christian. Stay away from the things that \_\_\_\_\_ your devotion to God. Paul told the young man Timothy, "Flee also youthful \_\_\_\_\_; but pursue (there's some things you need to grab a hold of, pursue) righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a \_\_\_\_\_ heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

Whether the devil appeals to the eye, to the flesh, or to pride, he's really appealing to your \_\_\_\_\_. People seek what they \_\_\_\_\_, and their desires can lead them away from God. Luke 4 tells us a little more about \_\_\_\_\_ the devil tempted Jesus: "Then the devil, taking Him up to a high mountain, showed Him all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will \_\_\_\_\_ before me, all will be Yours.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Luke 4:5-8).

Jesus knew whom He should worship and serve, and it wasn't the devil! In spite of all the treasures and power He might have received in ruling the world, Jesus would still have been a \_\_\_\_\_ to Satan if he had given in to the temptation. Jesus knew there was only One person to worship and serve, and that's the \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven.

Jesus knew people's carnal desires \_\_\_\_\_ them to something other than what they expected. Sin has a high, high \_\_\_\_\_: "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Ananias and Sapphira decided they \_\_\_\_\_ some of the money that they promised to God. Their \_\_\_\_\_ for money led them to keep back some of the money, and pretend to give it all, and they lied to God about it. They never expected that their lie to God would cost their lives (read Acts 5:1-10). Judas betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but it filled him with guilt and regret. Judas went away and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

We must never assume that sin is no big deal. Apparently, sin was a big enough deal for Jesus to bear the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. We can't love the world and love the Lord at the same time. James 4:4 simply says, "Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." When you sin, you sin against God; when you resist sin, you tell God that you love Him.

When you're in difficulty, hard temptations, remember to watch and \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus warned Peter, James, and John at the Garden of Gethsemane, "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is \_\_\_\_\_, but the flesh is \_\_\_\_\_" (Matthew 26:41). Prayer can help you \_\_\_\_\_ the spiritual strength you need to resist temptation. God is on your side, and He wants to help you.

First Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is \_\_\_\_\_, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of \_\_\_\_\_, that you may be able to bear it." One thing we can be sure about. If the temptation is too \_\_\_\_\_ for us, God will make us a way of escape. When you feel the temptation is too strong for you, start \_\_\_\_\_ for a way out of the situation.

The Lord invites us to \_\_\_\_\_ upon Him for the help that we need. Some people \_\_\_\_\_ away from God when they are tempted. Jesus calls us to come to Him confidently. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in \_\_\_\_\_ things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the \_\_\_\_\_ of grace, so that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." The Lord wants to \_\_\_\_\_ you overcome your temptations.

God wants you to be saved and to live with Him in heaven eternally; Satan and sin are your enemies. To find God's help, you must come to Christ and follow Him. To become a Christian, believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and your Lord. Turn from sin, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized into Christ. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins. The Lord can free you from the sin with His blood, when you're baptized (Romans 6:3-7). Won't you be baptized and follow Christ today?



## Eternity

Job asked, “If a man \_\_\_\_\_, will he live again?” (Job 14:14). Today, we’re exploring the effects of this life on our \_\_\_\_\_ destiny. The Scriptures open our \_\_\_\_\_ to God who made us, the God who gives us life, and the God who will one day \_\_\_\_\_ us. Each of us has an eternal destiny beyond this life, and the Word of God gives us wisdom to \_\_\_\_\_ for life beyond the grave. We hope and pray you’re prepared to meet God one day.

Someone said, “We live in a clock-eyed world”; we’re all \_\_\_\_\_ to schedules and deadlines. We can’t escape the urgency of \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus said, “We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (John 9:4). All this \_\_\_\_\_ for our time in this life can lead us to forget or to ignore the idea of our eternal destiny. So we must \_\_\_\_\_ from our spiritual complacency and realize that God’s commandments and His will for our lives really do matter. Romans 13:11-12 says, “Do this, knowing the time, that it’s already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”

If we remain in spiritual darkness, and we fail to come to the Lord, we’re going to \_\_\_\_\_ an eternity without God’s blessing and promises. But if we put on the armor of \_\_\_\_\_ and fill our lives with faith, hope, love, and the word of God, we can live with God eternally. Jesus suffered for your sins, the just for the unjust, to bring you to God. Where will you spend eternity?

**Our reading today comes from a prayer of Moses found in Psalm 90:1-4.**

Thinking about eternity brings many important \_\_\_\_\_ to mind. First, God is eternal, but we live only for a time on this earth. We’re destined for something \_\_\_\_\_ than this life. Compare what Moses prayed in Psalm 90:1-2 with verse 10. “Lord, you’ve been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are \_\_\_\_\_” (verses 1-2). God has always existed, but God said our existence on earth is quite \_\_\_\_\_. He said in verse 10, “The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon \_\_\_\_\_, and we fly away.”

James 4:14 reminds us, “Yet you do not know what your life will be like \_\_\_\_\_. You’re just a vapor that appears for a \_\_\_\_\_ while and then vanishes away.” The ancient man Job said, “Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and \_\_\_\_\_ of turmoil” (Job 14:1). As we age, it seems the days and months pass \_\_\_\_\_ than before.

God is not \_\_\_\_\_ by time like we are. Paul praised God as “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever” (1 Timothy 1:17).

Second Peter 3:8 says, “But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Even if you lived to be a hundred years old, that is only one tenth of a thousand. God created time for \_\_\_\_\_, but He’s not controlled by time. He knows the past, He knows the present, and the future.

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There's more than this life on earth! The Lord Jesus warns us, "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the \_\_\_\_\_ and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has \_\_\_\_\_ to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!" (Luke 12:4-5). The Scriptures give us \_\_\_\_\_ of those who have died and yet are still in a conscious existence. Matthew 17:1-3 tells of Jesus having a conversation with Moses and Elijah. Both had been dead for several centuries!

The Lord Jesus said to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He's not the God of the \_\_\_\_\_ but of the \_\_\_\_\_" (Matthew 23:31-32) Yes, though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead physically, they were alive in the hereafter.

After the death of her brother Lazarus, the Lord told Martha that he would \_\_\_\_\_ again. Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; and he who believes in Me will \_\_\_\_\_ even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will \_\_\_\_\_ die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the \_\_\_\_\_, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world" (John 11:23-27). Do you believe this?

Romans 14:7-9 says, "For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." We \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus in life and in death. Because of Him we have a \_\_\_\_\_ of new life and a new body. Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house (that is, this body we now have) is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with \_\_\_\_\_, eternal in the heavens." We're going to have a new imperishable, immortal body in heaven one day.

We have \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ of the life to come. Ephesians 2:4-7 says, "But God, being rich in \_\_\_\_\_, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were \_\_\_\_\_ in our transgressions, made us \_\_\_\_\_ together with Christ (by grace you've been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the \_\_\_\_\_ to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Second, God \_\_\_\_\_ to us about eternity. Psalm 90:1-2 say, "Lord, you have been our dwelling \_\_\_\_\_ throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Everlasting to everlasting is really kind of hard to understand; it's \_\_\_\_\_ time. Ecclesiastes 3:11 reveals that "He (God) has \_\_\_\_\_ everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their \_\_\_\_\_, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end." To people who can only think in \_\_\_\_\_ of start and finish, eternity is beyond our understanding. Eternity refers to "infinite time, \_\_\_\_\_ beginning or end." We might speak of something we experience that goes on and on, lasting an "eternity"; but that's only a \_\_\_\_\_ of speech. Eternal things have \_\_\_\_\_ end.

We can offer illustrations, but they're insufficient to fully \_\_\_\_\_ eternity. For instance, when ten thousand times ten thousand times ten thousand years have passed, eternity will have just \_\_\_\_\_. I recall as a boy my father speaking about eternity this way: Now suppose you could

suspend a rope from here to the moon, some 221,000 to 253,000 miles from the earth. And let's send an ant on that rope all the way to the moon and let him pick up one grain of soil from the moon and bring it back. In the time that it would take for an ant to bring back the entire moon grain by grain, that's just the beginning of eternity. Eternity is infinite time, without beginning or end; and it refers to something that time does not and cannot \_\_\_\_\_.

Third, the consequences of our \_\_\_\_\_ will last for an eternity, yes. Galatians 6:7-8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man \_\_\_\_\_, this he will also \_\_\_\_\_. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap \_\_\_\_\_ life." Some Christians imagine they can \_\_\_\_\_ all they like and still go to heaven. But sowing to the flesh will only bring corruption and condemnation.

Romans 8:12-13 speaks clearly, "So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--for if you are living according to the flesh, you must \_\_\_\_\_; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will \_\_\_\_\_." When a person dies spiritually, he forfeits his \_\_\_\_\_ of living with God eternally. Sin breaks God's heart and it \_\_\_\_\_ us from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 say, "Behold, the LORD'S \_\_\_\_\_ is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His \_\_\_\_\_ so dull That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His \_\_\_\_\_ from you so that He does not hear."

Let's consider some things that will separate us from God. The Lord Jesus said, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will \_\_\_\_\_ forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will \_\_\_\_\_ forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:14-15). Whether we're willing to forgive is a serious matter to God, and it should be to each of us.

Some unfairly rush to judge others, without considering their \_\_\_\_\_ sins. Like the Pharisees they condemn others over man-made traditions or their own \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus said, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way that you judge, you will be judged; and by your \_\_\_\_\_ of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the \_\_\_\_\_ that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the \_\_\_\_\_ that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, there is a log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see \_\_\_\_\_ to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5). If people realized the consequences of how harshly and unfairly they have condemned others, they might not judge so \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord wants us to be fair as we consider others. Jesus said "Do not judge according to \_\_\_\_\_, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

Some never consider the \_\_\_\_\_ who are hurting and need help. Love for God means loving others enough to \_\_\_\_\_ them. First John 3:16-18 says, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." According to Matthew 25:40, when we serve others, we're serving the Lord Himself. "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." He said to those who \_\_\_\_\_ to help their brothers "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." And then He said, "these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (verses 45-46). Please notice: eternal punishment lasts just as \_\_\_\_\_ as eternal life.



So we must be careful \_\_\_\_\_ we live our lives. Ephesians 5:15-17 says, “Therefore be careful how you walk (that is, how you live), not as unwise men but as wise, making the \_\_\_\_\_ of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord is.” Some people think that because God is love, He’ll never hold us accountable for anything; but nothing could be farther from the truth. The passing pleasures of sin are just not worth an eternity separated from God. Some people imagine they can feed their pet sin, and there’ll be no consequences to their actions.

Hebrews 3:12-14 says, “Take \_\_\_\_\_, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that \_\_\_\_\_ away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of \_\_\_\_\_. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold \_\_\_\_\_ the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.” What about you? Your eternity is hanging in the \_\_\_\_\_, and the Lord is waiting on you to come to Him, and come with love and faith and \_\_\_\_\_. Won’t you come to the Lord? Won’t you love Him and serve Him?

Solomon said, “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to \_\_\_\_\_ for all these things” (Ecclesiastes 11:9). Life can be filled with many things, and what we \_\_\_\_\_ matters. Solomon himself followed his impulses and learned that they didn’t give him \_\_\_\_\_ contentment. He said, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole \_\_\_\_\_ of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Psalm 90:12 says, “So teach us to \_\_\_\_\_ our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” Realizing life on earth is limited can cause us to \_\_\_\_\_ up. Where you and I spend eternity \_\_\_\_\_ on whether we’ve stayed close to God, whether the blood of Jesus has cleansed us, and whether we have believed and obeyed the Lord. There is a life beyond. If we become consumed with the \_\_\_\_\_, we may miss the beauty and joy of an \_\_\_\_\_ heaven.

Please, get that heart of wisdom! Love the Lord! Place your faith and trust in Him and in His words. Turn from sin and live in righteousness. Confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Be baptized into Christ, immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. That’s what the inspired apostle Peter told the people to do in Acts 2:38 at the very beginning of the church and it’s what we still need to do to be right with God. You see, that’s how we’re born again and how we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

We ask that you focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one.

## What Dead Men Know

If the \_\_\_\_\_ could open and the dead could speak, we'd learn several important spiritual truths! Today, we're exploring what the dead men know and we need to \_\_\_\_\_. God's word opens the \_\_\_\_\_ to the most important treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The apostle Paul spoke of Jesus Christ and said, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). We need that wisdom to know how to think and how to \_\_\_\_\_. We need that wisdom, because it's the key to \_\_\_\_\_ life.

If you and I, as living people, could know what the dead men know, we'd see things from a new and a \_\_\_\_\_ perspective. As it is, we're \_\_\_\_\_ in what we know and often distracted by the things of this world. When we get too focused on this present world, we may \_\_\_\_\_ the most important lessons that affect this life and the life to come. Paul prayed for the Colossians, asking "that you may be \_\_\_\_\_ with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you'll walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to \_\_\_\_\_ Him in all respects" (Colossians 1:9-10). Have you considered what is necessary to please the Lord Jesus?

There are \_\_\_\_\_ ways people know things. First, people learn intellectually through listening, observing, and study. Second, people learn through \_\_\_\_\_. Hebrews 5:8 says that Jesus "learned \_\_\_\_\_ from the things which He suffered." The experience of His suffering on the cross \_\_\_\_\_ Him what obedience truly means. I've wondered, "How could one \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus anything, since He's God's Son?" But Jesus experienced in death something He had never experienced before; He experienced the \_\_\_\_\_ of crucifixion and death. It's one thing to \_\_\_\_\_ about obedience; it's another to give your life in obedience. That's what Jesus did to save us from \_\_\_\_\_.

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

Dead people know things about God and the afterlife from experience. We, today, know things by \_\_\_\_\_, since the Scriptures teach them to us; but the dead are now experiencing them. They know these things are \_\_\_\_\_ and they beg you to pay attention. Some people think that when we die, we'll simply go to sleep and not ever know anything.

I hear people quote Ecclesiastes 9:5, which says "For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know \_\_\_\_\_, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten." They would do well to quote this passage in \_\_\_\_\_, paying attention to verse 6, which says, "Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a \_\_\_\_\_ in all that is done under the sun." The phrase "under the sun" refers to the dead body not to what our spirits will experience in the afterlife.

Recently a man called me and said that Psalm 146 says our \_\_\_\_\_ to be conscious ends at death. Psalm 146:4 says, "His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts \_\_\_\_\_." Sadly, he missed the context of this passage: Psalm 146:3-4 says, "Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his \_\_\_\_\_ perish." The point here is not to \_\_\_\_\_ what men teach. Unlike God, the teachings

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of men perish, but God's teaching continues forever. So, don't believe those who tell you, "When you die, you cease to know anything." They're leading you astray.

Here are some of the things the dead people know and wished live men took seriously. First, the dead will have consciousness in the afterlife. In Luke 16:19-31, the Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ what happened to the rich man and to Lazarus after this life is over. Lazarus was in a place of \_\_\_\_\_ and knew it; the rich man was in a place of \_\_\_\_\_ and knew it. They both could see, could speak, could hear, and could feel what was happening to them. In Matthew 17:1-5 Moses and Elijah, though they had been dead several hundred years, were having a conversation with Jesus. In Revelation 6, the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God \_\_\_\_\_ to God the Father wondering about avenging those who had killed them, and God gave them an answer. They were conscious of their past and their present. Many today mock the idea of God, but no one will mock that idea in the afterlife.

Second, they know the God of the Bible, the God of heaven, is \_\_\_\_\_. Some proudly proclaim they're atheists or agnostics who don't know whether there is a God, but there will be no \_\_\_\_\_ about God when this life is over. Ecclesiastes 12:7 describes death this way, "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." When we die, our bodies will return to the dust; but our spirits will go back to God who gave us that spirit. We'll know what is happening around us. When Jesus died, that very day He went to \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 23:43) and He committed into the Father's hands His spirit (Luke 23:46). If we're faithful to God we'll experience the same \_\_\_\_\_. While we live in the flesh, we can't \_\_\_\_\_ God; but when our bodies die, our spirits will go to Him. We'll know He is real!

Third, dead people know every word in the \_\_\_\_\_, every word in this book is true. They know the prophecies are true, the promises are true, and the warnings are true as well. They realize that everyone who is "of the truth" listens to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ (John 18:37). They also realize many people have believed a \_\_\_\_\_ and had false hope. Many people fall for the deception of wickedness and perish, "because they didn't receive the love of the \_\_\_\_\_ so as to be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). They will know that people who do not \_\_\_\_\_ the truth will not find salvation. They will also know that those who obey the truth and remain faithful will enjoy all the promises of God.

You may think, "It doesn't matter what we believe"; but God's Word in Scripture determines the spiritual truth that saves \_\_\_\_\_. Don't imagine that God is going to set aside His Word just to \_\_\_\_\_ you. You must \_\_\_\_\_ His Word and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Remember the words of Jesus when He answered Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every \_\_\_\_\_ that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). Whether something is biblical or not matters to your \_\_\_\_\_ life. God never said, He never says anywhere in scripture, or even suggests that "It doesn't matter what you believe." The devil is a \_\_\_\_\_ and the father of lies; and this notion, that it doesn't matter is really from the devil not from God. The Bible declares there is but one \_\_\_\_\_ in Galatians 1:6-9 and one \_\_\_\_\_ in Ephesians 4:5. The Lord Jesus said that He was the \_\_\_\_\_ way to the Father, in John 14:6. Dead people will know the Lord means what He says, and we need to learn that in this life.

Fourth, the dead know that life can end \_\_\_\_\_. They know the words of James are true, "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a \_\_\_\_\_ that appears for a little while and then \_\_\_\_\_ away" (James 4:14). David said, "As for man, his days are like grass; As the flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its

place acknowledges it no longer” (Psalm 103:15-16). The Scriptures are clear: “it is appointed for men to \_\_\_\_\_ once and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Each one of us has an \_\_\_\_\_ coming with death and judgment.” Death and judgment are appointed and certain.

As a minister, for many years I’ve had the sad \_\_\_\_\_ to have to bury infants, small children, teenagers, and adults of all ages. Friends, we have no assurance that we’ll live \_\_\_\_\_ and do all that we wish to do in this life. God is in \_\_\_\_\_, and He may require our souls this very day. Please don’t fail to \_\_\_\_\_ your soul for eternity. Once this life is over, we don’t get a \_\_\_\_\_ chance to make things right with God. We must come to the Lord, and obey the gospel, and stay faithful.

This leads us to our fifth thing that dead people know: they know death is when our \_\_\_\_\_ is settled. In Luke 16:22 the poor man who was right with God “died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom, a place of comfort. The rich man in this story was not right with God; he also died and was buried.” Verses 23-24 say, “In Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and he said, ‘Father Abraham, have \_\_\_\_\_ on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in \_\_\_\_\_ in this flame.’” Abraham couldn’t send Lazarus, because there was a \_\_\_\_\_ chasm fixed between those who were righteous and those who were unrighteous, and no one can cross that chasm (Luke 16:25-26). The Lord Jesus reveals the unfaithful and unrighteous are \_\_\_\_\_ from God and from His blessing from the time that they die.

That ought to wake us up and cause us to \_\_\_\_\_. We must do what is right by loving God, keeping His commandments, and loving others! Romans 13:11-14 says, “Do this, knowing the time, that it’s already the hour for you to awaken from \_\_\_\_\_; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the \_\_\_\_\_ of darkness and put on the \_\_\_\_\_ of light. Let us behave properly as in the \_\_\_\_\_, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the \_\_\_\_\_ in regard to its lusts.”

We put on the Lord Jesus Christ first by believing in Him and by being \_\_\_\_\_. Galatians 3:26-27 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have (put on, or) clothed yourselves with Christ.” It’s not enough simply to become a child of God, we must \_\_\_\_\_ on putting on Christ throughout our lives here on earth. We do this by how we think, how we speak, how we treat others, and how we live. People who want to live with Christ in eternity put away \_\_\_\_\_ behaviors and live like Christ keeping the morals He taught. Don’t let wickedness \_\_\_\_\_ you. Being a Christian means \_\_\_\_\_ in the light as He is in the light. You can’t walk in spiritual darkness and then expect to have the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Many people celebrate sin and laugh about it in this life, but no one will be laughing about sin in the life to come.

Sixth, dead people know there is a great \_\_\_\_\_ in God’s eyes between the faithful who are saved “in Christ” and the lost who are “outside” of Christ. Those who are \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ are “separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). But those who are “in Christ” are “no longer strangers and aliens, but you’re fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household” (Ephesians 2:19). If you’re in Christ, you’re a fellow \_\_\_\_\_ with the saints; you’re God’s son, you’re God’s daughter. You matter to Him because you’re \_\_\_\_\_ to God. As God’s child, you have an inheritance with Him in heaven! Nothing you will ever do is as important as maintaining that faithful relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last, the dead know there is a \_\_\_\_\_ Day. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his \_\_\_\_\_ in the body, according to what he’s done, whether good or bad.” Some imagine, “God is too \_\_\_\_\_ to condemn anyone.” When they say that, you can be sure they’ve not \_\_\_\_\_ what God said in Scripture but have listened to other people. Second Peter 2:4-9 speaks of God condemning angels when they sinned, condemning the ancient world in the days of Noah, and condemning Sodom and Gomorrah for their immorality. He concludes in verse 9, “then the Lord knows how to \_\_\_\_\_ the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under \_\_\_\_\_ for the day of judgment.” You can’t refuse to repent and still escape God’s judgment! You’re only fooling yourself. God is holy and He is a just God; He will punish those who choose sin and ignore Him.

The Judgment Day doesn’t have to be a judgment against you. At the close of his life, Paul said, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I’ve fought the good fight, I’ve finished the course, I’ve kept the faith; and in the future there is laid up for me the \_\_\_\_\_ of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to \_\_\_\_\_ who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

If the graves could open and the dead could speak, they would \_\_\_\_\_ to each of us clearly and emphatically, “Draw close to the Lord and obey Him. Don’t let anything come \_\_\_\_\_ God and you.” The wicked dead and former unbelievers wouldn’t want you to \_\_\_\_\_ their steps and end up where they are. The righteous dead would plead for you to put your trust in the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. They would passionately urge you to stay faithful to the Lord Jesus. They know how serious a matter salvation truly is. Are you getting this? Wouldn’t it be foolish to ignore this warning and find yourself lost like the rich man of Luke 16?

Our Father in heaven has no \_\_\_\_\_ to see you lost. 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.” Our Father in heaven hopes you will look at the cross and come to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord with all your heart. No one loves you like the Lord loves you. No one wants your salvation more than the one who died on the cross for your sins.

You can find salvation from sin and judgment in the grace of our Lord Jesus who shed His blood for our sins. Trust in the Lord Jesus, turn from sinful thinking and behaviors to serve the Lord humbly and repent, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ by an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Study Acts 2, Acts 22, and Romans 6. The Scriptures will teach you the truth about baptism into Christ. And then get involved in the church and stay faithful.

Focus your heart on God, do it today by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one.

## Do You Know Jesus?

Many have heard of Jesus and even imagine that they know Him well. We're asking if they simply know what they've heard or have they studied for themselves.

James Allan Francis in a book published in 1963, called "One Solitary Life," wrote:

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself....

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth—his coat. And when he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone and today he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John 14:6-11.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe in Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

Here Jesus helps us to understand who He is, and why we should believe in Him. Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that there is no way Father to You but through Him. Father, help us to serve Him and to love Him and to be close to You always. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Have you ever contemplated what the world would be like if there were no Jesus Christ? Jesus is unique among men. There's no one like Him who ever lived. He was better, nobler, more holy, more kind, and more generous than any I have ever known. John the Baptist said of Jesus, "but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I'm not fit to remove His sandals" (Matthew 3:11).

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In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses said of Jesus, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, and you shall listen to him.” In verses 18-19 God said, “I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.”

David prophesied of Jesus, “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet’” (Psalm 110:1). Isaiah could say of Jesus, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness, From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Before his birth, an angel of the Lord told Joseph about Mary, “‘And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.’ Now all this took place that what was written by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,’ which translated means, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:21-23). At his death, the centurion who crucified Him said, “Surely he was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54). Jesus was certainly no ordinary man; He deserves a closer inspection. I’ve found the more that we know about Him, the more we love and we honor Him. The myriads of myriads of angels and living creatures around the throne of God honor Him with a loud voice, saying, “Worthy is the Lamb (speaking of Jesus) that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing” (Revelation 5:12).

What would life be like without Jesus? First, we’d lack a true example of righteousness and morality. Many today believe morality, right and wrong, change over time and something wrong in other societies could be all right in this age. But nothing could be farther from the truth. What God called sin in the first century is still sin in this twenty-first century. How do we know that? The Jesus that was Lord then is still Lord now. The things He taught then, He still teaches now. We must hear the words that Jesus spoke for all time rather than assume that culture can overrule the Lord.

Jesus is the only person who ever lived about whom it could be said, “He never sinned.” The apostle Peter pointed to Jesus as our example said, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He didn’t revile in return; and while suffering, He uttered no threats, but He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously” 91 Peter 2:21-23).

Hebrews 4:14-15 describes the Lord Jesus, “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus was tempted, but He never sinned. Some people believe that Jesus sinned, but where is your proof? Jesus could confront His enemies with the question, “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” (John 8:46). Jesus was entirely holy and without any moral impurity. No one could point to a transgression of God’s will on His part. Jesus made it clear in John 8:29, “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Second, we have no example of compassion for those who are in need, greater than in Jesus Christ. I know other men have shown love and compassion, but has anyone shown love like Jesus? Because of the heart and teaching of Jesus we have a society that believes in compassion. Jesus could see what others couldn’t see. He could see those who were spiritually lost and misguided. Matthew 9:36-38 says, “And

seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. And then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.’”

He was loving and compassionate to the sick and healed them; to sinners and forgave them; to the poor and provided for them; and to the burdened and gave them relief. The Lord Jesus called to people, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus didn’t simply talk love and compassion; He practiced it!

Have you considered the contributions of Jesus through the church to society? Many of the hospitals we have today came because of Christian care and concern for the sick. Many of the world’s greatest universities were started by Christians for Christian purposes. Nearly all of the first one hundred colleges established in America were started as Christian schools. Reading the Bible was a primary reason for literacy and education for the masses. True Christian love and respect was the cause for the abolition of slavery, both in antiquity and in more modern times.

Because of Jesus and His teaching, women live with greater freedom and respect. Because of Jesus and His teaching, the sanctity of life and the sanctity of biblical marriage is more precious. Because of Jesus and His teaching in passages like the good Samaritan, people have become more benevolent and generous to those in need. Jesus taught people to judge with righteous judgment. Jesus elevated the common man, saying that even his soul is more valuable than the whole world.

More than a few societies through the ages have left barbaric practices to follow the steps of Jesus. He has influenced music, art, and literature more than any other person. He has changed lives for the better wherever His teaching has gone. Many of the languages of the world have been codified and set to writing, so people could learn the Bible. Jesus alone has the words of eternal life; and if we refuse to listen to Him, we lose our hope of heaven.

No one has ever loved you or me to the extent that Jesus has loved us. First John 4:10-11 says, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Later, in verse 19, he says, “We love, because He first loved us.” We may think we know about love, but Jesus shows us real love. He willingly sacrificed Himself to save us, knowing that we couldn’t save ourselves. He was willing to take our souls seriously when, as ungodly people, we didn’t give Him a second thought. He paid the price to willingly offer righteousness to sinners by demonstrating His love on the cross. He loved us and gave His body and blood for us despite our weaknesses and sins. Jesus acted on His love!

Third, Jesus showed us the gospel truth and the way of salvation. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). He paved the way for our salvation by offering His body upon the cross for our sins. He paved the way for our resurrection hope at the last day when God raised Him from the dead. If you ask, “What is the gospel?”, my answer is that it’s the good news of His death and resurrection!

First Corinthians 15:1-4 says, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” The apostles who witnessed His death and resurrection preached this gospel (or good news) message of what happened to the Lord Jesus. The



Corinthians, just as Christians in the whole known world in the first century, accepted it and took their stand upon it because it was true!

They are saved by this gospel message, if they hold fast to it and do not wander away from the truth. I often ask people to believe, repent, and be baptized. Baptism is the new birth that brings “newness of life” (John 3:5 and Romans 6:4). Christianity begins with a new birth, but our faith and commitment to Christ must last as long as we live. We don’t want anyone to believe in vain. We don’t want anyone to draw close to God and then fall away from the faith.

The gospel story reveals that Christ died for our sins. He shed His blood so that we might be cleansed from sin and can live to righteousness. This sacrifice was personal to Jesus; He willingly offered His body to terrible suffering and crucifixion out of love. He personally bore the punishment that was due to us for our sins. After dying, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Him. A giant stone was rolled over the entrance to the tomb.

Jesus predicted that He would rise from the dead on the third day, a resurrection predicted in the Scriptures and witnessed by the apostles after He arose. Acts 1:3 says, “To these He also presented Himself alive 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.” First Corinthians 15 lists how he appeared to Cephas (Peter), to the twelve, to the five hundred brethren at one time, to James, to all the apostles, and last of all to Paul. These witnesses were willing to die for their faith because they knew God had raised Jesus up from the grave. This resurrection gives us hope; our bodies one day will be raised from the dead; and we’ll have a home in heaven. That’s what the Lord Jesus did for you and for me!

Let’s pray together. “O, Father, we’re thankful for the Lord Jesus, for His love, for His concern, His compassion. We’re thankful that He was willing to die in our stead, so that we might have the hope of everlasting life. Help us heavenly Father, to devote ourselves to Him in love and in service. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

The apostle Paul, who left his old life as a Pharisee and persecutor of the church to come to Christ, said, “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I’ve counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:7-8). Paul said he would rather know Jesus than possess anything else. It’s more important than the Pharisee culture in his upbringing.

What is knowledge of Jesus worth to you? Many think they know Jesus, but the Jesus they think they know is unlike the one presented in Scripture. They’ve seen a snapshot or two that only show a portion of His character or His life. Like Philip, they missed seeing Him as He truly is. If we don’t know Him, we can’t assume that we have a relationship with Him that pleases Him. If we don’t know Him, we can’t be sure that He approves of us. We may be like the five foolish virgins who ran out of oil and weren’t allowed in the master’s house. And He may say to us, “I do not know you.”

At the end time, nothing else will matter. Does Jesus know you? Have you placed your faith in Him? Have you turned away from sins that offend Him and turned to Him in obedience? Have you confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God? Have you been baptized into Christ (that is immersed in water) for the forgiveness of your sins, as Acts 2:38 teaches? When you’re baptized into Christ, you become a child of God and precious in His sight. Why not come to Jesus today!

We ask that you focus your heart on God today. If it’s Sunday, why not worship at church today. Everybody needs a church family, and you do too. There’s probably a church of Christ in your area. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one.