

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By Christy Akins Brawner

Discipleship Series
Pioneer Evangelism Series

How to use “Beginning a New Life in Christ”

Follow the following suggestions as you tell the story and share Spiritual truths:

1. Remember to always treat the person with respect, asking permission to tell the story and to continue each week.
2. Speak in a calm, conversational voice. Do not preach at the individual.
3. Do not argue about the truths. Let the Holy Spirit do the work in the heart of the non-believer to convict their heart and convince them of truth.
4. Do not judge the person nor condemn them for what they believe. Merely study the Bible and let the Holy Spirit work through God’s word.
5. Begin each meeting with a brief word of prayer asking the Lord to bring understanding to the stories.
6. Use the following method to tell the story: Read from the booklet one sentence at a time and then explain what you just read in your own words. Using this method will give the person the opportunity to hear the story twice and have it explained in a very simple way. If there are available copies you may have the individual(s) read the stories to enable them to participant.
7. The leader should ask the oral questions at the end of the story. The purpose for these questions is to review and check for understanding of the story- NOT for elaboration or debate.
8. Read the spiritual truths. Allow the group members freedom to discuss and question each spiritual truth. Be careful to NEVER argue or debate with anyone. It is not necessary at this point for the members to agree or accept the spiritual truths. It is only important that they understand the truths as they are revealed in God’s Word.
9. After the spiritual truths, have a time for each person to share needs and prayer requests with the group.
10. Pray specifically for each need and/or each person in the group. As the group progresses and people accept the Lord allow the members to pray for each other during this intercession time.
11. At the conclusion of lesson seven you will invite them to accept Jesus as their Lord. But if anyone expresses interest in giving their lives to Jesus at anytime during the seven weeks you will need to share with them how to make Jesus their Lord and give them the opportunity to do so.

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
Christy A. Brawner

“The First and Second Coming of Jesus”-Lesson 1 **Matthew 1 and 24**

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming... Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”
Matthew 24:42, 44

*If it is possible, let each member of the group who can write bring a blank notebook and a pen to this study.

At the time when the Romans ruled the known world there was a young virgin girl, in the country of Israel named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph. Now, Mary became pregnant before they were married, and when Joseph found out he wanted to end their engagement. So, one night he decided to do this, but to do it secretly so as not to cause public shame for Mary.

While he was thinking through all these things, an angel of the Lord came to him. The angel told him to go ahead and marry Mary for she had not cheated on him, but had conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. The angel told him that she was to bear the child that had been promised by the old Jewish prophets. The child she was to bear was the one referred to by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us’.”

So Joseph believed the angel, and took Mary to be his wife. However they did not have any sexual relations until after the birth of the Jesus thus He was born of a virgin. Joseph named the child, Jesus.

The Bible made many prophecies about the coming of Jesus. His birth was predicted in the Old Testament as well as the events leading up to His death and resurrection. Jesus, Himself, made many promises concerning who He was and what He will do. Some of Jesus’ prophecies as well as others from the Old Testament have not yet been fulfilled. These prophecies tell us that Jesus will come again to earth. The first coming of Christ was in a humble place because He came as a Suffering Servant. But the Bible teaches us that His Second Coming will be very different.

Jesus spoke to His followers of His return while He taught them at the place called the Mount of Olives. He told them these things in response to the question, “And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Jesus answered them first with a caution: He told them to take great care so that no one would be deceived. He explained that as His coming gets closer more and more people would come using His name. They will say, “I am the Christ.”

Unfortunately, lots of people will believe these false prophets. And at this time also, there will be many wars among the different peoples of the earth. There will be four horrible calamities: unrest and rumors of wars, famines, diseases and earthquakes. But these things are just the beginning. For there will be even more sorrows that will come before the end of time.

For people will betray each other; they will kill each other; and they will hate each other because of their belief in Jesus. There will be many false prophets that go around deceiving people. Lawlessness will grow, and the love that people once had for each other will grow cold. But through all these things, the Good News of Christ will continue to be shared until all the nations have heard of Christ, and then the end will come.

There will be great tribulation, or trouble, all over the world. And if God let man just continue as he would like, we would very soon self-destruct completely, but for the sake of the followers of Christ, God will shorten the days of trouble and suffering on the earth.

So do not believe the false prophets and the false Christs who will go from place to place performing many impressive signs and wonders. These people are only trying to deceive people; even possibly those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ.

But then, one day, as lightening comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. After the tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall out of the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. THEN the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and THEN all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together all the people who have given their lives to Jesus Christ. And these shall gather from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other.

But exactly when this will occur, no one knows. The angels in heaven do not even know when Jesus will come back to earth. No one knows when Jesus Christ will return to earth except the Father.

“Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Oral Questions

1. In what country was Jesus born?
2. What were the names of Jesus' earthly parents?
3. What was miraculous about Jesus' first coming to earth?
4. The prophet Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be born of a virgin and be called Immanuel, which means “_____.”
5. When Jesus was with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, what was the question they asked Him?
6. Jesus told them to be careful so that they are not deceived by what kind of people?
7. He said many people would come claiming to be who?
8. Jesus mentioned four kinds of horrible things that will occur all over the world before he comes. What are these things? W_____, F_____, D_____, and E_____.

9. Jesus said that His followers would suffer because they believe in Christ. What are some of the things Jesus said people would do to each other?
10. Jesus said the false prophets would have powers to do what kinds of things that even followers of Jesus might be fooled?
11. Jesus said His coming would be like what event in nature?
12. What is going to happen to the sun, the moon, and the stars when Jesus comes again?
13. What instrument are the angels going to play as they gather up the followers of Christ?
14. Where will God's people unite?
15. Who is the only one who knows when Jesus Christ will come again?
16. How should I react, if someone does miracles that are not in Jesus' name or claims to be the Christ?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 1 **Matthew 1, 24**

1. Just as Jesus came the first time in fulfillment of the prophecies, He will come again with power and great glory. There are many false religions, many false prophets, and many people who claim to be God. When Jesus comes again there will be no doubt as to who He is. The Bible says that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. Anyone who comes to us and claims to be a new prophet, a new Christ or a god is a false prophet and a phony.
2. He will gather up all His people from one end of heaven to the other.
 - ❖ Jesus promised to come, and He did. He promises to come again, and He will. He promises to gather up ALL of His followers, and He will.
 - ❖ When we ask Jesus to come into our lives, when we give our hearts to Him, He promises that He will never leave us or forsake us. This means that, no matter if we sin (and we all will) God is faithful to keep His promise to us. It doesn't matter what happens to us, or what we do, if we have given our lives to Jesus, He will take us with Him to heaven, and at the time of His return we will meet Him in the clouds.
3. God's people will suffer for following Him.

The Bible teaches that as the world comes to an end, people will become more and more wicked. They will hate more, kill more, and betray each other more. The Bible says that many people will hate those who follow Jesus and mistreat them. It might be that you have already experienced people treating you differently because you made a decision to follow Jesus. How have people's attitudes toward you changed since you asked Jesus to come into your heart? Have some people, maybe even close friends and family, betrayed your friendship because of your decision to follow Christ?

The Bible teaches that we must love these people (Matthew 5:43-48). We must love the very ones who hate us and hurt us. We must love them and pray for them. This is how Jesus treated those who hurt and betrayed Him, and to be a follower of Christ is to follow His example of love. The Bible also teaches that there is a special blessing reserved for those who suffer or who are persecuted for following Christ. In fact, the Bible tells us to count it all joy because it will one day be worth the price we paid.

- Let us end this meeting in prayer. Let's each one share our experience of what has happened to you since accepting Christ. Hopefully it is a beautiful story, but it may not be. Has anyone suffered from accepting Christ? Let us remember to pray for this person as a group.
- But before we pray, let each person who brought a notebook, or those who have a blank sheet of paper and pen, take it out. If you have a notebook, write the names of each member of the group on the top of a separate sheet of paper. Under each name, we will list the prayer requests of each person. Let us remember the prayer

requests of each person. Let us also make a list of people we know who need to accept Christ. Share these lists with each other so that we may join our friends in the battle for our friends and loved ones.

- As we go out this week, let's agree to pray for each other every day. Put this notebook or piece of paper, in your bedroom, and before you go to bed or when you get up take it out and remember to pray for one another.
- Let us close this meeting thanking God for being faithful to keep His promise. Let's thank Him for coming to earth the first time to save us from our sins, and for the promise of His Second Coming. Let's ask him to help us to be faithful to pray for each other every day this coming week.

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
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"Jesus' Flight to Egypt and His Baptism"-Lesson 2 Matthew 2-3

"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3: 16-17

Review

1. The name of Jesus' mother was _____.
2. The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which translates meaning "God _____."
3. On the Mount of Olives when the disciples asked Jesus about His return to earth, Jesus said they must be careful so that they would not be deceived by _____.
4. Jesus said many would come claiming to be _____.
5. Jesus said that horrible things would happen all over the world such as W_____, F_____, D_____ and E_____.
6. Jesus said that followers of Christ would suffer also, why?
7. Jesus said His coming would be like what event in nature?
8. Where will the angels unite the people of God?
9. Who is the only one who knows when Jesus Christ will come again?
10. How should I react if someone does miracles that are not in Jesus' name or claim to be the Christ?
11. I should count myself _____ when someone makes fun of me because of Christ.
12. I should treat those who mistreat me because of Christ with _____.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem and lived there until the time when He was visited by certain wise men from the East. These men came to Israel following a bright star. Entering into the Jewish province of Judea, they had gone first to the capital city, Jerusalem. There they went to King Herod, and asked him where the new King of Israel had been born for they had seen His star.

Herod and all Jerusalem with him were disturbed when they heard these things, so Herod called a secret meeting of all his religious advisers. He asked these scholars where the Scriptures had said the promised King of the Jews would be born. They told him that the prophecies stated that the Child was to be born in Bethlehem.

Herod told the wise men where to go. But before they left his palace, he asked them when exactly they had first seen the star. He did this so he could figure out the age of the child.

The wise men continued their journey to Bethlehem, and the star guided them to the very house where Jesus was living. The wise men entered that place and worshiped Him. They also presented him with very precious gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Before they left to go back to their homeland, these men had a dream from God. In this dream, they were told not to return home by way of Jerusalem, as Herod had asked. They went home another way.

Joseph also had another dream from the Lord. This dream warned Him to leave immediately with Mary and the Child. They were to go to Egypt and stay there until he heard another word from the Lord. He was told that Herod was going to try to kill the child. This would be in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy; "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Herod did indeed set out to kill the promised Child. He put to death all the male children ages two and under who were in Bethlehem or in its surrounding areas.

After the death of Herod, Joseph had another dream advising Him to return to Israel. Joseph obeyed God. He went to a province north of Judea called Galilee, and they settled in the town of Nazareth.

Now in those days, there was a man named John the Baptist who came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. He preached the message, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." John himself was clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. His food was grasshoppers and wild honey.

Jerusalem, all Judea, and the entire region around the Jordan River went out to him and were baptized in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But also many of the religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, would come out to hear him speak. These men John called, a "Brood of Vipers," because they trusted in their religious heritage and traditions to save them, not believing they must repent of their sins.

As John the Baptist preached, he spoke of One who was coming who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. He said that this One was going to divide the people, gathering to Himself those who put their faith in Him and allowing the rest to burn with unquenchable fire.

So Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent it, for he felt that he was unworthy. But Jesus insisted on being baptized because He wanted all righteousness to be fulfilled.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and everyone could see that the sky was opening up to Him. The Holy Spirit then descended on Him like a dove and a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Oral Questions

1. What kind of men came to visit Jesus and what did they give him?
2. In what city did these men first stop, and with whom did they speak?
3. Why did God warn Joseph to flee to Egypt?
4. Where did Joseph go after Herod's death?
5. Where did John the Baptist preach?
6. What did he look like?
7. What was his message for the people?
8. What happened to the people who confessed their sins?
9. Why did John the Baptist call the Pharisees and Sadducees a "Brood of Vipers?"
10. John preached of One coming who was greater than He. He said this One would divide the people of the world. How so?
11. Who came from Galilee to be baptized by John?
12. Jesus insisted that John baptize him even though he felt unworthy. What was the reason that Jesus gave?
- 13.**What happened when Jesus came up from the water?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 2

Matthew 2-3

1. We can only experience God's best for our lives when we obey Him completely. God told Joseph to do many things that he would otherwise not have done. He obeyed God and married Mary even though she was pregnant. He trusted God, although her pregnancy was something impossible for him to understand. Then again after they were living in Bethlehem, God told them to move to Egypt. Egypt was a foreign country where they spoke a foreign language and lived completely differently even worshipping false gods. This move was not an easy one for a man with a wife and a small child. However, he chose to obey. And as a result, Jesus' life was spared.

Just as God had a special plan for Joseph's life, God has an individualized special plan for each one of us. The Bible says that even from the time when we were in our mother's womb, He has known us and created a special plan for us. If we want to experience God's best for our lives and the lives of our children, we must obey very carefully His instructions for us. The Bible says God desires to speak to each one of us in our hearts as we pray and read His Word. He wants to lead us to a full and abundant life with Him. Many times God speaks directly to us as we pray and read His Word. He deals with us about specific situations, specific attitudes, and specific decisions we should make. We need to make a choice before we even have a choice that when the time comes, we will make, as Joseph did, the decision to obey God even if the situation is difficult.

*Is God speaking to you about something specific in your life? Is He asking you to change something in your life that is difficult for you to change? If so and if you feel comfortable, share this with the group. Each person should then write this need under your name in his or her prayer notebook - to be remembered and prayed for every day during the next week. God desires and will give you the strength to obey His plans for your life.

2. Before Jesus went back to heaven, after His resurrection, He gave all of us, His followers, a command. Let us review the final words of Jesus before He returned to heaven: "Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Later in this study, we will learn how to go and tell others about Jesus. But there is one command we all must do ourselves in obedience to His Words. We must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

- ❖ Baptism is a simple act of obedience to this example left by Christ. It is getting in water with a godly person and allowing yourself to go under the water briefly then coming up again.
- ❖ Jesus was not baptized as a baby. In the gospel of Luke, we learn that Jesus was taken to the temple as a baby. There the priest blessed Him and His parents. But this was not a baptism.

- ❖ His baptism was a choice that He made for Himself. It was not something His parents did for Him. In the example of Christ, we all should go, ourselves, and seek to be baptized by a godly person.
- ❖ This is not a religious ritual that identifies you with a specific sect or denomination. This is not a spiritual experience that cleans the soul of sin. This is a symbol, a public demonstration of our commitment to follow Christ. The Bible teaches that baptism is a picture of the burial and resurrection of Christ. When we get baptized we identify ourselves with the burial and resurrection of Jesus.

*What do you think of Baptism? Do you think it is a difficult thing to be baptized in the example of Christ? Do you need to be baptized? Would you like to be baptized?

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“The Temptation of Christ”-Lesson 3 Matthew 4

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4

Review

1. The prophet Isaiah said Jesus would be called Immanuel, which translates meaning, “God _____.”
2. Jesus said that when He finally does return to earth it will be like a bolt of _____.
3. Jesus said that when He returns to earth, no one will be confused as to who is the real Christ for everyone will see Him coming on the _____ with power and great glory.
4. Jesus said that before he arrives, many will do spectacular tricks pretending to be Christ. We must be careful as to not be _____ by these false prophets.
5. Jesus said we should consider ourselves _____ when people hurt us because of Jesus Christ because we will not lose our reward. He said we should treat these people with _____.
6. Jesus said the only one who knows when He will return to earth is the _____.
7. A man in the wilderness named _____ the _____ preached a message of repentance, wore camels’ skins and ate grasshoppers.
8. Many came to be baptized by John and confessed their _____.
9. John said that one was coming who would divide the people of the earth, and that those who rejected Him would be condemned to an unquenchable _____.
10. Jesus came and asked John to _____ Him.
11. At Jesus baptism, the _____ came down like a dove and _____ spoke from heaven.
12. In the final words of Jesus before going back to heaven, He told His disciples to _____ everyone who accepted Christ as Lord.
13. We must be _____ not because it _____ us of our sins, but because it is a symbol that identifies us with _____.
14. Baptism symbolizes the _____, _____, and _____ of Jesus.

After His baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness where He was to be tempted by the devil. Jesus stayed there forty days and forty nights fasting. After these forty days, He was hungry. It was at this time that the devil came to Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” Jesus answered Him using a passage found in the Old Testament saying, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

Next the devil took Him up into Jerusalem, the capital city, to the highest point of the temple. There he said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: He shall give His angels charge over you," and "In their hands they shall bear you up. Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him again using words from the Bible saying, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Again, the devil took Him, this time up on an extremely high mountain. From this point, the two of them could look out over all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Satan told Jesus, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Jesus responded by saying, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you will serve.'" The devil obeyed Jesus' command and left. Then angels came and ministered to Jesus.

Oral Questions

1. Where did the Holy Spirit take Jesus to be tempted?
2. What did Jesus do for forty days before Satan came to tempt Him?
3. In the first two temptations, Satan challenged Jesus to prove that He is who?
4. In the first temptation, into what did Satan try to get Jesus to turn the stones?
5. How did Jesus overcome the devil in the first temptation?
6. In the second temptation, what did Satan try to get Jesus to do when he took Him to the top of the temple in Jerusalem?
7. How did Jesus overcome Satan in the second temptation?
8. In the third temptation, Satan promised to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would only do one thing. What did Satan want Jesus to do?
9. How did Jesus overcome Satan in the third temptation?
10. Who came to minister to Jesus after Jesus sent the devil away?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 3

Matthew 4

1. We will experience temptation, even after giving our lives to Christ. Unlike Christ, we do not have to go out to a wilderness to be tempted. The Bible teaches us that we are tempted not only by the devil, but also by our own desires (James 1:14). The Bible teaches us that there is a constant struggle in each of our hearts between our desire to do good and our desire to do evil. “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.... For the good I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.” Romans 7:15 & 19
2. You will experience temptation because you now have two natures in you. One is the spirit of the flesh and the other is the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) in you. Gal 5:16-17 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” There will be a daily struggle between your will verses God’s will in both the big and small things of life.
3. We can overcome temptation the same way Jesus did, through the power of the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” *Read this verse more than one time. Ask members to tell you what they think this verse means.*

God’s Word is not just a book of advice. It is living Words that God uses to speak to each one of our hearts in an individual way. It penetrates deep into the parts of our soul that only God knows about.

The single most important thing that every follower of Christ MUST do is spend time EVERY DAY alone with the Father. Satan will do everything he can to keep you away from the Word of God because he knows that the Word of God is our source of strength. He will tell us we’re too busy; we already do Bible study; we’re too sleepy, the Bible is too hard to understand, and a million other excuses. But we must recognize these thoughts for what they are: LIES. We must make it a priority to spend time EVERY DAY in prayer and in the Word of God.

Here is an easy plan to follow:

1. Start out your time alone with the Father telling Him how much you love Him and praise Him for all the wonderful things that He is.
2. Thank Him for things He has done in your life, or answers to prayer that you have received.

*It is a good idea to make a page or section in your prayer notebook called “Thank you” and record those things that God does in your life; always include the date. This way you can keep a record of how God is working in your life.

3. Pray for others: the people in your Bible study, your family, your friends, especially those who don’t know Christ yet, and special needs. If you have a lot of people to pray for, you may need to make a page or section for each day of the week and divide out your family and friends praying for them once a week.

For example:

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>
Aunt Pam	Grandmother
Uncle David	Mamaw
Rachel	Papaw
John David	Pastor Marcelo

*It may be helpful to stop and do this now together. So that everyone can begin his or her time of prayer without having to do this later.

4. Read and meditate on God’s Word. The Bible teaches us that we should not just read the Bible like we read everything else, but we should MEDITATE on it.

This means we should:

- ◆ Read it slowly.
- ◆ Reread it several times thinking deeply on the meaning of the words. It may take several readings before we can concentrate on the truth God is trying to get across.
- ◆ Put your own name into the truth of the Word as it applies. For example, if the verse says “Honor your father and your mother” personalizing it means, “Christy, you must honor your father and your mother.”
- ◆ Pray this verse back to God and thank God for His blessings and ask Him for special needs. For example, “Thank you God for my father and my mother. God, I thank you that You are my heavenly father who meets my every need, and who is there when my earthly father is not.”

The Bible has many spiritual truths that God wants to communicate to us about our life right now. Here is an example of how to meditate on God’s Word.

**Let’s begin with the chapter after the one we discussed today, Matthew 5. Let’s stop and let every person have time to read the first three or four verses. If someone is unable to read, the leader should read these verses to this person several times without any explanation.*

*Now let’s each one try to understand the meaning of the verses, and if we can let’s put our names into the verses. Do not be afraid to allow God’s Spirit to speak to you. Here’s an example, but certainly not the only way this verse can be applied to a person’s life. These are words that the Lord spoke to me as I read these verses.

Verse 3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(Example of author’s “spiritual truth”) Vs. 3 I am blessed if I am poor in spirit, for I will inherit the Kingdom of God. Lord; help me to be poor in spirit. I do not want to be haughty, prideful and full of my own spirit. Thank you Lord, for the work that you are doing in my life. Thank you, Lord, for I know that I will inherit the Kingdom of God. I truly am a blessed person.

Verse 4: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

(Example of author’s “spiritual truth”) Vs. 4 “It is difficult for me to imagine being blessed in mourning, for mourning is such a sad time. But as a follower of Christ, I am thankful because I know that I truly am blessed. For there is hope for us who have faith in Christ. God gives us hope and this truly is a comfort. Lord, thank you for being a comfort to me when I experienced mourning in my own life with the death of my mother. Thank you for the Godly people you put in my life who were physical comforts to me in my time of sorrow. Thank you for the Comfort I received from your Holy Spirit in my soul. Yes, Lord, I can see that as a believer I am blessed when I mourn. I love You, Lord for You care for me.

There is no special formula, no special words, or any special method. It is important only to meditate on the Words of God. Allow them to soak deep within your soul. When they penetrate into your life, God will speak there to your deepest parts.

By doing this on a continual basis, we become more like Christ in every way. Not only are we able to resist temptation, but we show more love and act more Godly in every area of our lives. Knowing God in a personal way is the KEY to a victorious Christian life.

*I recommend that you divide the last section in your prayer notebook. This one is the section for meditation. Write the date in every day you open your Bible, and record at least one truth that God is speaking to you about. Sometimes it is easier to meditate on the Word if you are writing down your thoughts, or it may be good just to go back later and read the precious things the Lord is speaking to you in your heart. This is a very private and precious moment between you and your Master.

*I challenge you to make a commitment to yourself and your group that for one week, you will be faithful to spend at least fifteen minutes with the Father every single day. If possible, write down one thing per day that the Lord has spoken to you about. If you are unable to read, see if you can find someone to read to you maybe just one verse per day this next week, and see what happens when God’s Words are allowed to penetrate your heart every day.

*Let us all continue to read this chapter that we began. There is no hurry to finish a chapter in a day. When you do finish the chapter just continue to the next chapter and then the next. Next week, let us all come back and share any experiences you may have had while meditating on God’s Word.

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By
Christy A. Brawner

“Casting Fear out of Fishers of Men”-Lesson 4 **Matthew 4-8**

“But He said to them, ‘Why are you fearful, O you of little faith.’ Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.” Matthew 8:26

**As a leader, remember to ask the group members if they were able to read their Bibles and pray everyday. Give each person an opportunity to share experiences. Encourage their efforts.*

**Also because of the nature of this week’s study, it is important to have the group to have their time of prayer requests and intercession at the beginning of the study instead of the end.*

Review

1. The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which translates meaning, “God _____.”
2. On the Mount of Olives when Jesus was teaching His disciples about His Second Coming, He told them to be careful so that they would not be _____ by false prophets or people claiming to be Christ even if they were able to perform spectacular tricks.
3. Jesus said that when He finally does return to earth everyone will see Him coming in the _____ with great power and glory.
4. Jesus said the only one who knows when He will return to earth is the _____.
5. John the Baptist baptized many in the wilderness that repented of their _____.
6. Before Christ ascended to heaven, He commanded that all of His disciples be _____.
7. John said that One was coming who would divide the people of the earth, and that those who rejected Him would be condemned to an unquenchable _____.
8. In Jesus’ first two temptations, Satan tried to get Him to perform tricks that would prove that He is _____.
9. In the third temptation, Satan asked Jesus to bow down and _____ him.
10. Jesus answered the devil three times using the _____ of _____.
11. If we want to know God better, it is necessary that we spend _____ with Him every day.
12. What are the two natures in you that are in conflict with each other? The spirit of the _____ and the Spirit of _____.
13. If we want to overcome temptation, it is necessary that we spend time ALONE with _____ everyday.

14. If we want to be more like Christ, it is necessary that we spend time ALONE with Him _____.

Jesus began His public ministry after He returned from the wilderness. He settled in the area around the Sea of Galilee, and based Himself out of the city of Capernaum. He preached in this area the same message that was preached by John the Baptist, “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

The first two disciples called by Jesus were Simon Peter and Andrew. These two brothers were out together throwing their nets into the Sea of Galilee trying to catch some fish. Jesus called to them and said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

From there He went on until He came to a man and his two sons who were sitting in their fishing boat mending their fishing nets. He called the two sons to follow Him. Their names were James and John, and their father’s name was Zebedee.

So Jesus went around this whole area teaching in the Jewish synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. His fame grew to such an extent that even people from the neighboring country of Syria would come to be healed by Him.

So when Jesus saw that all these people were following Him, He took His disciples and went up a certain mountain. There He sat down and taught His disciples many things about the kingdom of God.

The people listened to Jesus’ teachings and were astonished at the authority that He possessed. No one had ever heard anyone like this in his own synagogue.

When Jesus came down from the mountain the crowds were already waiting to follow Him wherever He went. One particular leper was among them and asked Jesus if He would be willing to clean him of his disease. Immediately the man was healed. Another man, a Roman soldier, asked Jesus if He would heal his paralytic servant who was lying at home. Jesus healed the servant.

Jesus went to Simon Peter’s house because Peter’s mother-in-law had caught a fever and had become very ill. Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. She then got up and served everyone in the house.

So Jesus stayed there through the evening healing all the people and casting out many demons. But when He saw the masses swarming Him at that place, He commanded His disciples to depart with Him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

It was already late at night when they all got in the boat and set sail for the other side of the sea. Then suddenly, while they were in the middle of the sea, a storm came and covered the boat with waves. The disciples, many being fishermen, recognized the danger they were in and were very afraid. Jesus, however, had fallen asleep and did not wake up.

The disciples, horrified, woke Jesus saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” Jesus answered them, “Why are you fearful, oh you of little faith?” Then He got up and spoke to the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. The disciples marveled saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him.”

Oral Questions

1. What was the message that Jesus preached to the people?
2. What were the names of two of Jesus' first disciples?
3. What was the profession of these first disciples?
4. Why did people want so desperately to see Jesus?
5. Why were the followers of Jesus impressed by how He taught them on the mountain?
6. After Jesus came down from the mountain, He healed a man with a serious health problem. What was this man's problem?
7. He then healed the servant of the Roman soldier. What was wrong with the servant?
8. Jesus cured one of Peter's relatives. Which relative was she?
9. Why did Jesus want to cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee?
10. What did Jesus do on the boat?
11. Why were Jesus' disciples afraid?
12. Why did Jesus rebuke them?
13. What was the disciples' reaction to Jesus' ability to calm the storm?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 4 **Matthew 4-8**

1. Jesus calls ALL of us to be “fishers of men.” The freedom we have in Christ is something Jesus commands us to share with people in every country, city and neighborhood of the world. These were His final words to His followers before He returned to heaven. On the last week of this study we are going to learn how to share our faith in Jesus clearly. However, many of us are afraid to even begin to share Christ with others. We think things like, “who am I, with all my limitations, how can I ever convince someone to follow Christ? And even if I ever could, I live in just one very small corner of the world, how can Christ expect us to make a difference in other parts of the world?”

The Bible teaches us that even if we were the most dramatic and polished speaker that has ever lived, we still never would be able to convince a person to follow Christ. When we gave our hearts to Christ, it was not a person who touched us, but the presence of the Holy Spirit of God who moved us to repentance. John 16:8 says, “When He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

Our role as fishers of men is to hold out the net of our lives and bring in all the fish that the Holy Spirit brings our way.

One of the very first steps to sharing our faith in Christ with others is by being able to share what Christ has done in our lives. This kind of presentation is called a “testimony.” The word “testimony” is a word used in courts of law. Witnesses testify as to the things that they know to be the truth, things they have witnessed firsthand. People can argue that you are crazy, an unreliable witness, but they can never deny what you have experienced firsthand. Here is an exercise for us to stop and do together.

- Let each person think back to how his/her life was before they knew Christ.
- Then think how Christ was first introduced to you.
- Think about the moment the Holy Spirit moved in your heart, and you knew that Jesus was God and you needed Him in your life.
- Think about your decision to give your life to Christ
- Finally, think about the difference Christ has made in your life.
- After having time to process this in your mind, let’s go around the circle and let each person share this testimony with the group. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT TAKES NO MORE THAN 3 MINUTES.**

*Also it is time, as a group to begin supporting each person by praying during our individual quiet times for those people that God has shown us need to accept Him, perhaps there are people from work or school. There may be close family members that have not yet accepted Christ’s love. Pray together for these people. Let each person write down in his/her prayer notebook the names mentioned by each other in the group. This is a group effort to bring everyone to Christ.

*But let us also not forgot the people living in places far away from us. It is our responsibility to pray for these people as well.

*Idea for leader- Perhaps you or your pastor knows of a missionary that lives in another country or another part of this country. Why not, as a group, begin to pray for that person, their family and the people they minister with. Do this as a group weekly during the intercession period of the Bible study. Have someone in the group write the missionary asking about special needs and prayer requests. Pray about, and look for ways your group can help share the Good News of Jesus to people in far away places all over the world. Stop and discuss this now before moving on to the second spiritual truth.

2. Jesus rebuked the disciples, not because they woke Him up to calm the storm, but because they were full of fear. The disciples looked around at the storm. They were familiar with storms and knew that this one was a bad one. What they were not yet familiar with was the power of God in their lives. They did not yet realize that God is bigger than any storm in their lives, and He was sitting in the boat with them.

I have a one and a half-year-old daughter who is beginning to explore the world around her. She runs around the house, opens up drawers, pulls out pots and pans and everything else she can get her little hands into. One day, we were at a friend's house eating supper, and she was playing on the floor in their dining area while we were eating until their big black dog came strolling into the room where we were eating. My daughter immediately ran as fast as her little legs could carry her over to me yelling, "Mama!" I picked her up, and her muscles immediately relaxed in my arms. Why? Because she knew that I love her, and she trusted me to take care of her. It was but a few short minutes until she was completely at ease and was even reaching out her hand to pet the dog.

We are God's children from the moment we give Him the control of our lives. He is our protector. He is our safety and the safety for our children. He loves us, and in our fear we should immediately run to Him. In His arms He casts out fear. There is no fear when we live our lives every day under the wings of obedience to Jesus Christ.

There was a man in the Old Testament named David. He went through many difficult and scary circumstances because a man named King Saul tried to kill him. As David learned many truths about God and grew closer to Him, he wrote many poems called "Psalms". These are poems inspired by God to teach about God. There are 150 of these, not all by David, but they are found in the Old Testament. He wrote several Psalms about fear, but I have chosen one for us to read and meditate on this week- Psalm 27. Read it during your prayer time this week. If you do not have the Old Testament, I have copied for you this Psalm and included it in this material. Ask God to teach you to lay all of your fears down and climb up into His arms of love and safety.

*Close this week in prayer, but this time let each one find a partner preferably of the same gender. Talk to each other about things in your lives that you greatly fear. Then pray for each other about fears, cite them specifically before the Lord. Ask God to take away the fear and replace it with faith in Him. Tell God of your desire to put all of your trust in Him, even about those things that are terrifying.

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell.
Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me, In this I will be confident.

One thing I have desired of the Lord, That I will seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.
To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.
For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.
Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice!
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
When You said, "Seek My Face,"
My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."
Do not hide Your face from me;
Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help;
Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.
When my father and my mother forsake me,
Then the LORD will take care of me.

Teach me Your way, O LORD,
And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.
Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;
For false witnesses have risen against me,
And such as breath out violence.
I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the good of the LORD
In the land of the living.
Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage;
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
Christy A. Brawner

“Love-The Meaning of Christ’s Earthly Ministry”-Lesson 5 **Matthew 8-10**

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” Matthew 9:36

**Before starting this lesson, please check to see how many people have been having their time alone with Christ. It is important not to be critical, but in love, encourage one another to stay in God’s Word every day. Invite them to continue reading the book of Matthew until the very end. Ask if people have been praying for the people who were mentioned that need Christ. See if anyone had an opportunity to share their testimony during the week.*

Review

1. The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means “God _____.”
2. Jesus said that when He finally returns to earth, everyone will see Him coming in the _____ with great power and glory.
3. Jesus said that no one knows when He will return to earth except the _____.
4. John baptized many in the wilderness who repented of their _____.
5. John said One was coming who would divide the people of the earth, and that those who rejected Him would be condemned to an unquenchable _____.
6. Jesus answered the devil three times using the _____ of God.
7. If we want to grow closer to God we must spend time alone with Him _____.
8. Jesus called all of us to be “_____ of men.”
9. What was Jesus doing on the boat during the storm?
10. Why were the disciples afraid?
11. Jesus rebuked His disciples because they were _____ and did not trust Him.
12. The Bible teaches us that when we live under the wings of Christ’s protection we do not need to have _____.

After crossing the sea of Galilee during the fearful storm, Jesus and His disciples arrived on the other side of the sea and there in that place they met two men who were demon-possessed. These men were fierce and had been in the tombs. Suddenly one of them cried out to Jesus, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

Some distance away from where the place where the demon-possessed men were, a group of herdsmen was watching their pigs feed near the shore. The demons begged Jesus that if He were going to expel them from the bodies of the men, to send them to the bodies of the pigs. Jesus agreed saying, "Go!" When the demons entered into the pigs, the pigs sprang violently out of control plunging recklessly down the steep terrain into the sea to their deaths.

The herdsmen ran into the city telling everyone what had happened to the men as well as what had happened to their pigs. The townspeople came out and begged Jesus to leave the region. Jesus climbed into His boat, and returned to Galilee.

Having returned to Galilee, a paralytic was brought to Jesus. Jesus cured the man of his paralysis and also forgave him of his sins. The onlookers marveled and glorified God, but the Pharisees considered Him to be a blasphemer.

Moving on from there, Jesus came across a tax collector named Matthew. He called Matthew to follow Him, and immediately He did. Jesus went to eat with him as well as other tax collectors and people of terrible reputations in the city. When the Pharisees saw with whom Jesus was eating, they questioned Jesus' disciples as to why Jesus would do this. Jesus answered them saying "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."

Now Jesus went from there and reached out to all people from all walks of life. There was another man who was a ruler among his people. This man had a daughter that had died. Jesus went to the mourning ceremony, took the girl by the hand and raised her from the dead.

He restored sight to two blind men who followed Him and begged to be healed. He restored speech to a man who not only was mute but was also demon-possessed. He cast out the demons and the man was healed.

Jesus saw the many needs of the people and was moved with compassion. The needs were so great; the people were like sheep having no shepherd. He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

He then took His disciples and sent them all over the country of Israel. He gave them power to meet many needs of the people; their purpose was to share and show His love. He gave them specific instructions to seek out people who were willing to listen to the Good News of Christ. He told them that when they found such people, they would leave the peace of God on the home of that person. But He warned them that many would reject them and their words.

He said to them, "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." He told them not to worry about the physical needs. For the Father who knows even the number of hairs on our head is in control of all things and values us greatly.

He concluded His remarks before sending them out saying, "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Oral Questions

1. Who did Jesus meet after He and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee after the fearful boat ride?
2. What was wrong with these two men?
3. What did Jesus do for them?
4. Why did the pigs throw themselves into the Sea?
5. Why did the townspeople ask Jesus to leave their region?
6. What did Jesus do for the paralytic?
7. Why did the Pharisees call Jesus a blasphemer?
8. What was the name of the tax collector Jesus met and called to follow Him?
9. Why were the Pharisees critical of Jesus and His dinner companions at this particular place?
10. What was Jesus' response to these people?
11. What did Jesus do for the ruler's daughter?
12. What did Jesus do for the blind men?
13. How did Jesus heal the man who could not speak? What was wrong with him?
14. What did Jesus send out His disciples to do?
15. Jesus told His disciples to be as wise as _____ and harmless as _____.
16. He told them not to worry about what kind of things?
17. He said that God knows even the number of _____ that we have?
18. He told them that if people would do as little as give a cup of water to a particular group of people that they would not lose their reward? What group of people was he talking about?

Spiritual Truths-Lesson 5 **Matthew 8-10**

1. Jesus cares for each person. He cares for the demon-possessed, the sick, the poor, the wealthy and especially the children. Everyone is worthy and of value in the kingdom of God!!!

2. Men do not always care for other people. In the encounter with the demon-possessed men, the townspeople were so upset about the pigs that they wanted Jesus out of their region. They didn't care about all the ways Jesus had helped the men. They were concerned about the financial losses they had suffered. It is a very easy thing to value money over people. Unfortunately, most of us fall into this trap. I Timothy 6:10 says, "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." You also may remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:19-21 where He says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Money is powerful. It can control us, or we can give it to the Lord and He can control us.
 - Think, how do I spend my money every week? It may be good to write it down.
 - Ask the question, do I honor Jesus with how I spend my money?
 - Am I buying things or doing things that bring dishonor to God? Am I hurting others with how I spend money? Am I helping others with how I spend my money?

In the Old Testament, God required of every person to give 10% of what they had to God. In the New Testament, we are told to give our lives and everything we have to God. But traditionally, we have followed the Old Testament law and given 10% of our financial earnings to the work of God, or the church. This is called a tithe. Begin praying now, how much of your money does the Lord want you to give to His work? The Bible teaches that God does bless those who contribute to the growth of His kingdom. The Bible also teaches that Jesus will provide for all of our needs. You may be thinking, "But God does not understand how poor I am?" "God doesn't understand how big of a debt I have made for myself?" Jesus was also born in a very poor earthly family. Jesus understands the problems of poverty, but He asks for all of us to be faithful in obedience to whatever He asks of us to do. Ask the Lord, how He wants you to be a part of financially supporting His ministry.

3. To be a follower of Christ means to follow His example and love others like He did. It is true that we cannot heal people as Jesus did, but Jesus still cures and heals people. We should be faithful to pray for the sick. We should stay by their sides and hold their hands in their moments of pain. We should tell them of Jesus' love for them. We should pray for the demon-possessed. Jesus still expels demons all over the world through the prayers of His people. We should pray for,

and help the needy. We should do what we can to help with their physical needs, but especially tell them about the love of Christ who can transform their lives on the inside. We should especially help the children. Jesus commanded His disciples to do all these things, but He promised a special reward for people who will help children.

4. Some people are not easy to love, but God desires for us to have mercy. Tax collectors in those days were disliked for a very good reason. They worked for a corrupt government collecting money from the people, and most of them charged people more than they owed and pocketed the extra for themselves. Showing love to a person who has stolen something from you is not easy to do, especially if this person is not repentant at all for what he has done. But Jesus tells us that as followers of Him, we have no right to condemn these people even if what they are doing is completely wrong. Our duty is to pray for them, love them, and show them the truth about God's forgiveness. If they repent of their sins they too will receive God's complete forgiveness. The Bible says that we are all sinners deserving of punishment. The Bible says we have received forgiveness and mercy, so we should also show forgiveness and mercy, even if this is an almost impossible thing for us to do without God's power in our lives.
5. The needs of the world are so great; we cannot do this alone. There are millions of people who have never experienced the love of Christ. There are millions of people, who have never experienced love from anyone. There are millions of people, who would, if someone would show them, give their lives to Jesus and experience His love. We must do what we can, but we must also pray that God would bring others to help bring more people to know God's love.
6. You can show your love for God and one another by giving a tithe to the work of God through your local church. God uses the local church to minister to people's problems spiritually, emotionally and physically. God uses your tithe to help the church accomplish its tasks.

Discussion Questions

1. What are ways that I can, in my circumstances and in my world, show God's loves to others?
2. What are the greatest needs of the people around me? How are people hurting most where I live?
3. How can I reach out to the hurting people around me?
4. How can I show God's love especially to children?
5. In what ways do I let money come before people in my life?
6. Do I honor God with my money?
7. How can I show those around me God's mercy in my life?

**This is another good time to discuss supporting a missionary in another part of the world and praying for a people group of another country who has not yet heard of God's love.*

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
Christy A. Brawner

“Betrayal and Forgiveness”-Lesson 6 Matthew 21-27:10

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

Review

1. The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means, “God _____.”
2. Jesus said that no one knows when Jesus will return to earth except the _____.
3. John baptized many in the wilderness that repented of their _____.
4. Jesus answered the devil three times using the _____ of God.
5. If we want to grow closer to God, we must spend time alone with Him _____.
6. Jesus called all of us to be “_____ of men.”
7. Jesus showed love to all people by _____ them of their sicknesses.
8. Jesus was moved with compassion for the people because He saw their many _____.
9. Jesus told His followers to go out to all people, but to be wise as _____ and harmless as _____.
10. Jesus said that He knows even the number of _____ on our heads.
11. He said that if people would give as little as a cup of water to a child they would not lose their _____.
12. Jesus told His disciples in the boat during the storm not to _____.

Jesus taught, preached and healed many people in the province of Galilee, but still many rejected His Words. Jesus explained to His disciples that this was also according to God’s plan for He chose to hide His truths from the wise and prudent and to reveal them to babes.

The time came of which He had forewarned His disciples. It was time for Him to go to Jerusalem, to suffer many things from the chief priests and other religious rulers, to be killed and to be raised from the dead.

His arrival into Jerusalem was a grand affair. People lined the streets on both sides throwing down their clothes and palm branches making a carpet for Him to walk on. And as he passed by them seated on a donkey they yelled, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

Jesus spent several days in Jerusalem teaching at the temple, preaching and healing many people. But He had many confrontations and conflicts with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' very own disciples, approached the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus to them for money. They offered Him thirty pieces of silver. He took it.

On the night of the Passover celebration, the most important Jewish holiday of the year, Jesus sat with His disciples for a final meal together. At this meal, Jesus picked up the bread that they were eating, broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he raised the glass of wine, gave thanks over it and said, "Drink from it all of you. This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins."

After dinner, all the disciples went up on the Mount of Olives. Here Jesus warned them that they would all be made to stumble. Peter stubbornly insisted that He would never betray His Lord. Jesus predicted that he not only would betray Him but would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed that very morning.

From there, Jesus took His disciples to Gethsemane. He spent the rest of the night praying. He was sorrowful even to death because of all that was transpiring. He asked His disciples to pray with Him, but they all fell asleep. They awoke only at the time of Judas' arrival in the garden with the priests and the people who came to take Jesus away.

Judas came to Jesus and kissed Him as a sign of His betrayal. The chief priests grabbed Jesus and took Him to the house of Caiaphas, the chief priest at the times. The disciples fled from Gethsemane.

While Jesus was in the house being tried by Caiaphas and the other leaders, Peter was outside in the courtyard. While he was sitting, a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." Peter denied it. He then moved to the gate and waited there until another girl saw Him and accused Him of being with Jesus. Peter again denied it, this time with an oath. A little later, other people approached Peter and accused him of being with Jesus. This time he began to curse and swear saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately the rooster crowed, and Peter remembered Jesus' words on the Mount of Olives. He went away and wept bitterly.

When the morning came, the chief priests took Jesus to Pilate to be put to death. Judas seeing that Jesus had been condemned to death was remorseful and tried to return the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests. He said to them, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They answered him, "What is that to us? You see to it!" "Judas then threw the money on the floor of the temple, went away from there and hanged himself."

Oral Questions

1. God's plan is to hide the truth from the wise and prudent and reveal it to whom?
2. How was Jesus treated as He entered the city of Jerusalem?
3. Why did Judas approach the chief priests, and why did they give him thirty pieces of silver?
4. During Jesus' last Passover dinner with His disciples, He told them that the wine and bread were special. How so?
5. Jesus told them that His blood must be shed. Why?
6. On the Mt. of Olives, Jesus told His followers that they would be made to stumble. Peter denied this. Jesus then makes a special prediction about Peter, what was it?
7. With what gesture does Judas betray Jesus?
8. Where was Peter while the religious leaders were trying Jesus?
9. Two girls came up to Peter at separate times and accused Him of something. What?
10. A third time several people came and claimed that Peter was with Jesus. How did Peter respond to these people?
11. When did Judas feel guilty for betraying Jesus?
12. Why did he go back to the chief priests?
13. What did Judas do when the chief priests refused to accept back the betrayal money?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 6

Matthew 11-27:10

1. During Jesus' last meal with His disciples, He began a tradition that has been observed by followers of Christ all over the world since that time until today. We call this tradition the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is not a supernatural event that takes away sins or does something special in our bodies. It is not a moment in which ordinary bread and juice magically become Jesus' blood and flesh. It is a time for followers of Christ to come together, eat bread, drink wine and remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. It is a time to remember the price Jesus paid for the sins in our lives. It is a time of joy and thanksgiving as we rejoice together in the forgiveness He bought for us. 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 teaches us that it is a serious occasion; it is not something to do lightly. It is a time to meditate on His sacrifice for us and examine our own lives in light of what He has done for us on the cross.
2. God knows our failures even before we do, and He still accepts us and wants to use us in His kingdom. From the time Jesus first called Peter to be a "fisher of men", He knew that on this very night Peter would betray Him. But as we continue to read our Bibles, we learn in Acts that God used Peter to lead thousands of people to Christ. In fact there are two books in the Bible that were written by Peter. In Acts 2, right after Jesus returns to heaven, we see Peter preaching a sermon in Jerusalem in front of the very people he was so afraid of on the night of the betrayal.

In the same way, our failures are no surprise to God. Even after we accept Christ, we will have failures in our lives. We will sin; we will betray Him; we will do the very things we hate.

3. What then should we do after we fail before God?

There were two men who betrayed Christ that night. One man was Peter, a man who betrayed Christ, but eventually was used greatly by God. The other was Judas who also betrayed God, but then committed suicide. Many people mistakenly believe that the reason Peter became successful and Judas failed was because Judas' betrayal was greater. This is not so. The Bible teaches us that we are ALL sinners. We all betray God and deserve eternal punishment for our betrayal. But if this is not true, what was Judas' tragic mistake?
-Judas did not repent of His sins and seek God's forgiveness.

There are many people who know when they have done something wrong. Many people feel horrible guilt for things they have done in their lives that were wrong. Some people have done things so terrible that they feel that even God could never forgive them for these things. The Bible teaches us that **THIS IS NOT TRUE.**

I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness."

This means that if a person:

- ◆ Comes to God
- ◆ Tells God what he/she has done
- ◆ Repents
- ◆ Asks God to forgive him/her of this sin
- ◆ **THEN GOD IS FAITHFUL TO FORGIVE THIS PERSON OF ANYTHING-NO MATTER HOW HORRIBLE THE SIN IS, JESUS' SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS IS WORTHY ENOUGH TO CLEANSE THIS SIN.**

This also means, that as a follower of Christ, we should never live defeated remembering past sins that have already been forgiven by God. We do not need to live in guilt for things Christ has already forgotten. Peter repented of his sins and was able to be used by God. We also may repent of our sins and be used greatly by God.

Judas truly did have wickedness in his heart. It is a horrible thing to betray a close friend, and to cause this Person to suffer a horrible death when He was completely innocent of all wrongdoing. However, the truth is that God still had a plan for Judas' life. Even Judas was worthy of forgiveness by God. Jesus' sacrifice of His life on the cross was big enough to forgive even Judas. If only he had come to Christ, but instead he allowed the guilt to take control of his life, it became too much and he ended his own life.

4. Jesus told His disciples that our covenant or agreement with God is made possible because of His blood that was shed for the forgiveness of sins. We did nothing to receive God's forgiveness in our lives. Once we have accepted Jesus into our hearts, there is nothing we can do to lose this forgiveness. Ephesians 1:13b-14 says, "in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." John 3:16 says that you have "eternal life". Once Christ enters you He never leaves you. You are saved forever from that point on. The Bible says that we should remember Christ's sacrifice for us and quit sinning. We must do our best to live every day of our lives in complete obedience to Him. But 1 John 2:1 reminds us that if we do sin, we must remember who is living inside of us. We must remember that Jesus is in our lives as our defender before the Father. He is the substitute payment for our sins.

Discussion

1. What do you think of Peter and of Judas?
2. What does the word, "forgiveness" mean to you?
3. Have you ever felt so guilty that you can identify with Judas?
4. Do not say anything out loud, but is it possible that you did something so horrible you find it difficult to accept Christ's forgiveness in your life?
5. What is Jesus words to you in this situation? Have everyone recite or read aloud 1 John 1:9

Each person should bow your head and speak to God all that is in his/her heart. If there is sin there, confess it. Ask God to take away the guilt. Ask God, by His mercy, to keep you away, at all costs, from this sin. Confess openly that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is enough to forgive you of your sin. Claim this truth.

*It may be that later on, Satan may try to attack you with accusing thoughts of guilt. These thoughts are NOT from God. These thoughts are not real guilt but false guilt. If you begin to have these feelings of false guilt about something God has already forgiven, immediately stop and pray. Say,

“Thank you Jesus for Your forgiveness of my sin (say the sin specifically). Lord, thank you that Your sacrifice is worthy to forgive even me. I trust in Your blood, and I ask that You remove these guilty thoughts from my mind.”

God is faithful, and He will do this. If you pray to God every time Satan attacks you, it won't be long before he will quit attacking, and you will be free of these thoughts of guilt forever. We have complete victory over every area of our life in Christ!

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
Christy A. Brawner

"The Crucifixion of Christ"-Lesson 7 Matthew 26-27

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” I Corinthians 1:18

Review

1. The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means, “God _____.”
2. Jesus said that no one knows when He will return to earth except the _____.
3. John baptized many in the wilderness that repented of their _____.
4. Jesus answered the devil three times using the _____ of _____.
5. If we want to grow closer to God and be able to resist temptation, we must spend time _____ with Him _____.
6. Jesus called His followers to be “_____ of _____.”
7. Jesus told His disciples not to _____ because of His presence with them.
8. Jesus spent His time on earth _____ in the synagogues, _____ about the Kingdom of God, and _____ the diseases of the people.
9. Jesus told His followers to go out to all people, but to be _____ as serpents and harmless as _____.
10. Jesus said that He knows even the number of _____ on our _____.
11. On the Mount of Olives Jesus predicted that _____ would betray Him three times before the rooster crowed that morning.
12. _____ was the disciple who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
13. _____ repented of His betrayal and was later used greatly by God.
14. _____ felt very guilty for what He had done and went out and killed himself.
15. The Bible teaches that if we “_____ our sins, He is faithful and just to _____ us our sins and cleans us from _____ unrighteousness.”

While Peter was outside the door to Caiaphas’ house, Jesus was inside being accused by all kinds of false testimony. None of it was credible enough to convict Him. Jesus allowed His accusers to continue to attack Him without even opening His mouth in His own defense. Having been unable to accomplish anything, Caiaphas asked Jesus, “Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

Finally Jesus broke His silence saying, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

This was evidence enough for Caiaphas, and he ripped his clothes pronouncing Jesus a blasphemer. They took Jesus, spat on His face, mocked Him, and beat and slapped Him.

When morning came, the chief priests and leaders bound Him and led Him away to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor over the province of Judea. The governor asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" His answer was simply, "As you say." The chief priests then proceeded to bring forth their list of accusations, but Jesus again did not even respond. The governor marveled at Jesus' ability to remain silent. He did not find Jesus guilty and tried to find a peaceful way to release Him.

As it was Passover, the most important Jewish holiday of the year, it had always been Pilate's custom to release one prisoner at the will of the people. This year, he brought forth two men before the people. One was Barrabas, a hated convict, and Jesus. He asked the people which one they wished for him to release. The people, having been stirred up by the chief priests, hollered out for Barrabas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. Pilate then yelled to the people, "Why, what evil has He done?" Their answer was, "Let Him be crucified!" Pilate saw that he could no longer do anything with these people for they were out of control, so he consented to their demands saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." The people responded by saying, "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate released Barrabas and commanded Jesus to be whipped and then sent Him to his headquarters, called the Praetorian, where He would be further tortured.

At the Praetorian, He was stripped and dressed in a scarlet robe. They gave Him a reed to hold and stuck a crown of thorns into His scalp. The soldiers made fun of Him and spat on Him. They kneeled before Him in mock tribute. Then they took the reed that had been in His hand and struck Him on the head with it.

After the soldiers had finished all they were to do in the Praetorian, they put His clothes back on Him and led Him away to Golgotha, meaning Place of the Skull. This was the place where the crucifixions were to take place. As they were walking from the Praetorian, they forced a man named Simon to carry Jesus' cross for Him.

While Jesus was hanging on the cross, the soldiers divided up His clothes and threw lots to see who would get what. They watched Him die from underneath the cross. The chief priests and other elders also came out to see Him hang, they laughed at Him and made sarcastic comments as to why He wouldn't get down from the cross. Many other people came by the place where He was crucified shaking their heads and making rude comments. Even the two thieves who were hanging next to Him on the cross did not refrain from making hateful remarks.

But from the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the earth. Jesus cried out to God, "Eli, Eli Lama Sabachtani!" Which means "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?!" Hearing this cry, an onlooker ran and got a sponge full of sour wine and tried to give it to Jesus. The rest of the crowd said, "Let Him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." Then Jesus cried out again and gave up His Spirit.

At His death there were many strange things that occurred all over Jerusalem testifying to who He was. The veil in the temple, which separated the Holiest, place from the rest of the temple ripped from top to bottom, the earth quaked and rocks shattered. But also many graves were opened and the bodies of followers of Christ who had already died came out of their graves and walked around the city of Jerusalem.

The evening of Jesus' death, a very rich man named Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked if He could take the body to be buried. Pilate agreed, and Jesus was taken to a brand new tomb that had been carved out a rock. Joseph took Jesus' body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, laid Jesus down in the cave and rolled a large stone over the entrance of the tomb before He departed with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary from that place.

Oral Questions

1. How did the Jewish leaders finally convict Jesus in the trial at Caiaphas' house?
2. How did Jesus respond to all of their accusations against Him?
3. How did Pilate react to Jesus' ability to remain quiet before all of His accusers?
4. Who was Barrabas?
5. How did the Roman soldiers treat Jesus?
6. How did the priests and other onlookers treat Jesus as He hung on the cross?
7. What happened all over the earth between the sixth and the ninth hour?
8. What did Jesus cry out before He yielded His Spirit to God?
9. What strange things happened at Jesus' death?
10. What did Joseph of Arimathea do with Jesus' body?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 7 **Matthew 26-27**

God's ways are not man's ways. Let us read together a passage of Scripture found in I Corinthians 1:18-21,27. Read this passage two or three times, so everyone has time to think about what the Bible is saying.

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.... But God choose the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty.”

As we look at the life of Christ, we can see that God's ways are not man's ways.

- ❖ *When an earthly king is born, he is born in a palace. But God sent Jesus, the King of Kings, to be born in poverty.*
- ❖ *When someone is to announce an important message or the arrival of an important person, this messenger is rich, beautifully dressed and driving around in an important vehicle. God sent John the Baptist wearing camels' hair to announce the arrival of Jesus in the desert where people had to go out of their way to hear His announcement.*
- ❖ *When a human king has an enemy who he can easily overpower, he destroys Him immediately. Jesus deliberately went out in the desert to be tempted by Satan, and He has not yet destroyed Satan.*
- ❖ *When a human king chooses His closest companions, He picks men who have graduated from the finest schools, come from the finest families, and who have lots of money. Jesus chose, among other common professions, fishermen and tax collectors.*
- ❖ *An earthly king forces his people to obey Him and punishes those who defy him. Jesus taught us to love. He allows people to choose to follow Him or reject Him.*
- ❖ *A human king makes others work for him, pay taxes and some even kill those who betray His government. Jesus died on the cross deliberately because He wanted to pay the price for our sins. He wants us to be free to live eternally with Him.*
- ❖ *When an earthly king dies, he is buried and his son takes his place. When Jesus died, He rose again and reigns for eternity.*

Jesus is not a man. He is God. He is to be worshipped, adored and obeyed. He loves us and wants the best for us. His life here on earth is totally incomprehensible. God's

ways are so much greater than are small minds can comprehend that they are illogical to men.

**The Bible teaches us that one of the things that the Lord loves is to hear the praises of His people. Praise simply means to tell Jesus how much you love Him and appreciate all the wonderful things that He is. God loves to hear our hearts love for Him. He loves to hear things like, "I love you Lord because you loved me;" or "I praise you Lord because you are a great and powerful God." These are phrases that tell God who He is to me personally.*

As we think about the life and death of Christ, we can only be amazed to think what God, the Creator of the universe did for us. His love for us is more than we can ever understand. His ways are so much greater and better than anything we could ever even appreciate. This is an appropriate time to stop for a moment and praise God.

The purpose of His crucifixion was to be a sacrifice for our sin. He was punished, judged and condemned for your sins that you have committed and will commit. We should thank and praise Him daily for being our Lord and Savior.

We are going to do something called "sentence prayers." A sentence prayer is where everyone prays a sentence at a time as thoughts come to his/her mind that he/she would like to express to God. Let's all bow our heads and think about God, Jesus, what He did during His ministry on earth, what He did on the cross, on His return, and what He is doing right now in our lives. Then let's take turns putting in words our feelings towards God. For example, "Dear Father, I love you because you saved me." Then another person says another sentence, "Father God, You are a kind father to me." Each person can and should pray as many times as he/she feels led to by the Spirit. This is a time to share publicly that, which is in our hearts. Continue for as long as needed. Then move on to prayer requests and pray for one another.

**Leader, remind members to begin to include a time of praise daily in their time alone with God. Be sure to ask members every week how their quiet times are going. Encourage the ones who are having trouble, and allow people to share things that God has shown them or neat things God has done for them.*

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
Christy A. Brawner

“The Resurrection of Christ”- Lesson 8 Matthew 27

"For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Review

1. The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means, “God _____.”
2. Jesus said that no one knows when He will return to earth except the _____.
3. John baptized many in the wilderness that repented of their _____.
4. Jesus answered the devil three times using the _____ of _____.
5. If we want to grow closer to God and be able to resist temptation we must spend time _____ with Him _____.
6. Jesus called His followers to be “fishers of _____.”
7. Jesus told His disciples on the boat not to _____.
8. Jesus was moved with compassion for the people because of their many _____.
9. Jesus told His followers to go out in His name being wise as _____ and harmless as _____.
10. Peter betrayed Jesus by _____ Him three times in Caiaphas’ courtyard.
11. Judas betrayed Jesus by turning Him into the priests for _____ pieces of silver.
12. Jesus _____ ALL of our sins when we confess them.
13. How did the Roman soldiers treat Jesus?
14. The chief priests came to the foot of the cross to _____ at Jesus as He died.
15. There were many strange occurrences when Jesus died including many dead people who _____ around the city of Jerusalem.
16. Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus’ body to lay it in a _____.

The day after Jesus was crucified, the chief priests and Pharisees met together and again approached Pilate. They told Pilate that Jesus had prophesied that He would be raised from the dead on the third day. They asked if special security measure could be taken to ensure that no one stole the body. Pilate agreed to their request, so the group of them went to the tomb and sealed the rock that was blocking the entrance into the cave. They also left armed guards there to watch that place.

Now the day after the Sabbath, that is the very first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went back to the grave. But when they got there, there was a great earthquake and the stone that had been blocking the entrance into the tomb had been moved. An angel of the Lord that had come down from heaven was

sitting on top of the rock that had been used to seal the grave. The angel's clothes were white like snow, and He looked as if He were lightening. The soldiers who had been guarding the tomb were also there shaking in fear until they became like dead men.

The angel told the ladies not to fear. He said, "for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come; see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

The ladies hearing this were filled with joy and turned to run quickly back to the disciples. On their way, Jesus met them saying, "Rejoice!" So they stopped, held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. Jesus reminded the ladies to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee.

Meanwhile, the guards got up and went back to town to tell the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priest met together and agreed to offer the guards a large sum of money for them to go around and tell people that they had fallen asleep and that people had stolen Jesus' corpse. The priests then promised to protect them if Pilate found out, and they got in trouble. So the soldiers took the money, and many rumors floated around Jerusalem for many years.

The disciples went to Galilee to a specific mountain where Jesus had instructed them to go. He came to them, and they worshipped Him. However some doubted. Then Jesus spoke to them His final instructions before ascending into heaven. He said, "**All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" Amen.

Oral Questions

1. Why did the Pharisees want to put guards at Jesus' grave?
2. What two ladies came to visit the gravesite?
3. What did these ladies see when they arrived there?
4. What did the angel tell them?
5. What happened to the guards?
6. Where did the guards go after the angel appeared?
7. What was the offer made them by the chief priests?
8. Who did the ladies see as they were running back to meet the disciples?
9. Where did Jesus tell His disciples to meet Him?
10. What was the command that Jesus gave His followers on the mountain before He ascended?
11. With whom did Jesus promise to be from now until the end of the age?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 8

Matthew 28

1. The message of Jesus is to be shared to all people. It could be that God has been working in your heart giving you the strength and the desire to share His message with others. There are many ways to tell others about the love of Christ. One good way is to lead a person, or group of people, through the story of His life. You can do this through this material in seven weeks. Since lesson four, we have, as a group been praying for specific people God has laid on your heart. Hopefully you have had a chance to tell these people a little about the change that has occurred in your life. If not, make this week the week you approach them.
 - Do NOT go to this person and tell them how horrible of a person they are and that God is going to send them to unquenchable fire if they don't repent.
 - DO invite them to do a short Bible study with you in **their** home. Tell them that you have been learning about the Bible and were wondering if maybe they would be interested in studying with you about the life of Christ for seven weeks.
 - When you go to their home, take a partner with you. Maybe somebody from your Bible study group, or a person you met at church. Your Bible study leader may want to go with you.
 - When you go, spend time talking to the person about things going on in their lives. Meet their family members; listen to their needs. Pray for them, their job, their family, and ask God to bring His peace on their home.
 - Start with the first story about the birth of Christ. Allow them to ask questions. If you don't know the answer that is okay. Just tell them you will ask your Bible study leader because you don't know, and then bring the answer back the next week.
 - Do NOT stay at their home for over one hour. Remember this is a short Bible study.
 - Everyday that week and every week thereafter, pray for this person and their family. Ask your group members to join you in prayer for them.

REMEMBER: Just as we do not have power to cure anyone or expel any demons, we do not have any power to convince people of their need for Christ. The one who has the power is the Holy Spirit who lives in us. He has power to cure people of diseases; He has power to expel demons from people's lives; and He is the one who breaks the chains of sin in a person's life and brings them to repentance in Christ. Our responsibility is to share and pray.

It may be that you are in a situation where you do not have an opportunity to do a seven- week Bible study with a person, but would like to share with them about Jesus Christ.

What to do:

- Tell them, as best you can remember, the story of Christ. Tell them of His birth, His baptism, His life, His miracles, His love, His message of repentance, His betrayal, His death and His resurrection.
- Tell them that like the people in Jesus' time, we have all done wrong before God, even if we are very good people. This means we have all sinned. Give them examples of some sins: lying, stealing, hate, envy, adultery, etc.
- Tell them that just as God forgave the people in the Bible, He forgave you when you repented of your sins.
- Explain a little about your life before Christ, the moment you chose to follow Christ, and your life since Christ (your testimony).
- Read or recite one of the most important verses in the Bible, John 3:16. It says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
- Ask the person if they also would like to repent of their sins, believe in Christ and accept the forgiveness that He can give them.
- Explain that to believe means to turn your life over to Christ. This is to trust Him and commit your life to Him.
- If they say, "yes" help them to pray a simple prayer giving their lives to God.
- If they say, "no" ask them if they would permit you to pray for them at this moment, then pray to God that He would help them understand His truth for their lives.

***Stop and take time as a group to practice presenting Christ to another person. Divide up in pairs and let each person go through an entire presentation.**

After having practiced, you might think, "This is impossible, I can never tell anyone about Christ." Think about this final truth in this study:

2. "And, lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age." The Bible teaches that the moment we accept Christ, the Holy Spirit of God comes and dwells within our lives. You may have not realized it, but He has already been at work in your life (John 14:7).
 - He is the one who teaches us in our time alone with God everyday (John 14:26)
 - He is the one who makes us feel guilty when we disobey God. He is the One who enabled us to understand for the first time that we were sinners and needed Christ's forgiveness in our lives. (John 16:8-11)
 - He is the one who gives us wisdom and guides us in God's perfect will for our lives. (John 16:13)
 - He comforts us when we are sad. (Acts 9:31)
 - He empowers us with special gifts so we can do things we never even dreamed we could do. He gives us the words to tell others about Christ. (I Corinthians 12)

We may think that we can never become the kind of follower of Christ that we need to be. We may think that obeying God is impossible. The truth is that this is true. We can never do anything to follow Christ, but God can through the Holy Spirit who dwells within our lives.

This is the secret to telling others about Christ; it is the secret to living a life without fear; it is the secret to making right decisions every day. When we allowed the Creator of the Universe to enter into our lives, He gave us the gift of His constant presence. The presence of the Holy Spirit is our source of strength and power. This is the exciting thing because the Bible teaches us that God has awesome plans, incredible ideas, and a beautiful purpose for every one of our lives. Let us finish this study with very special promise found in Jeremiah 29:11-13:

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU CONTINUE TO
SEEK TO KNOW HIM!**

The Presentation of the Gospel

(These six verses explain the essence of the gospel.)

1. The purpose of God for your life

The Bible says in **I John 5:13**, “**I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.**”

Purpose of the verse: To show that God wants to give assurance of eternal life because of His love for man.

Explanation of the verse: Eternal life is two things:

- a) To know Jesus Christ and have His peace in your heart now while you live in this life. (John 17:3)
- b) To live with Jesus Christ in heaven for eternity after you die. (John 14:1-3)

Application of the verse: Do you want to have assurance that you have eternal life?

Observe: in Christian and non-Christian based cultures these terms will need to be clearly defined and this may take lots of time.

2. Your need

The Bible says in **Romans 3:23**, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**”.

Purpose of the verse: To show that all of us are sinners.

Explanation of the verse: What is sin? Sin is disobeying God. For example, all of us have committed sins such as lying, anger, bitterness, greed, lust and pride.

Application of the verse: Do you recognize that you have sinned? What is the consequence of sin?

The Bible says in **Romans 6:23**, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

Purpose of the verse: To show that all deserve death because of our sins.

Explanation of the verse: What is death? Death means to be separated from God in two ways.

First, death is separation from God now in this life on earth. It is a life without joy or peace in the soul. It is a life without assurance of eternal life and without Jesus in your heart. Separation from God leaves man with an empty and fearful heart.

Second, death is separation from God for eternity in hell. This is a life without Christ for all eternity. According to the Bible all of us deserve death, separation from God, because of our sins.

Application of the verse: Do you understand that you deserve death, separation from God, because of your sins?

3. The provision of God

The Bible says in **Romans 5:8**, “**But God demonstrates his own love to us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”

Purpose of the verse: To show that God loves us so much that He gave His son Jesus Christ to die for our sins.

Explanation of the verse: The only payment for sin is death. Jesus Christ was punished, judged and condemned to death on the cross to pay the penalty of sin in our place.

The death of Jesus was the only sacrifice that was sufficient to free man of the guilt of sin. Many people are trying to get to God through different ways: depending on their own good life or good works. They also may try to get to God through saints, idols, images, spirits or reincarnation.

Man’s own efforts have no power to purify man of his sins. The only way to have a relationship with God is through Jesus Christ. After Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, He arose from the dead, conquering death. He is alive and He wants to live in your heart.

Application of the verse: Do you believe that Jesus Christ is your only Lord, Savior and Mediator?

4. Your response

The Bible says in **Romans 10: 9**, “**That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**”

Purpose of the verse: To show what you must do to receive Jesus as your Lord.

Explanation of the verse: To receive Jesus you must do two things:

- a) First, to receive Jesus you must confess Christ as your only Lord. You must abandon your sins and turn to follow Jesus. This means to turn the control of your life over to Christ. This is repentance.
- b) Second, to receive Jesus you must believe in your heart that Christ rose from the dead and is your only Savior. This means that you have to stop putting your faith in other things like morality, good works, idols, images, saints or reincarnation and put your trust in Jesus Christ as your only Savior.

Application of the verse: Are you ready to confess Jesus as Lord and give your life to Jesus as your only Lord? Are you ready to stop putting your faith in other things and give your life to Christ right now as your only Lord and Savior?

The Bible says in **Romans 10:13**, **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

Purpose of the verse: To show that anyone that calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.

Explanation of the verse: This means that you can accept Jesus by faith right now in your heart.

Application of the verse: Are you ready to give your life to Jesus and ask Him to enter in your life right now? If you are ready, say this prayer with all your heart to God.

“Lord, I am a sinner. I trust in you, Lord, as my only Lord, Savior and Mediator. I give my life to You. Come into my heart and save me right now. Transform me and take full control of my life. Amen.”

Do you believe that Jesus answered your prayer? Than where is Jesus right now? Are you saved?