

THE CROSS



“A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL”



Why Is Sunday Sacred?

SCRIPTURES: GENESIS 2:2, EXODUS 20:8, EXODUS 31:13-16, MATTHEW 28:1-6 AND MARK 16:1-8

word is truth from Genesis to Revelations, and to appreciate and celebrate God's **New Testament Covenant.**

Introduction: Many people are confused about Sabbath Day worship and Sunday worship. This lesson will clarify the question through God's word and refute confusion about why we worship on Sunday.

The Sabbath is a holy day established by_ God. The word Sabbath means "rest." God sanctified the 7' day of the week, Saturday as the Sabbath, and declared it holy unto you. (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-11). God did

(Sacred on page 13)

Lesson Aim: To understand that God's

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021
Volume 25 Issue 1

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Carl's Garden

Carl was a quiet man. He didn't talk much. He would always greet you with a big smile and a firm handshake. Even after living in our neighborhood for over 50 years, no one could really say they knew him very well.

Before his retirement, he took the bus to work each morning. The lone sight of him walking down the street often worried us. He had a slight limp from a bullet wound received in W.W.II. Watching him, we worried that although he had survived W.W.II, he may not make it through our changing uptown neighborhood with its ever-increasing

(Garden on page 12)

Love

This month we are going to briefly touch on the subject of Love. Briefly I say, because truly there would never be enough time to cover all of the depth of this vitally important subject.

The Bible is an entire book of Love. From Genesis to Revelation we see Gods perfect plan for humanity and His plans unfolding through His amazing Love for His created inhabitants of the earth .

In particular, we can see how His love directed toward us is also flowing outward from us to others.

(Love page 14)

If No Excuses—Let Us Love One Another

It is quite natural for you and me to think of the events of this year as been downright awful and relatively despicable, considering what we have had to deal with. This includes every single one of us. We have faced stuff that we used to read about only in historical contexts. Yes epidemics come and epidemics go. Life continues and God continues to rule our lives. What can we do?

People in authority all over the globe are doing the best they can to control the situation as best as they can. As we usher in a fresh new year, it would almost seem as if we are getting a new lease on life. As if things might change overnight and our situation might be better than it has been these past months. We know absolutely that nothing is guaranteed to us. We have to be aware that nature has no calendar.

(No Excuses on page 14)



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Facebook page

From The Pastor's Desk



New Year's Blessing, Retooling for Church Growth: Renewing, Reconnecting, and Reopening.

There's a scripture that I quote often, and I would like to share with you that no doubt you have read or sung at one point in your walk with the Lord. Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it."

It is no doubt that the vast majority of us are happy to turn the corner to 2021. We know that turning the corner will not turn it all around at once everything wrong in our country.

We will still face circumstances in the upcoming year that will test our resolve and determination to serve Christ. Even as Christians, we will face more difficulty, and yes, even persecution, as we live out our Biblical convictions fighting the coronavirus and the many injustices.

The scripture I just shared helps us look over the horizon of this new year with the clear perspective that we live this life, making the most of every day. Lord, give us our daily bread as we serve You and the Church. It has been by this Pandemic that we have experienced more daily joy in helping others.

When it comes to our future, remember that God already has been there! There is absolutely nothing that will come up in the days, weeks, and months ahead, that will be a surprise to Him!

I encourage you to look at this upcoming year with anticipation for the beautiful things God wants to do through you! Some people will be looking for hope, and we have that hope, and His Name is Jesus! Be ready to share the Good News of the Gospel!

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

The message is that Christ calls us to make the most of today and not fret about tomorrow. While we can certainly make plans, we should always keep in mind those plans should always be ready to be molded to the will of the Lord.

We have demonstrated during the Pandemic that God will supply our daily needs. Let's join together in Retooling for Church Growth 2021: Renewing, Reconnecting, and Reopening.

Faithfully Yours,

Pastor Moses L. Harvill

Note: I want to take a moment on behalf of the Pastor, First Lady, and Leadership at The Historic Cross Street AME Zion Church to wish you and yours a Blessed and Bounteous New Year. Much love to all.

We miss gathering together.

The Best is Yet to come!

RETOOLING FOR CHURCH GROWTH 2021

- Renewing
- Reconnecting •Reopening

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you. ~Matthew 6:33*

Growing the Church via Zoom & Virtual Church

Starting Stronger:

RENEWING

*Bible Study— Growing in Christ: Lessons on Assurance—Lessons on Christian Living
‘Living for Christ isn’t easy, but it is possible!’ Learn how with GROWING with CHRIST
Lessons will be emailed & available for you to pick up at the church.*

*We begin the year with Spiritual Renewal
-Prayer & Bible Study*

RECONNECTING

Growing the church by coming back together in love & fellowship

REOPENING

Returning with zeal for Christ and His Kingdom mission

Hear Our Prayers Lord

Daily Miracle Prayer Request

God above, we stand before You today as Your humble servant, powerless and weak when compared to Your vast excellence. In this world and the next, You control all, including our life and we stand to gain everything in our worship of Your name.

Lord Almighty, we pray for instant miracles that will turn our heart's desires into realities, so we can move forward with You in the lead at every step. Your miracles will touch all parts of our lives and testimonies will be in praise of Your Heavenly name, Father. We pray that You allow not the jest from our enemies and instead, make us living wonders that will preach Your mercies all the days of our lives.

We thank You for Your answers and In Jesus Name We Pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Daily Protection

Lord, please heal and protect us today from all negativity, hurt, resentment, and evil. Please help us to avoid selfishness and please help our relationship to grow and strengthen together. Please help us with all the decisions we need to make in the future and please help us to make these decisions according to Your will. Please protect us from harm and sickness. Please help us to better serve You and make You proud. Please forgive us for our sins and our mistakes, its in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Prayer To Live Today For Jesus

Lord, we do thank You for a night of refreshing sleep this past night and thank You for waking us up on the dawning of this new day. Today we ask that You be present with us throughout the day we pray. We ask You to strengthen and keep us from all evils and dangers helping us to walk worthy of the calling, wherewith we have been called.

If there are burdens, we pray that You will carry them for us and if there are decisions to be made we pray that You would give us the discernment and wisdom we need to make the best choices. If there is busyness in the day we pray that it will not deflect us away from relying on You as we ought. If there is anyone that You bring into our path today, we pray that You would give us the words and wisdom to say what is needed to be said as well as the sense to know when to be silent.

Lord, into Your hands we place our day. go before us we pray, stay with us each minute of the day and keep us safe under the shadow of Your wings. May You be glorified in our life today so that when people look at us they see no one but Jesus in us. Its In Jesus' name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Help Us Embrace Life

Lord, help us to embrace and enjoy the life You've given us to live. We are not accidentally here! But each day we awake to breathe, You faithfully meet us with purpose. We lift our anxiety and worry to you, today, as we seek to embrace Your peace and promises. We confess our tendency to condemn, criticize, and compare instead of embracing the peace and blessings You have showered over our lives during

these trying seasons and relatively easy days. Help us to see and remember You in all situations become we never know what is going to be throw at us, buy You do because You never change. We ask Holy Spirit, faithfully nudge and reminds us that we are children of God, freed from the chains of sin by Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and resurrection and assertion to heaven where He is seated by the Father.

Bless our minds to remember and embrace the freedom, hope, joy and peace we have in Christ, its In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

A Daily Prayer of Thanksgiving

Morning prayer is a wonderful way to focus our time and attention on seeking God's plan for the day ahead. Whether we need encouragement, peace, strength, or rest, God can meet us in a very real and present way when we come before Him with a humble heart. Today seek God's presence each morning before your energy and attention are pulled by all the tasks we have ahead, Amen.

Dear God, Thank You for Your amazing power and work in our lives, thank You for Your goodness and for Your blessings over us. Thank You for Your great love and care. Thank You for Your sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank You enough, for who You are, for all that You do, for all that You've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on You afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with Your peace and joy.

We love You and we need You, this day and every day. We give You praise and thanks, for You alone are worthy to be praise! It is in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

A Prayer for Christmas Eve

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

A Joy-Filled Holiday

Happy birthday, Jesus! We celebrate Your birth and Your life. Thank You for coming to earth as a baby, bringing life and hope to us all. We surrender to You. May each day be a celebration of Who You are in our life. In Your name, we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

A Prayer for Faith in the New Year

Lord, even though we woke up with the same troubles we had yesterday, we know there is great power in our choices. So today, dear God, once again, we choose to listen for Your voice above everything else. Forgive us for not trusting You enough. Forgive us for spinning our wheels and trying to work everything out all on our own. Help us to truly let go of what You have asked us to release to You and to believe that

You're at work in ways we can't fully see. Help us in our unbelief, its in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen. -Barbara Perry

New Year Blessings 2021!

We declare new beginnings and new opportunities!

Almighty Father, we Thank You graciously for the New Year 2021. we ask You, Lord, to bless our family & friends, as we begin this blessed New Year with a renewed hope in You. Lord, we Thank You so much for all that You have done for our family & friends. Your hand on our lives is so much more than we could ask for. Your blessings are so greatly appreciated, we love You Lord and its in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen!

Stand Strong In You

Dear Lord, We don't know who or what will cross our path today. But we do know that You are our Rock and our Fortress. You are our shield and our strong Tower. Help us to anchor ourself to You today. Teach us how to stand strong in You and choose only Your way today. Help us walk by Your truth and not our feelings. Help us to embrace anything that comes our way as an opportunity to see You at work and as an opportunity to point others to You. Thank You that You love us and nothing can ever take that away from us! Even if we fail today and fall short, You whisper Your unconditional love deep into our soul and rewind us that Your mercies are new every morning. That truly amazes us, Lord. Thank You for meeting with us today. Would You wake us again

tomorrow with the same sweet whisper of Your love? I can't wait to meet with You again, in Jesus name Amen, Amen, Amen.

Prayer for Strength to Endure

Lord, today if we are weary and don't know when this "race" will end in our life and we feel like we've been running forever, trying to outrun this trial. Help us to stop trying to outrun our pain but rather run with endurance the race You have set before us. We know that because of You we are ultimately a victor over the trials in our life. Today we know that nothing in this world can separate us from Your steadfast love. Please give us a measure of Your love today; give us the strength to endure this trial. Thank You for Your love for us that never ends! And Thank You for the crown of joy that awaits us forever in Your Kingdom, its in Jesus name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Crave God

Lord, We pray You would move the Spirit more boldly in our life. We know that any sin can grieve and diminish the voice of the Spirit, and we pray against the temptation to sin. Help us crave our presence more than we crave sin. Help us grow in the fruit of the Spirit and so walk closer with Yourself. We pray for guidance from our Spirit-let our will and promises always be a meditation of our heart, its In Jesus' name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Prayers by Barbara Perry

Serenity Prayer
 God, grant me the Serenity
 to accept the things I cannot change.
 The courage to change the things I can,
 and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
 enjoying one moment at a time;
 Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
 Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is;
 Not as I would have it;
 Trusting that You will make all things right
 if I surrender to Your will;

So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
 and supremely
 happy with You forever in the next.
AMEN

courageouschristianfather.com
 Reinhold Niebuhr

Prayer for Change

Dear heavenly Father,
I know it's time for a change.
 Give me the courage to keep going,
 for I am afraid to let go.

**I believe that when a door closes,
 another opens, for You are faithful.**
 But I am assured that no matter what,
 there is one thing that never changes
 -Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday,
 today and forever! Hebrews 13:8
**Thank you for holding onto me through
 the different seasons of my life.**
 In Jesus' name, Amen.

B BIBLE PORTAL

The Miracle Prayer

*I open my heart wide to receive the love of God.
 As I receive God's love as universal supply,
 all my affairs are healed.
 I realize and accept the healing power of the
 Universe as love, and I allow the healing power
 that is love to penetrate my life.
 I readily accept the healing power of love
 in my life and I know that as love,
 God is my limitless and
 abundant supply made manifest.
 I feel the outpouring of God's love
 in my body and mind.
 I feel God's love in my affairs,
 and I know all is well.*

"May we beg forgiveness for being a nation that does not provide health care as a human right. Help us own our social sickness of greed, call sin what it is, and turn from its wicked ways to become the healers you call us to be."

Bishop William J. Barber II

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 Read all prayers at UCC.ORG/100P
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NEW YEAR PRAYER:

Thank You Lord for giving me
 The brand new year ahead.
 Help me live the way I should
 As each new day I tread.
 Give me gentle wisdom
 That I might help a friend,
 Give me strength and courage
 So a shoulder I might lend.
 The year ahead is empty,
 Help me fill it with good things
 Each new day filled with joy
 And happiness it brings.
 Amen.

**I have loved
 you, my people,
 with an
 everlasting love.
 With unfailing love
 I have drawn you
 to myself.**
-Jeremiah 31:3

Spiritual Renewal

- Fasting
- Prayer – Prayers of Great Lent
- Spiritual Reading –
 - Scripture -
 - Great Lent & Lenten Spring
- Immersion in the life of the Church
- Confession of sins
- Acts of Charity
- Feasting on Easter

13

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman...”He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the “beauty of the Lord will be upon us” (Psalm 90:17) and “we shall bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:4).”

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

“But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman...”He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the “beauty of the Lord will be upon us” (Psalm 90:17) and “we shall bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:4).”

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated “is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (I John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE “is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God”. The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (I Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God’s word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian’s life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,*

The Weed

LOVE, *limited love, hatred;* JOY, *temporary JOY, sorrow;* PEACE, *numbness, carelessness, anxiety strife;* PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity, impatience;* KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness, pride;* GOODNESS, *hypocrisy, evil;* FAITHFULNESS, *half-heartedness, infidelity;* MEEKNESS, *false modesty, self-seeking;* SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals, lack of control*
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

Read the BIBLE in ONE Year

January

01 Genesis 1-2
02 Genesis 3-5
03 Genesis 6-9
04 Genesis 10-11
05 Genesis 12-15
06 Genesis 16-19
07 Genesis 20-22

08 Genesis 23-26
09 Genesis 27-29
10 Genesis 30-32
11 Genesis 33-36
12 Genesis 37-39
13 Genesis 40-42
14 Genesis 43-46
15 Genesis 47-50

16 Exodus 1-4
17 Exodus 5-7
18 Exodus 8-10
19 Exodus 11-13
20 Exodus 14-17
21 Exodus 18-20
22 Exodus 21-24
23 Exodus 25-27

24 Exodus 28-31
25 Exodus 32-34
26 Exodus 35-37
27 Exodus 38-40
28 Leviticus 1-4
29 Leviticus 5-7
30 Leviticus 8-10
31 Leviticus 11-13

FEBRUARY

1 Leviticus 14-16
2 Leviticus 17-19
3 Leviticus 20-23
4 Leviticus 24-27
5 Numbers 1-3
6 Numbers 4-6
7 Numbers 7-10

8 Numbers 11-14
9 Numbers 15-17
10 Numbers 18-20
11 Numbers 21-24
12 Numbers 25-27
13 Numbers 28-30
14 Numbers 31-33
15 Numbers 34-36

16 Deuteronomy 1-3
17 Deuteronomy 4-6
18 Deuteronomy 7-9
19 Deuteronomy 10-12
20 Deuteronomy 13-16
21 Deuteronomy 17-19
22 Deuteronomy 20-22
23 Deuteronomy 23-25

24 Deuteronomy 26-28
25 Deuteronomy 29-31
26 Deuteronomy 32-34
27 Joshua 1-3
28 Joshua 4-6

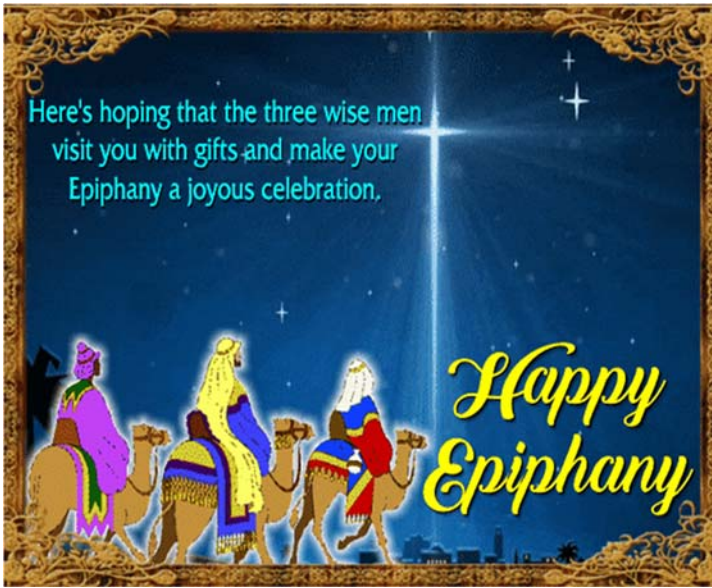
MARCH

1 Joshua 7-9
2 Joshua 10-12
3 Joshua 13-15
4 Joshua 16-18
5 Joshua 19-21
6 Joshua 22-24
7 Judges 1-4

8 Judges 5-8
9 Judges 9-12
10 Judges 13-15
11 Judges 16-18
12 Judges 19-21
13 Ruth 1-4
14 1 Sam. 1-3
15 1 Samuel 4-7

16 1 Samuel 8-10
17 1 Samuel 11-13
18 1 Samuel 14-16
19 1 Samuel 17-20
20 1 Samuel 21-24
21 1 Samuel 25-28
22 1 Samuel 22-24
23 2 Samuel 1-4

24 2 Samuel 5-8
25 2 Samuel 9-12
26 2 Samuel 13-15
27 2 Samuel 16-18
28 2 Samuel 19-21
29 Samuel 22-24
30 1 Kings 1-4
31 1 Kings 5-7



Epiphany or The Season After Epiphany (4-9 Sundays) is a time for remembering the various times and ways Jesus was revealed to humans, particularly to the Gentiles (non-Jews) through the Magi (Wise Men) who represented other nationalities. It is a reminder of the universality of Jesus, the Savior of persons in every land. The first Sunday after Epiphany Day (January 6) is known as Baptism of the Lord referring to 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34. This is an excellent time for baptism and renewal of the baptismal covenant. Appropriate symbols are water, the baptismal shell or font, a descending dove, and a cross standing in water. The emphasis for the remainder of the season is on the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the miracles performed, and Jesus' works and teachings.

Color: Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth.

Name of God	Meaning	Application
JEHOVAH – SHAMMAH	The Lord is There The Lord My Companion	God's presence is not limited or contained in the Tabernacle or Temple, but is accessible to all who love and obey Him.
JEHOVAH – TSIDKENU	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jesus is the King who would come from David's line, and is the one who imparts His righteousness to us.
YAH, ORJAH	"I AM<" The One Who Is The Self-Existent	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. God promises His continuing presence.
YHWH	"I AM<" The One Who Is The Self-Existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful.



Sunday School is a Family Affair

8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103
 New Members Class meets at the same time.
 (For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

Come Grow with US!

Called to Proclaim

Devotional Reading:
 Deuteronomy 8:1-11

Background Scripture:
 Luke 4

EXALT!

Declaration:
 Luke 4:14-22 (end with “from his mouth”)

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

***The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth**
¹⁶ when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is a upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed

at the gracious words that came from his mouth...”

Affirmation:
 We commit to align our faith response with Jesus’ call and mission.

ENGAGE

Unit II, “Jesus and calls in His Ministry,” presents four sessions about Jesus’ ministry. Luke emphasizes Jesus’ call to proclamation and ministry and identifies Jesus as one who calls following. Mark speaks to Jesus’ call to a ministry of healing. John gives us a look at Jesus’ call as the intercessor for those who follow him.

No doubt we dream of a world with no sickness or oppression, no homelessness, poverty, no pain or suffering, no injustice. Such a world is usually called a utopia. Arguably utopias are possible, and our dreams of such may certainly keep us working toward them.

Break into groups of threes and discuss with one another how dreams of utopias have influenced your life and how utopias relate to religious beliefs. Share your findings with the whole group.

EDUCATE

Luke 4:14-16: Nazareth was a small, insignificant town that was looked down upon, even by others in Galilee (John 1:45-46). A powerful message of hope would have been welcomed there. It was doubted as to how anything notable could come from such an insignificant place. Yet, we know how God acts, always in a manner that is astonishing to us. We often say He work in mysterious ways- His wonders to preform. It was only natural that Jesus should preach his

initial sermon in His hometown synagogue. But it was beyond human imagination that the Son of God, the Savior of the world would come from such a lowly place.

Luke 4:17-21: The proclamation of a special year of the Lord’s favor is a reference to the year of jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-55). Jubilee was a time at which debts were forgiven, slaves freed, and land returned to its original owner. Isaiah refers to Jubilee in the context of a restoration of Israel after the nation’s enemies had humbled her (Isaiah 61:2). Jesus made the reference in regard to the new day he would bring. Paul may have been making a Jubilee reference when comparing the new covenant to the old covenant (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). By applying the words of Isaiah 61 to himself, Jesus was claiming to be the anointed servant, the Messiah. This was a rare occasion, since Jesus generally kept this title form being affixed to him until the time of the culmination of his ministry drew near. See Matthew 16:20; Mark 1:25, 34; 7:36. the word of this passage and occasion appear only in Luke’s Gospel, which stresses Jesus’ concern for the lowly, the weak, the oppressed, those subjected to the injustices of society. And the words He quotes from Isaiah have been and still are used to bolster liberation movements and the struggles for social justice.

Luke 4:22: An initial positive reception of Jesus turned negative when some suggested that he was making claims about himself that were not warranted from his heritage (Luke 4:22b-30). Matthew 13:54-58 and Mark 6:1-6 also record a rejection at Nazareth. If these all describe the same event, there is disagreement as to where it fits chronologically in Jesus’ ministry. But this rejection did not

(Wisdom on page 9)

Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God’s hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God’s children.

(Wisdom from page 8)

hinder Jesus. He continued to preach and live out His calling (e.g., Matthew 5-7; 25:31-46; Luke 6:17-36; etc.), which is an excellent example to us as to how we should honor our own callings no matter the opposition we may encounter.

ELEVATE

People hear conflicting messages and proclamations all of time. What message would provide answers to life's deepest problems? The worshipers at Nazareth listened to Jesus' proclamation of justice and compassion and were amazed at His gracious words. No doubt, these words from the prophet spoken and applied to Jesus Himself from His own lips stirred up their long-held hopes of a better life to come. It was just unbelievable that it was finally coming to pass in and through one of their own small townspersons.

Break into two groups and have one group discuss the truth or falsity (reality or unreality) of the first three questions:

1. Believers know that Jesus can bring change that political leaders can only promise. What changes are we looking to Jesus to accomplish rather than to political leaders?
2. Believers see typologies of Jesus in Old Testament festivals, promises, and events. Name some in particular.
3. Believers stand with Jesus, even when other reject his claims. Name situations in which we do this or may do so.

And the second group discuss the reality and truth or falsity of the last two questions:

4. Believers seek to bring Jesus' message of freedom to those who are poor, ill, and oppressed. How do we accomplish this task?
5. Believers view the Gospel primarily as the promise of the Lord's favor rather than the Lord's wrath. What impact does this have on us?

Share your findings with the group as a whole.

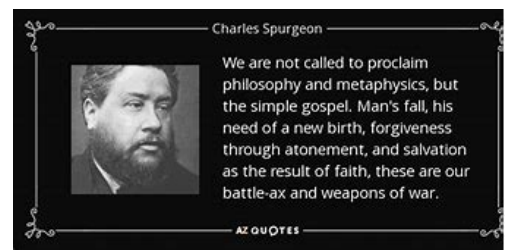
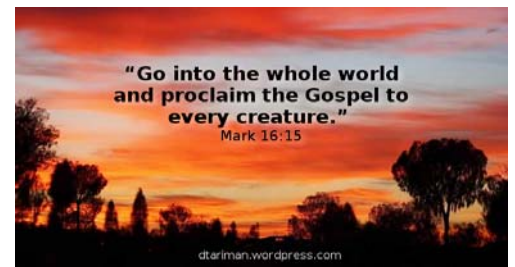
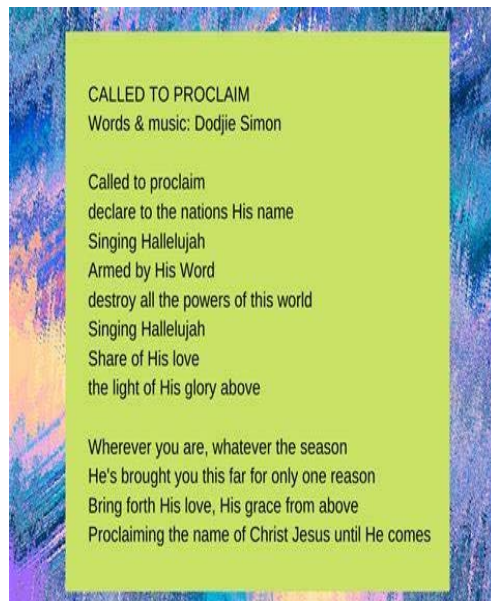
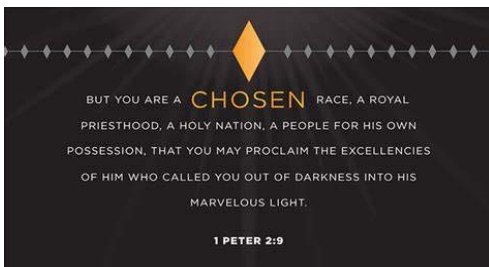
iTHINK

1. Recall the political promises made by candidates in recent elections. Rate the likelihood of each promise being kept as very likely, likely, unlikely, or very unlikely.
2. Begin class with a quiz in which participants match famous people with the small towns in which they were born. Discuss the quiz after revealing the answers. Did these people remain in these hometowns? Why or why not? What positive or negative reactions might these people encounter were they to return to those towns?
3. Using your Bible and Bible reference tools, do some research on the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-55). How does the deliverance Jesus brings compare and contrast with the freedom of the Jubilee year?
4. Write the major phrases of Luke 4:18-19 on the board. Help participants imagine beginning a para-church ministry that would fulfill all of these goals. What would they call this ministry? Where would it be located? How would it be staffed? How does our congregation participate in Jesus' mission?
5. Name the groups that Jesus mention in his Isaiah quote who will receive divine grace at Jesus coming. What grace have these groups received? Whom would you add to this list of those needing divine grace? What words do you find in Jesus' teachings to support this?

KEY VERSES

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Luke 4:18-19

From The Young People-Adult Quarterly
(Ages 18 and up) International Sunday School Lessons for Christian Teaching



Prayer—90 devotions from Our Daily Bread Compiled by Dave Branon

SURROUND BY PRAYER

Read: Romans 15:22-33

I urge you, brothers and sisters,...join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Romans 15:30

My friend Melissa's 9-year-old daughter Sydnie was in the hospital for chemotherapy and bone marrow transplant when I had a dream about her. I dreamed she was staying in a central room at the hospital with her parents. Surrounding her room was a block of other rooms where family and friends were staying and continually praying for her during her times of treatment.

In real life, Sydnie wasn't physically surround by family and friends in adjacent rooms. But spiritually speaking, she was and is surrounded by prayer and love.

The apostle Paul seemed to have a desire to be surrounded by prayer. In most of his letters to churches, he requested to be remembered in prayer to the Lord (2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossian 4:2-4; Philemon 1:22). To the believers in Rome, he wrote, "I urge you, brothers and sisters, ...to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me" (Romans 15:30). He knew that he could not be effective in his service for God without His power.

The Bible tells us that Jesus also prays for us (John 17:20; Hebrews 7:25), as does the Holy Spirit, whose prayers are according to the will of God (Romans 8:27). What a comfort to be surrounded by prayer! Anne Cetas

PERSISTENT PRAYER

Read: Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1

A friend of mine has been a woman of prayer for many years. She has received countless answers from God, but sometimes she is disheartened because certain prayers for loved ones remain unanswered. Yet she keeps on praying, encouraged by the parable in Luke 18. This story features a widow who badgered a heartless judge for help and finally got it.

Jesus ended His parable with a question: If an unrighteous and disrespectful judge finally answers a pestering widow's pleas for help, shall not God answer His own children who cry to Him day and night? (vv. 7-8). The expected answer: "Of course He will!"

George Müller (1805-1898), pastor and orphanage director, was known for his faith and persistent prayer. Many times when he prayed for specific needs for his orphanage, God sent exactly what was required. Yet for more than 40 years he also prayed for the conversion of a friend and his friend's son. When Müller died, these men were still unconverted. God answered those prayers, however, in His own time. The friend was converted while attending Müller's funeral, and the son a week later!

Do you have a special burden or request? Keep on praying! Trust your loving heavenly Father to answer according to His wisdom and timing. God honors persistent prayer! Foanie Yoder

KEEP ON ASKING

Read: Luke 11:1-13

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Luke 11:9

I heard a woman say that she never prayed more than once for anything. She didn't want to weary God with her repeated requests.

The Lord's teaching on prayer in Luke 11 contradicts this notion. He told a parable about a man who went to his friend's house at midnight and asked for some bread to feed his unexpected visitors. At first the friend refused, for he and his family were in bed. Finally he got up and gave him the bread—not out of friendship but because the caller was so persistent (vv. 5-10).

Jesus used this parable to contrast this reluctant friend with our generous heavenly Father. If an irritated neighbor will give in to his friend's persistence and grant his request, how much more readily will our heavenly Father give us all we need!

It's true that God, in His great wisdom, may sometimes delay His answers to prayer. It's also true that we must pray in harmony with the Scriptures and God's will. But Jesus moved beyond those facts to urge us to persist in prayer. He told us to ask, seek, and knock until the answer comes (v. 9).

So don't worry about wearying God. He will never tire of your persistent prayer! Joanie Yoder

Prayer Tip: Approach God confidently (Hebrews 4:16).

OUR DEMANDING SCHEDULES

Read: Mark 1:32-39

The whole town gather at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. Mark 1:33-34

Is your life too busy? Business deadlines, productivity quotas, and shuttling children to lessons and sporting events can really fill up your schedule. It's easy to think, If only I didn't have so many responsibilities, then I could walk in vital union with God.

Yet C. S. Lewis wisely pointed out that no one was busier than Christ. "Our model is the Jesus ...of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this ...is the Divine life operating under human conditions."

We read of Jesus in Capernaum: "That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gather at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases" (Mark 1:32-34). The next day Christ sought out a solitary place and prayed. There He received direction from His Father to pursue a demanding ministry in another place. Our Lord communed with His Father and depended on the Spirit to minister through Him.

Is your schedule demanding? Follow the example of Jesus and set a specific time for prayer. Then depend on God's power to help you meet each day's demands. Dennis Fisher

Prayer Tip: Put a Post-it note in your line of sight at work with requests you can pray about during the day.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18
"... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11

The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)
Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.

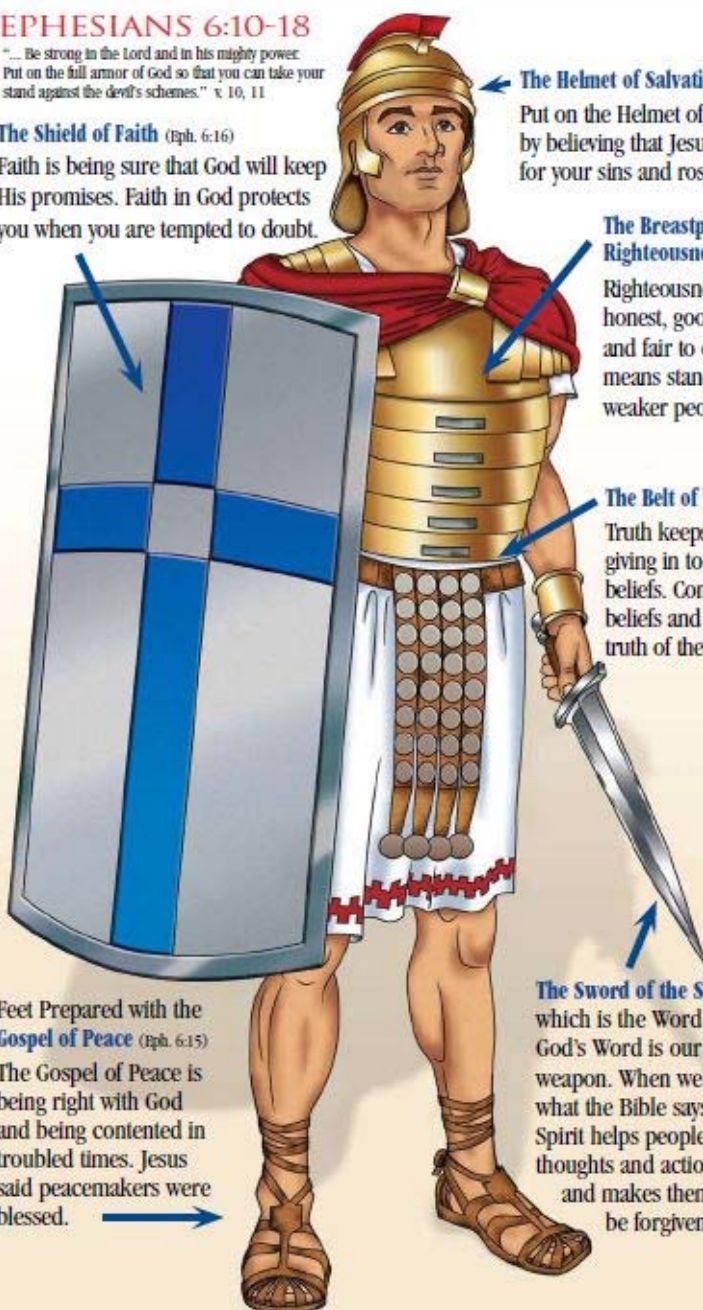
The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)
Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)
Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)
Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)
which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)
The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed.



Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak

(Garden from page 1)

random violence, gangs, and drug activity.

When he saw the flyer at our local church asking for volunteers for caring for the gardens behind the minister's residence, he responded in his characteristically unassuming manner. Without fanfare, he just signed up. He was well into his 87th year when the very thing we had always feared finally happened.

He was just finishing his watering for the day when three gang members approached him. Ignoring their attempt to intimidate him, he simply asked, Would you like a drink from the hose? The tallest and toughest-looking of the three said, Yeah, sure, with a malevolent little smile. As Carl offered the hose to him, the other two grabbed Carl's arm, throwing him down. As the hose snaked crazily over the ground, dousing everything in its way, Carl's assailants stole his retirement watch and his wallet, and then fled.

Carl tried to get himself up, but he had been thrown down on his bad leg. He lay there trying to gather himself as the minister came running to help him. Although the minister had witnessed the attack from his window, he couldn't get there fast enough to stop it. Carl, are you okay? Are you hurt? The minister kept asking as he helped Carl to his feet.

Carl just passed a hand over his brow and sighed, shaking his head. Just some punk kids. I hope they'll wise-up someday. His wet clothes clung to his slight frame as he bent to pick up the hose. He adjusted the nozzle again and started to water. Confused and a little concerned, the minister asked, Carl, what are you doing? I've got to finish my watering. It's been very dry lately, came the calm reply. Satisfying himself that Carl really was all right, the minister could only marvel. Carl was a man from a different time and place.

A few weeks later the three returned. Just as before their threat was unchallenged. Carl again offered them a drink from his hose. This time they didn't rob him. They wrenched the hose from his hand and drenched him head to foot in the icy water. When they had finished their humiliation of him, they sauntered off down the street, throwing catcalls and curses, falling over one another laughing at the hilarity of what they had just done.

Carl just watched them. Then he turned toward the warmth giving sun, picked up his hose, and went on with his watering.

The summer was quickly fading into fall. Carl was doing some tilling when he was startled by the sudden approach of someone behind him. He stumbled and fell into some evergreen branches. As he struggled to regain his footing, he turned to see the tall leader of his summer tormentors reaching down for him. He braced himself for the expected attack.

Don't worry old man, I'm not gonna hurt you this time. The young man spoke softly, still offering the tattooed and scarred hand to Carl. As he helped Carl get up, the man pulled a crumpled bag from his pocket and handed it to Carl. What's this? Carl asked. It's your stuff, the man explained. It's your stuff back. Even the money in your wallet. I don't understand, Carl said. Why would you help me now? The man shifted his feet, seeming embarrassed and ill at ease. I learned something from you, he said. I ran with that gang and hurt people like you. We picked you because you were old and we knew we could do it. But every time we came and did something to you, instead of yelling and fighting back, you tried to give us a drink. You didn't hate us for hating you. You kept showing love against our hate. He stopped for a moment. I couldn't sleep after we stole your stuff, so here it is back. He paused for another awkward moment, not knowing what more there was to say. That bag's my way of saying thanks for straightening me out, I guess. And with that, he walked off down the street. Carl looked down at the sack in his hands and gingerly opened it. He took out his retirement watch and put it back on his wrist. Opening his wallet, he checked for his wedding photo. He gazed for a moment at the young bride that still smiled back at him from all those years ago.

He died one cold day after Christmas that winter. Many people attended his funeral in spite of the weather. In particular the minister noticed a tall young man that he didn't know sitting quietly in a distant corner of the church. The minister spoke of Carl's garden as a lesson in life. In a voice made thick with unshed tears, he said, Do your best and make your garden as beautiful as you can. We will never forget Carl and his garden.

The following spring another flyer went up. It read: Person needed to care for

Carl's garden. The flyer went unnoticed by the busy parishioners until one day when a knock was heard at the minister's office door. Opening the door, the minister saw a pair of scarred and tattooed hands holding the flyer. I believe this is my job, if you'll have me, the young man said.

The minister recognized him as the same young man who had returned the stolen watch and wallet to Carl. He knew that Carl's kindness had turned this man's life around. As the minister handed him the keys to the garden shed, he said, Yes, go take care of Carl's garden and honor him. The man went to work and, over the next several years, he tended the flowers and vegetables just as Carl had done. In that time, he went to college, got married, and became a prominent member of the community. But he never forgot his promise to Carl's memory and kept the garden as beautiful as he thought Carl would have kept it. One day he approached the new minister and told him that he couldn't care for the garden any longer. He explained with a shy and happy smile, My wife just had a baby boy last night, and she's bringing him home on Saturday.

Well, congratulations! said the minister, as he was handed the garden shed keys. That's wonderful! What's the baby's name? Carl, he replied.

The Best Mathematical Equation I have ever seen: 1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.

That's the whole gospel message simply stated. Take 60 seconds give this a shot! Let's just see if Satan stops this one.

All you do is: 1. Simply say a small prayer for the person who sent you this, (Father God bless this person in whatever it is that You know he or she may be needing this day!) 2. Then send it on to five other people. Within hours five people have prayed for you, and you caused a multitude of people to pray to God for other people. Then sit back and watch the power of God work in your life for doing the thing that you know He loves.



(Sacred page 1)

not make a gentle suggestion for His people, the Israelites to rest from their own labors; instead, He mandated it.

The Sabbath Has Two Purposes:

1. The Sabbath is a day commanded the Jews to rest from their own secular labors.

2. It is the 7th day of each week set aside to remember all that God has done for His people and to worship and praise Him for it.

The **Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God** set aside a day out of each week for his people and sanctified it as holy. He knew humankind needed a day out of each week to relinquish our hurried, bustling lives of rushing and hustling. Therefore, He mandated this day for praise, worship, and thanksgiving to Him, so He could refresh and renew our spirits. Only God can make us holy, because He is holy and He said in His Word: "Be ye holy as **I am holy.**" **Read: Leviticus 11:45-** "I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore, be holy as I am holy."

1 Peter 1:15-16- But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; v-16-For it is written: Be holy for I am holy.

The Sabbath Is A Sign Between God And Man:

Read:

- Exodus 31:13-18
- Isaiah 59:13-14

Question: What is the punishment for desecrating the Sabbath?

Further Study of the Old Testament Relating to This Sabbath Lesson:

- Exodus 31:12-18
- Leviticus 19:3; 30
- Ezekiel 20:12-20
- Isaiah 1:13; 58: 13-14;
- Isaiah 66: 23-24

Later in Old Testament times, the Jewish elders added their traditions to the simple Sabbath Law; so much so, that the law became burdensome and even foolish for the people. Then, in the New Testament, Jesus came teaching against the Jewish elders and leader's traditions, but not against God's established Sabbath Law.

"New- moons" and "Sabbaths" refer to monthly offerings (Numbers 28:11-4) and weekly and special annual Sabbaths on the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles Leviticus 16:31; 23, 34, and 39).

The people worshipped but did not feel sorry for their sins; so they continued offering sacrifices for forgiveness. But gifts and sacrifices mean nothing to God, when they come from someone with a corrupt heart.

Sacrifices were to be an outward sign of their inward faith in God. Many people today are like the Israelites of old, who placed more importance on the rituals of their religion than on the God they worshipped.

Now, to answer the question asked in the lesson topic, **Why Is Sunday Sacred?**

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, His disciples met on the ascension of Jesus Christ, his disciples met on the first day of each week for rest, praise and worship. The Jews celebrated both Sabbaths for awhile, but the Gentile Christians having never kept any such day before, celebrated only Sunday, the first day of the week was the day the New Testament Christians observed as the day Christ arose. Therefore, Sunday observance came into the church during "New Testament" times.

Read:

- Matthew 28:1-6
- Mark 16: 1-8;
- Luke 24:1-12

- John 20:1-9.

The Law written in Exodus 24:31 and Leviticus 19:9-10 prevented farmers from becoming greedy and ignoring God on the Sabbath, and these laws also protected laborers from being overworked. Deuteronomy 23:25 made provisions for travelers and for the poor among the people.

However, Jesus Christ came fulfilling the Prophets and the Law.

Read:

- Matt. 5:17-18;
- Luke 24:14-44

Question: Should we observe Saturday worship instead of Sunday?

A Shadow of God's Reality:

The Law served as a shadow of the reality of things to come in the person of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.

Read:

- Matthew 5:17-22
- John 20:1; 19
- Matthew 22:34-40

Scriptures for Study

- Galatians 4: 10 - 11
- Mark 3: 4,
- Colossians 2: 16 - 17,
- Hebrews 8: 7 - 12,
- Revelations 14: 13

Remember, the Lord said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of man is even Lord of the Sabbath." (Mark 2: 23 - 27)

Study Scriptures

- Mark 3: 4; 2: 27 - 28,
- Luke 6: 5,
- John 5: 17 -24,
- Acts: 13: 4; 16: 13; 18: 4

Salt Of The Earth

Read: Matthew 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, ...it is then good for nothing. Matthew 5:13

What did Jesus mean when He told His followers that they were "the salt of the earth"? (Mt. 5:13). In the ancient

world, salt had many uses. For one, it preserved food. Without salts, meat and fish would quickly spoil. In a similar way, Christians who uphold God's moral standards can slow the decay of society.

Salt was also used as fertilizer. Until the mid 1900's, English farmers added salt to their fields to increase the yield.

Salt helped crops to grow. Christians too can encourage the growth of what is good wherever they live.

Salt also brings out the flavor of food. By their witness, salty believers help the people around them to taste life fully as God intended.

(No Excuses from page 1)

The human clock of time and space has no consequence to nature. So, what we think of as a new calendar year is nothing but another rotation of the earth on its axis. There has to be something we can do and need to do.

Be that as it may, it is worthwhile for us to gather ourselves together, look into ourselves and try to make adjustments to our attitudes and behavior towards one another. Even though we may not know exactly what the Lord God has in plan for us mortals, there are a couple of things that are within our control. I am thinking of how we treat and how we relate to each other. Thank God for the free willing spirit in each and every one of us. We have the choice to face each day with bright, cheerful optimism or gloomy, downright, negative pessimism. It is a choice that every one of us faces every time. From the events of the past couple of months, actually during this past year of 2020, it has become abundantly clear to me, that we have very little choice but to look up and be positive. Stay in fervent prayer, keep hope alive and listen to the advice and caution from our professionals.

Anyone who has not paid attention to the collective plight of the entire population of the human race is either living on a different planet or has chosen not to care. *'We are in this*

together' has become a political statement of choice to get each other's attention. And there is good reason to pay attention and be aware. We are in an epidemic of 'novel' proportions. Even the trained and seasoned professionals have no definitive and immediate solutions. All across the globe people have lost their lives and the living, have had their usual customs and habits drastically altered. It may come as a surprise to many, but those of us who follow the precepts of Jesus the Christ and his ideals have one tool that we still have in our control. That is the capacity to **love** one another.

In time of turmoil and havoc, maybe we can lessen the level of anxiety and chaos by first and foremost putting our trust in the Lord and next, counting on each other for comfort and assurance. Love each other. Practice some level of random act of kindness and care. Show compassion to the needy. Show love to the afflicted. Open your heart to those who are hurting. Lend a hand (in various ways) to support efforts to ease the burden on those who are bearing the brunt of the current situation. Send messages, reach out and give of your heart. Changing with the calendar would give us something to give to each other that does not cost us much – **love** one another.

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(Love on page 1)

This subject of loving one another is of great importance to God.

Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:34-35

By the love we have for one another is how Christ will be seen in us by others.

Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant. He washed the disciples feet. He became a servant to His brethren. He sends us forth to do the same.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

God is telling us by love to prepare for a life of servitude. He gave us the examples that we should follow in His steps.

God, in the book of First John truly defines His love for humanity and the process of that love flowing through each one of us.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the

love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:8-12

If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. What powerful words to meditate on.

The book of 1 Corinthians chapter 13 gives us a clear understanding of what true Charity (Love) is.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth:

but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." 1 Corinthians 13:2-8

No matter what it is we seek to do, this amazing love of Christ is the guiding light in everything we say and do.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." 1 Peter 3:8

As we approach the beginning of a new year. Let us resolve to be a people of God full of compassion, pity and courtesy.

Lord prepare me
To be a Sanctuary
Pure and holy
Tried and true
And with thanksgiving
I'll be a living
Sanctuary
For you.

Happy New Years brothers and sisters.
God bless,
Greg Adamo

Amen. -- Greg Adamo

Memo from GOD

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all ... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it in My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster? For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

8. BE PATIENT

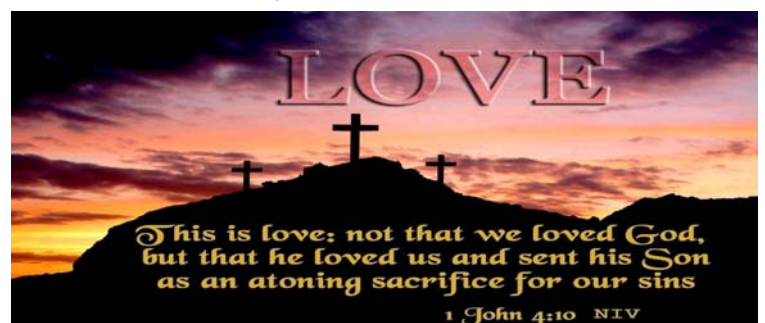
I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

10. **LOVE YOURSELF** As much as I love me for one reason of Love. Love Me. heart ache when I are very precious you, how can you not love yourself? You were only ... to be loved, and to love in return. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. see you so angry with yourself when things go to me. Don't ever forget that! created by I am a God It makes My wrong. You

With all My heart I love YOU ... God



Our Daily Bread

God's Guidance

Marvin Williams

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers. Psalm 1:1

Read: Psalm 1:1-3

When their bank accidentally deposited \$120,000 into their account, a couple went on a shopping spree. They purchased an SUV, a camper, and two four-wheelers in addition to paying off bills. Discovering the deposit error, the bank told the couple to return the money. Unfortunately, the husband and wife had already spent it. They were then charged with felony theft. When the couple arrived at the local court, the husband said to a reporter, "We took some bad legal advice." He learned that following bad advice (and spending what wasn't theirs) could lead to making a mess of their lives.

In contrast, the psalmist shared wise advice that can help us avoid messing up in life. He wrote that those who find genuine fulfillment—who are "blessed"—refuse to be influenced by the advice of those who don't serve God (Psalm 1:1). They know that unwise, ungodly counsel can lead to unseen dangers and costly consequences. Also, they're motivated by (find "delight" in) and preoccupied with ("meditate on") the timeless and unshakable truths of Scripture (v. 2). They've found that submitting to God's guidance leads to stability and fruitfulness (v. 3).

When we're making decisions, big or small, about our careers, money, relationships, and more, may we seek God's wisdom found in the Bible, godly counsel, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. His guidance is essential and trustworthy for living a fulfilling life and not creating messes.

Why do you believe Scripture is essential in making godly decisions? Who are your counselors that help you with wise advice?

God, before I seek Your advice about things I don't know, help me to practice obedience in the areas I do know, and in loving You and others.

Joy to the World

Lisa M. Samra

God so loved the world. John 3:16

Read: John 3:1-8, 13-16

Every Christmas we decorate our home with nativity scenes from around the world. We have a German nativity pyramid, a manger scene fashioned out of olive wood from Bethlehem, and a brightly colored Mexican folk version. Our family favorite is a whimsical entry from Africa. Instead of the more traditional sheep and camels, a hippopotamus gazes contently at the baby Jesus.

The unique cultural perspective brought to life these nativity scenes warms my heart as I ponder each beautiful reminder that Jesus' birth was not just for one nation or culture. It's good news for the whole earth, a reason for people from every country and ethnicity to rejoice.

The little baby depicted in each of our nativity scenes revealed this truth of God's heart for the entire world. As John wrote in relation to Christ's conversation with an inquisitive Pharisee named Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The gift of Jesus is good news for everyone. No matter where on earth you call home, Jesus' birth is God's offer of love and peace to you. And all who find new life in Christ, "from every tribe and language and people and nation" will one day celebrate God's glory forever and ever (Revelation 5:9).

In what unique ways do you celebrate the birth of Jesus? How might the reminder of God's love for the whole world bring joy this Christmas season?

Father, thank You for providing salvation through the gift of Your Son.

Uncharted Waters

Sheridan Voysey

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

Isaiah 43:2

Read: Isaiah 43:1-7

The ball drops in New York's Times Square. The crowd counts down to Big Ben chiming. Sydney Harbor erupts in fireworks. However your city marks it, there's something exciting about welcoming in a new year and the fresh start it brings. On New Year's Day we push out into new waters. What friendships and opportunities might we find?

For all its excitement, though, a new year can be unsettling. None of us knows the future or what storms it may hold. Many New Year's traditions reflect this: fireworks were invented in China to supposedly ward off evil spirits and make a new season prosperous. And New Year's resolutions date back to the Babylonians who made vows to appease their gods. Such acts were an attempt to make an unknown future secure.

When they weren't making vows, the Babylonians were busy conquering people—including Israel. In time, God sent the enslaved Jews this message: "Do not fear ... When you pass through the waters, I will be with you" (Isaiah 43:1-2). Later, Jesus said something similar when He and the disciples were caught sailing in a violent storm. "Why are you so afraid? He told them before commanding the waters to be still (Matthew 8:23-27).

Today we push out from the shore into new, uncharted waters. Whatever we face, He's with us—and He has the power to calm the waves.

What possibilities excite you as you look forward to a new year? What worries can you place in God's hand?

God, thank You that whatever this new year brings, You will be with me in it.

Depths of Love

Elisa Morgan

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1

Read: 1 John 3:1-6

Three-year-old Dylan McCoy had just learned to swim when he fell through a rotted plywood covering into a forty-foot deep, stone-walled well in his grandfather's backyard. Dylan managed to stay afloat in ten feet of water until his father went down to rescue him. Firefighters brought ropes to raise the boy, but the father was so worried about his son that he'd already climbed down the slippery rocks to make sure he was safe.

Oh, the love of a parent! Oh, the lengths (and depths) we will go for our children!

When the apostle John writes to believers in the early church who were struggling to find footing for their faith as false teaching swirled about them, he extends these words like a life-preserver: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1). Naming believers in Jesus as "children" of God was an intimate and legal labeling that brought validity to all who trust in Him.

Oh, the lengths and depths God will go for His children!

There are actions a parent will take only for their child-like Dylan's dad descending into a well to save his son. And like the ultimate act of our heavenly Father, who sent His only Son to gather us close to His heart and restore us to life with Him (vv. 5-6).

When has God rescued you from a dark well of need? How have you seen Him bring you to a place of hope?

Oh, heavenly Father, thank You for reaching into the well of my need to rescue me and bring me back to You!

Words To Live By

PRAYER For 2021

Dear Jesus,

As we enter 2021, I'd like to pray for not only myself, but the whole world, and that with this new beginning we can find hope, healing, and prosperity.

Please watch over us and give us the strength to continue moving forward. I pray that the world may overcome this pandemic and that you help to heal all of those who have suffered in any way throughout this year.

Jesus, please help me to use what I learned throughout this year's hardship to better me, the world, my community, and my relationship with You. I pray that I will continue to grow closer to you
And that my faith will flourish.

Thank You for helping me to get through the year and giving me the opportunity to enter into a new one. I pray that this new year is filled with joy, peace, love, and hope. Please continue to watch over me and guide me as I embark on this journey.

In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

[Pinterest.com/faithfilledyou](https://www.pinterest.com/faithfilledyou)

“Daily Confession of Faith”

In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.

I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.

I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.

If God be for me, who can be against me?

I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.

My enemies are fleeing before me.

God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.

He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.

I am the head and not the tail.

He has given me power to make wealth.

I dwell in the secret place.

I have His protection and provision.

God is my refuge, my fortress.

I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.

No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.

God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands

lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.

1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.

***Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,
or any other disease cannot enter my body.***

I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,

the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgement You shall condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.

I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.

***Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.***

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Spirit Lifters

By Norman Vincent Peale

Faith, Hope and Love

The best three-point formula for living is in this immoral statement:

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

Here are three powerful Spirit Lifters: Faith, the greatest power in this world; Hope, the attitude of expectancy—the best is yet to be; and Love, one of the greatest qualities of all—a heart full of

compassion and understanding. Christian love gives deep joy. Let these three shine like stars in your life, and your spirit will be uplifted always.

Love Given Returns to You

When we are on the “outs” or in conflict with other people, it tends to depress us. Try this cure:

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one

another. Romans 12:10

Practice kindly affection. Always take a generous, patient attitude. Practice consideration. Put the other person ahead of yourself. Courtesy has amazing power to dissipate ill

will.

Free your heart of jealousy and resentment. The love you give will return to you, and your spirit will be lifted to new levels.

Love Life and Have It Good

For anyone who wishes to enjoy life and experience God’s goodness—to be happy, respected and, in short, live a full, rich life—read slowly but reflectively and humbly the following verses:

He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 1 Peter 3:10, 11

In these two verses are listed just a few things that put happiness in your heart.

We are told to curb our tongues from speaking evil about anyone. Simply never say anything to hurt anyone. Moreover, we are to refrain from double talk, from shrewd remarks that are designed to advance our interests at someone else’s disadvantage. We are to turn our back upon evil and, in every

way possible, do good. We are to help people and bring blessings into their lives. We are to seek peace on earth and in our own hearts, and so live that peacefulness may flow from us to others. We are to become an island of peace in a world of turmoil.

Do the simple, honest Christian things and life will be good—and you will love it

Realize the Power Within You

Realize the power that is within you, and you will no longer be the victim of a depressed spirit.

And what is this inner power? Simply the God-given ability to believe.

To the extent to which you develop this faculty, you will master the defeats in your life.

The great issue is to learn to believe.

This is stated in one of the most important of all Scripture passages:

Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are

possible to him who believes.” Mark 9:23

Learn to believe. Learn to cast out doubt. This is done by the practice of affirmation.

Affirm faith, think positively, visualize achievement. Never think doubt. Always think faith.

This text affirms that when you learn to believe, the area of the impossible is vastly reduced and the area of the possible is greatly increased.

If you set this text firmly at the center of your thought patterns, you will never again be a victim of low spirits.

What Christ Can Do for You

We read in the Bible of the marvelous things Jesus did for people—and wish that the same experience might be ours.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, they were able to accomplish the most astonishing achievements, or were rescued from sad plights or gained tremendous new power over difficulties.

Rather sadly we ask, “Why can’t that happen to me?”

It can, and as proof I urge you to meditate upon this tremendous Spirit Lifter:

The simple truth stated here is that Jesus Christ never changes. He is an invariable factor in a variable world. He is just the same now as when He walked the shores of Galilee. He has the same kindness, the same power to heal and change men’s lives. He is the same restorer of courage, the same transformer of people’s souls.

Any things that He ever did for anyone throughout all history, He can do for you. It all depends upon how completely you surrender yourself Him—and how sincerely you believe.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
Hebrews 13:8

You Are Never Alone

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. Genesis 28:15

Uncertainties can be frightening, but these reassuring words show that God will be with you wherever you go on in whatever situation you find yourself. You are never alone. He will always see you through.

Barbara Perry Speaks

It's All In Your Mind

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
Roman 12:2

Let us pray, "Father in heaven, today we surrender our thoughts and mind to You. Help us retrain our thoughts so that they are in line with Your Word. Today we choose to have an attitude of faith and expectancy and thank You for empowering us to live the life You have for us, it's in Jesus' name, Amen, Amen, Amen."

Many of us today don't realize that the reason we're not happy, the reason we're enjoying life is simply because we've trained our minds in the wrong direction. We've trained our minds to worry, complain and see the negative. But if we retrain our mind according to the word of God and form godly mindsets we'll developing a positive attitude by learning to stay grateful.

See when we stay grateful, we are focusing on what's right rather than what's wrong. The seed of the Word takes root in the good ground of your heart. This doesn't

happen automatically, we have to discipline ourself. We have to make a conscious effort every single day until a good habit is formed.

Remember, when we live with an attitude of praise and thanksgiving, we are shielding ourself from the attacks of the enemy. The seeds of discouragement cannot take root in a grateful heart. Neither can bitterness, envy or strife.

So today, retrain your mind and be empowered with His strength to overcome in every area of your life! Amen.

Failure Is Not Final

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, Philippians 3:13

Let us pray, "Father God, thank You for Your hand of victory and blessing that is on our life. Today, we shake off the past, we shake off failure, we shake off poor choices and trust that You are restoring us and leading us into the plan You have for us, it's in Jesus' name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen."

Are you down on yourself today because of past mistakes you've made or because you're not where you want to be in life? Well God knows every poor choice, every difficulty, every wrong turn you may have made, and He's already planned your comeback!

Friend, know today that failure is not final. God always has the final say. Mistakes don't have to keep us from our destiny. God's plan can override every setback. Our world may be in turmoil today, but know this: not only will God rescue us; He will set our feet on a rock and lead us to our final

destination in life, Amen. So I encourage you to remember, the promise He placed on the inside of us didn't go away because we had some personal failures. No, that failure is only temporary but His Word remains forever!

So keep hoping, keep believing because He will move us into the blessing and victory He has prepared for us, it's in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen. Hallelujah, Thank You Jesus!

A New Route

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Psalms 103:4

Let us pray, "Father God, we come humbly before You today. We give You our past, present and future knowing that You will redeem our life. We release those who have hurt us, we choose forgiveness so we can be free to move forward in the new route You have for us, it's in Jesus' name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen."

Today, don't focus on what's happened in our past, focus on what God will do in our future. When the enemy brings hardship into our life, God will take the experience and turn it around for our advantage. We may think we've hit a dead end, but if we will stay in faith, we will see God begin to open up a new route. We also might feel like we've wasted years because of poor choices, but we have to realize, nothing we been through is ever wasted. Those challenges sharpened us to help make us who we are today and our past

experiences, good and bad have deposited something on the inside of us, Amen.

So remember God will put the right people in our path, the right opportunities, the right circumstances to move us forward toward our God-given destiny. He also wants to restore our soul and revive our dreams if we keep believing, keep expecting, keep hoping because God has a new route for our future! Amen, Amen, Amen. Hallelujah, Thank You Jesus.

Words Become Your Reality

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.
Proverbs 18:22

Let us pray, "Father, thank You that our words have the creative power to change our life and become our reality. Help us to give our faith a voice by speaking words of life and blessing over ourselves and our future daily. Today we declare that we will sow seeds of abundance and increase and reap a harvest

of good things, its In Jesus' Name we pray and ask, Amen, Amen, Amen."

We are where we are today in part because of what we've been saying about ourselves. Words are like seeds. When we speak something out, we give life to what we're saying. If we continue to say it, eventually that can become a reality. Whether we realize it or not, we are prophesying our future.

See our life moves in the direction of our words. We have to think of our words as seeds we're planting. At some point, we're going to eat fruit from the exact seeds that we've been sowing, so make sure we're planting the right seeds. In other words, we can't talk negative and expect to live a positive life. Remember if we don't like what we're eating, start sowing seeds of abundance and increase, and we'll reap a harvest of good things, Amen.

A Prayer For Peace That Surpasses Understanding

Dear Father, Thank You for not leaving us empty-handed. You have provided us the truth of Your Word to help navigate us through this life thank You that we can bring anything and everything to the foot of the cross and make all our requests known to You. Thank You that even though "there may be trouble in the world", You have overcome the world because we cannot survive the storms of life without Your peace and we are the victors over the enemy who attempts to destroy it.

We ask that You cover us in Your peace today. You see us, and You hear our prayers. We know that even if our eyes can't see our circumstances changing, that You see it and You are in control. Thank You that Your peace is not only our guard but our guide, protecting us. We also ask that the Holy Spirit prompt us in those moments of worry to turn toward You in thanksgiving. We worship You for being a faithful God whom we can trust with everything. We love You In Jesus' Name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...

WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEUM, THE MICHELANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALIAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!

AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND.

"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."

BUT THERE'S A CHANGE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLANE.

SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ITALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REMBRANDTS.

BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ITALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT LOSS.

BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURNING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.

SOURCE UNKNOWN

Joyce Meyer: Promises for your Everyday Life - a Daily Devotional

Practicing Thankfulness

¹ I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Psalms 34:1

We all know that we should be grateful for our many blessings. God tells us in His Word to be thankful, and we know from our own experience that once we seriously start praising God, our burdens and troubles seems to weigh less heavily on our shoulders.

David said, "I will bless the Lord at

all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Many evils confront the [consistently] righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" Psalm 34:1, 19.

That's the power of thankfulness. Not only does it help set us free, but as we pause to give thanks to God for the blessings we enjoy in our lives, we actually begin to find more blessings, even more to be thankful for!

I encourage you to take time to practice being thankful. There is so

much for us to be grateful for, and we need to focus on it, every single day. Keep in mind the admonition of the psalmist, "Be thankful and say so to Him, bless and affectionately praise His name! Psalm 100:4.

Prayer starter: Dear God, the power of thankfulness is truly incredible. Thank You for blessing me daily and working in my life. I know that without You, I have nothing, so I thank You for the goodness that You have shown me.

You Have Potential

²⁷ And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. Mark 10:27

It's amazing how many gifted people there are who just sit on the sidelines of life and do nothing. They never take a step forward to use the gifts God has given them because they don't believe they're gifted in the first place. Are you one of them?

The truth is, God has given each one of us gifts, talents and abilities. He has a great plan for you and has equipped you to do great things for His Kingdom. But until you see yourself the way He sees you and trust Him to enable you to use your gifts, you won't live up to your God-given potential.

If you're struggling with low self-esteem, a poor self-image and lacking confidence, I want you to know that God created you with amazing potential. And when you trust God and believe you can do whatever He says you can do, you

will fulfill His destiny for your life.

Remember, "all things are possible with God." when you put your confidence in Him, you will be free to live up to your potential.

Prayer Starter: God, help me to see myself through Your eyes, with the gifts and talents You've given me. I believe that You made me with great potential because You are a great God. Today, I put my confidence in You and believe that all things are possible with You!

The Lord Is Your Strength

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Ephesians 6:10

We must realize that part of Satan's plan for end-time believe is to make us weary. Daniel 7:25 gives a vivid description of a vision the prophet Daniel received regarding the last days: "And he 'shall wear out the saints of the Most High'" (AMP).

But God want you to be encouraged.

Romans 8:37 (AMP) gives Christians this good news: "Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us." 'More than conquerors' means that before trouble ever starts, we already know who wins. I like that, don't you?

We can purpose in our hearts to maintain such an intimate relationship with God through prayer and His Word that we are constantly being strengthened by the power of His promises. Intimacy with God produces

strong Christians who can outlast the devil!

Live your life totally confident in God's strength and have no fear of the trials that can produce weary warriors and fainting saints. Remain strong 'in Him' and in the power of His might.

Prayer Starter: God, You alone are my strength. I won't let Satan make me a weary Christian, but I'll remain strong in my intimacy with You.

Praying in His Name

²³ And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. ²⁴ Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23-24

When our youngest son was still in school, we had people who stayed with him when Dave and I traveled. In order for those who were caring for him in our absence to get medical treatment for him

if it was needed, we had to sign a legal document stating that they had the right to use our name on our son's behalf, literally, to make decisions in our place.

That is what Jesus did for His disciples and, ultimately, for all who would believe in Him. He said that God would answer when we pray using His name. This is the authority you and I have been granted in His name.

His name takes His place, His name represents Him. When we pray in His name, it is the same as if He were

praying. This privilege seems almost too wonderful to believe! But we can believe it because we have Scripture to back it up. So use the authority of Jesus' name and put that power to work to overcome evil and bring the blessings of God to this world.

Prayer Starter: God, I pray to You boldly in the name of Jesus, knowing that You are listening and ready to answer. Thank You for the wonderful privilege of praying in Your Son's name.

A Bird's Eye View Of The Bible

Old Testament

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library.
There are four types of writing in the Old Testament:
Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

HISTORY

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

POETRY

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

PROPHECY

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor Prophets" (the last 12). The "Minor" ones are shorter, not less important.

New Testament

There are 27 books in the New Testament library.
There are three types of writing in the New Testament:
History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

HISTORY

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

PROPHECY

Revelation

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



A Prayer for Our World

God, You alone are worthy of honor, glory, and praise. With You, we can overcome every storm—including the global impact COVID-19 is having on our world.

Right now, we are asking You to:

- Heal those who are sick and protect those who are not.
- Give our leaders extra wisdom as they navigate this pandemic and economic uncertainty.
- Strengthen Your global Church. Reveal to us how we can partner together to reach the needs of those around us.
- Calm our fears. Fill us with Your hope, joy, and peace as we continue to trust in You.
- Use this pandemic to pave the way for spiritual renewal. We want Your glory, power, and healing to be on display.

Come Lord Jesus, come.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

YouVersion

A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Psalm 100:2

As I waited in the breakfast buffet line at a Christian conference center, a group of women entered the dining hall. I smiled, saying hello to a woman who stepped into the line behind me. Returning my greeting, she said, "I know you." we scooped scrambled eggs onto our plates and tried to figure out where we'd met. But I was pretty sure she'd mistaken me for someone else.

When we returned for lunch, the woman approached me. "Do you drive a white car?"

I shrugged. "I used to. A few years ago."

She laughed. "we stopped at the same traffic light by the elementary school almost every morning," she said. "You'd always be lifting your hands, singing joyfully. I thought you were worshiping God. That made me want to join in, even on tough days."

Praising God, we prayed together, hugged, and enjoyed lunch.

My new friend affirmed that people notice how Jesus' followers behave, even when we think no one is watching. As we embrace a lifestyle of joyful worship, we can come before our Creator anytime and anywhere. Acknowledging His enduring love and faithfulness, we can enjoy intimate communion with Him and thank Him for His ongoing care (Psalm 100). Whether we're singing praises in our cars, praying in public, or spreading God's love through kind acts, we can inspire others to "praise his name" (v. 4). Worshiping God is more than a Sunday morning event. Xochitl Dixon

In what ways can you joyfully worship God throughout the day? When has someone else's worship led to your own?

Almighty God, please help me live to worship You with contagious joy and gratitude.

Today Scripture: Psalm 100

¹ Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. ² Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. ³ Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. ⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. ⁵ For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

INSIGHT

While worship of God may include joyful praise and thanksgiving, as Psalm 100 describes, the biblical concept of worship is much broader. The Hebrew word translated "worship" ('bd) in Psalm 100:2 is more often translated "serve" or "work." for example, Adam was to "work" (same Hebrew word) the ground in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). Later this word became associated with the "service" of God in the tabernacle and temple (see Numbers 3:7). Because tabernacle and temple service involved praise of God, offering sacrifices, and other religious practices, the word came to mean "worship" as we understand it today. But the concept really has to do with serving God more than singing praises and offering thanksgiving. These expressions of worship are just some ways we can serve God. As Paul says, believers are to offer their whole bodies and minds to God as an act of spiritual worship (Romans 12:1-2). Con Campbell

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
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Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day. Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

PLEASE dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY

We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?

Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way

For more information contact:

Church office 860-344-9527.or

Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

BLACK LIVES MATTER



When you have a scale that is out of balance, to even things up, you can either add more to one side or take away from the other. The **Black Lives Matter** movement suggests that the scales of justice are out of balance.

To get into balance, this movement is asking us to add more attention to the civil rights and treatment of black individuals and ensure that the weight put upon the value of protecting black lives is equal to the weight put upon that of all Americans' lives. This movement is not about taking away from the value of other lives, but, simply, balancing the scales.

To counter with "All Lives Matter" is to suggest that you think the scale is already balanced – I assure you, it is not. The Black Lives Matter movement does not suggest any lives should matter less, just that they all should matter equally as much.

YES, ALL LIVES MATTER
BUT WE'RE FOCUSED ON THE BLACK ONES RIGHT NOW, OK?
— BECAUSE IT IS VERY APPARENT
THAT OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM DOESN'T KNOW THAT.

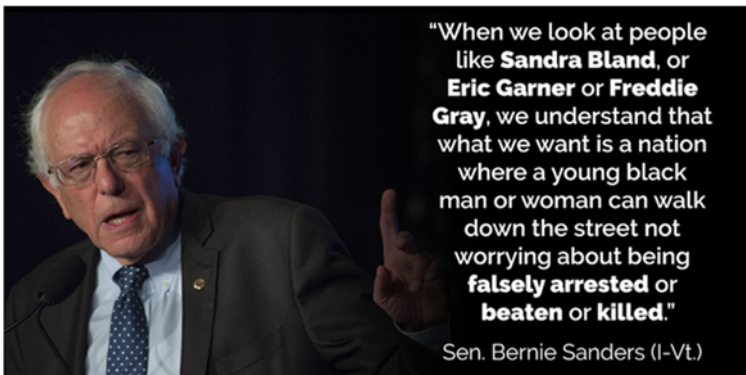
PLUS, IF YOU CAN'T SEE WHY WE'RE EXCLAIMING #BLACKLIVESMATTER YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM.

Lets Be Clear, We Said:
BLACKLIVESMATTER
We NEVER Said
ONLYBLACKLIVESMATTER
That Was The Media, Not Us
In Truth, We Know That
ALLLIVESMATTER
We've Supported Your Lives
Throughout History
Now We Need Your Help w/
BLACKLIVESMATTER
For Blacks Lives Are In Danger

FREEDOM IS NEVER VOLUNTARILY GIVEN BY THE OPPRESSOR; IT MUST BE DEMANDED BY THE OPPRESSED.
-MLKJ

Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress.

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



"When we look at people like **Sandra Bland**, or **Eric Garner** or **Freddie Gray**, we understand that what we want is a nation where a young black man or woman can walk down the street not worrying about being **falsely arrested** or **beaten** or **killed**."

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men's skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact.
– Lyndon B. Johnson

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:30 a.m. **Church School** (see Zoom Meeting)

12:00 p.m. **Worship Service**

<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>

Meeting ID: 959 628 798

(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

Tell your family and friends from across the Country.
We can be watched worldwide.

Tuesday

Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/562367770>

(929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

Wednesday

Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. & 6:00 P.M.

Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

Sunday School ZOOM Meetings

8:30 a.m.- Dr. Long's Sunday School Class

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 734629713#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/734629713>

9:00 a.m.- Contemporary Sunday School: Adults

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 140827210#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/140827210>

9:30 a.m.- Beginners Sunday School: Ms. Carolyn Smith

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 233007146#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/233007146>

11:00 a.m.- Primary Sunday School: Rev. Earlene Grant

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 614890401#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401>

11:30 a.m.- Juniors Sunday School: Rev. Greg Winborne

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 856361645#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/856361645>

We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

Online: crossstreetamezion.org

1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/> TJXKDEVIXE)

2. Text 73256 (Thecross)

3. PayPal,

4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440

5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct 06457,

6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

7. Call the office for someone to pick up

8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the website; <http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/Give>)

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: **crossstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby**. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: **ken46@snet.net**. If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons (Ken46@snet.net), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**



CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223
Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

crossstreetchurch@snet.net
www.crossstreetamezion.org

Sunday School — 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Moses L. Harvill, M. Div.,
Pastor

Email: mharvill@snet.net

The Rev. Dr. Terry L. Jones
Presiding Elder

Mrs. D. Diane Proctor
Missionary Supervisor

The Right Reverend Dennis Proctor
Presiding Prelate

Ministerial Staff

- Rev. Robyn Anderson-Turner
- Rev. William D. Wilson
- Rev. Ella Frances Perry
- Rev. Karen Nesmith
- Rev. James Battle
- Rev. Myrtle Turner
- Rev. Gregory Winborne
- Rev. Joyce Johnson
- Rev. Earlene Grants
- Sister Felicia Freeman



Retooling For Church Growth In 2021

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteous; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33 KJV

“I am a Christian”
By Maya Angelou

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not shouting “I’m clean livin’.”
I’m whispering “I was lost,
Now I’m found and forgiven.”

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I don’t speak of this with pride.
I’m confessing that I stumble
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not trying to be strong.
I’m professing that I’m weak
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not bragging of success.
I’m admitting I have failed
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... “I am a Christian”
I’m not holier than thou.
I’m just a simple sinner
Who received God’s good grace,
somehow!

The Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread. And forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on
tablets, that he may run who reads it.
Habakkuk 2:2

The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel
saying, “**Oh, that You would bless
me indeed, and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would keep me from
evil, that I may nor cause pain!**” “ So
God granted him what he requested.
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

“God’s Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword, piercing even to the dividing
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
joints and marrow, and is a discernor of
the thoughts and intents of the heart”
Hebrews 4:12*

Prayer: Forever, O Lord, your Word is
settled in heaven. I bless you because
you have given me rest according to all
that you have promised to me. Not one
word of all your good promises has ever
failed. In light of this truth, I will walk in
your Word at all times.
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp
unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
All of your words are pure, O God, and
you are a shield to me. Lord God, your

way is perfect, and your Word is tried.
You are a shield and a mighty buckler to
me as I trust in you.
With your Word you made the heavens,
O Lord. all of your promises are yes in
Christ, unto your glory, O God. You
have spoken through your Word since
ancient times, in order to give light to
those who sit in darkness, and you guide
my feet in the way of peace.
Your Word is quick, alive, and powerful,
and sharper than any two-edged sword.
It pierces even to the dividing asunder of
my soul and spirit, and of my joints and
marrow, and is a discernor of the
thoughts and intents of my heart.
Father, I am thankful for your Word, and
I will endeavor to walk in the light of your
Word all the days of my life.

If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???

Doxology

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.
Jude 24-25