

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 4

Matthew 10-16

1. Those who confess the name of Jesus before men, He will confess before His father. But those who deny Him before men, He will also deny before His father in Heaven.
2. Many followed Jesus only because they wanted some miracle from Him, but they did not want a relationship with Him, they did not want to obey His words. They did not want to repent of their sins. They only wanted to take advantage of God's mercy. Today there are still many people like this? Do you know any?
3. The only person who has access to the Father is Jesus Christ and those who come to the Father through Jesus Christ. There is no other intercessor to God except Jesus Christ. There is only one God, and there is only way to reach God, and the Bible teaches that that way is Jesus Christ.

*Maybe you have been taught to pray to God through other intercessors besides Jesus Christ. Who are these other intercessors: are they gods, prophets, good people of the past? The Bible says they may have been good people, but they are not God. Do you agree with the Bible that there is only ONE intercessor between God and man, Jesus Christ?

4. Jesus wants to carry our burdens and our worries. He is gentle and lowly in heart. He wants to relieve us of the weights that we carry. In Him we can find rest for our souls if we accept His yoke, in other words if we accept His Lordship or leadership in our lives.
5. Jesus is concerned about our physical needs. The disciples were hungry, and Jesus provided food for them, knowing that this would provoke anger and persecution from the Pharisees. The Creator God of the

Universe is worried about the physical needs of each of us.

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” What does the word “sacrifice” mean to you? Have you been taught by religious leaders to make sacrifices to God, maybe to receive favor or forgiveness of a sin? Is it difficult for you to believe that God does not want you to prove anything to Him by sacrifices? This is the second time that Jesus tried to explain to the Pharisees that God is not pleased with our human sacrifices. But for people who are very religious this is often a difficult fact to accept. All religions teach that we must do something in order to avoid the wrath of God or gain the favor of God. Many people go through many hardships trying to pay God back for promises they’ve made, pay for past sins, or simply to show loyalty to God. But this proves NOTHING to God. He wants a relationship with us. He wants to show us mercy; He does not want our sacrifices. Jesus knew that He would have to suffer many things and then die. But that after three days He would resurrect from the dead. This was all a part of God’s plan. He tried to explain this to His disciples, but they could not understand why He must die and then resurrect.

*In the last three lessons of this study, we are going to try to understand the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection. This unique event would change the history of the world forever. This single event has the power to break the bondage of sin and transform our lives.

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS

By:
Christy A. Brawner

“The Betrayal of Jesus”- Lesson 5 **Matthew 20-26**

“Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.’ Matthew 20:17-19

Review

1. Jesus was born of a virgin named _____.
2. His earthly father, _____, had a dream in which God told him to flee to Egypt because King Herod wanted to _____ Jesus.
3. John the Baptist lived in the desert preaching and baptizing all that _____ of their sins.
4. Jesus didn’t have any _____, but He asked John the Baptist to baptize Him.
5. What does the word “repent” mean?
6. When Jesus was baptized, the _____ descended like a dove and the voice of God was heard saying, “This is my _____ in whom I am well pleased.”
7. In the desert Jesus was tempted by _____.
8. Jesus encountered two men that were possessed of _____.
9. Jesus demonstrated that He has power to _____ demons.
10. Which is better, to be a great sinner with many sins but repentant or to be a person with few sins and to never repent?

11. Jesus said that if you confess Him before men, He will _____ you before His _____ in heaven.
12. Many Galileans, including the people of the city of Capernaum, _____ the Word of God; they only followed Jesus because of the many miracles He performed.
13. They didn't want to repent of their sins. Again, what does the word "repent," mean?
14. Jesus said that He would give _____ to all who were weary and heavy laden for His yoke is _____.
15. The Pharisees didn't want Jesus to cure the man with the withered hand because it was on the _____ day, and it is against the law to work on the _____.
16. The Pharisees devised a plan to _____ Jesus.
17. Jesus knew that the Pharisees were planning His death, but He still continued to do many miracles including multiplying two _____ and some _____ to feed more than four thousand people.

Jesus with His disciples made the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. As He was about to arrive in Jerusalem, Jesus asked two of his disciples to pass by a certain village and retrieve a donkey and a colt that He needed. Jesus sat on this colt for the trip into the city of Jerusalem.

He entered gloriously and triumphantly. A multitude gathered around Him on each side of the street. A large number of people lay their own clothes on the road to make a type of carpet for Jesus to enter into the city. Some broke palm branches and spread them all over the road as a means of honoring Him. And still others would walk before and behind Him yelling, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" Hosanna in the highest!"

The entire city of Jerusalem was moved by this grand and unusual event. Everyone in town was asking, "Who is this?" So the many people answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

So Jesus entered the city and went to the Jewish temple. There he kicked out all of the venders; He overturned the tables of the moneychangers who had set up booths in the temple. He said to them, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of

thieves.” After this He stayed in the temple healing the blind and the lame.

After Jesus had taught the people many things, performed many signs and wonders in the temple, the chief priests and the religious leaders joined together in order to plot His death. They discussed how somehow by trickery they might kill Him. They were, however, anxious about executing such a plot during the Passover, so it was decided by them to wait until the Passover was over to deal with Jesus.

Now one of the twelve disciples, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to meet the chief priests saying, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” They agreed and gave him thirty silver coins. And it was from this day forth that Judas began to look for an opportunity where he might betray Jesus.

As it was the week of Passover, the disciples prepared the dinner for the feast according to specific instructions given by Jesus. On the night of the celebration, Jesus sat down together with the twelve and said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” As He said this, the disciples became very sad and each of them began asking, “Lord, is it I?”

Jesus answered them saying; “He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Judas, the one who was betraying Him, asked, “Rabbi, is it I?” And Jesus answered Him; “You have said it.”

So they ate dinner together that evening, and while they were still eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it saying, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

After they had finished the meal, they sang a hymn, and together they went to the hill called Mount of Olives. There Jesus continued to teach them many things some of which was concerning the events that soon were to take place.

Then Jesus brought them down to a place called Gethsemane where they were to pray with Him all night long. Now Jesus took Peter, James

and John together with Him as He began to become deeply distressed. He asked them to please sit up with Him. He then left them and went a little farther away to pray to His Father alone. He prayed this night regarding the things that were about to unfold. His Words have been recorded as follows:

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

It is recorded that He prayed this same prayer three times, and His heart was sorrowful even to death.

The disciples, however, could not even keep their eyes open for a single hour. They all fell asleep. Finally, Jesus woke them all up saying, “Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

Oral Questions

1. On what kind of animal did Jesus enter Jerusalem?
2. How did the people treat Jesus as He was entering into the city?
3. What did Judas do to betray Jesus?
4. What festival was being celebrated in the city?
5. How did Jesus warn Judas that He knew He would betray Him?
6. What did Jesus say about the wine at the supper?
7. According to Jesus, for what is the shedding of blood necessary?
8. Jesus took His disciples to Gethsemane to spend the night in prayer. How many of His disciples were able to stay up all night praying?
9. What was the prayer that Jesus prayed the night of His betrayal?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 5

Matthew 20-26

1. God is in control of all things. The Pharisees were conspiring to catch Jesus by surprise. But God, the entire time, was using them to exercise His perfect will on earth. It always was the will of God that Jesus would die on the cross.
2. God knows what is in our hearts when others don't know. Jesus knew the entire time that His disciple, Judas, was going to betray Him.
3. Jesus loves us and treats us with the same love even if we reject Him. Judas was so well treated by Jesus that no other disciple could believe that he was the traitor. In the same way, Jesus loves us and treats us lovingly even though many times we betray and reject Him and His will for our lives.
4. The blood of Jesus was shed for us for the remission or forgiveness of our sins. The disciples, at this time, did not understand the fact that Jesus had to die. They did not understand that God demands of each person the payment of sins in his/her life and that this payment is the shedding of blood. They understood that Jesus loved them and that they were forgiven of their sins. But they would need more time until they understood the price that Jesus had to pay in order to be able to forgive their sins.

*Many people know that they have sin in their lives. Some people may even have heard the story of Jesus, and that He loves them. But very few understand that God demands blood as a payment for sin. Jesus, because He is God, is the only person who ever lived or will live on this earth without a single sin. Because of His incredible love for us, He chose to surrender His life as a sacrifice to pay the price for our sins and not just ours but for the sins of the whole world. It is because of this sacrifice, that we now have an opportunity to receive forgiveness for our sins and peace with God.

Next week, we will look at the details of the crucifixion of Christ.

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS

By
Christy A. Brawner

“The Crucifixion of Jesus”- Lesson 6 Matthew 26-27

“Jesus said to him, “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.” Matthew 26:64

Review

1. Jesus was born of a virgin whose name was _____.
2. Just as the Scriptures had foretold, Jesus was born in the city of _____.
3. Just as the Scriptures had said, Jesus came out of the land of _____, because He was fleeing from King Herod.
4. Jesus’ earthly father, _____, had a dream advising him to return to Israel because King Herod had died. Joseph, still afraid of King Herod’s son, moved his family to the province of _____ to a city called Nazareth.
5. Jesus began his public ministry by being baptized by _____.
6. As Jesus came up out of the waters the _____ like a dove came down from heaven, also the voice of _____ spoke from the heavens saying, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”
7. Jesus cured many people and forgave many people of their _____.
8. Even after many miracles, many people from the region of Galilee _____ Jesus’ message, and did not want to repent of their sins.

9. What does the word “repent,” mean?
10. As Jesus went into the city of Jerusalem there was a great procession of people who accompanied Him. In the procession, Jesus was sitting on a _____.
11. On the night of the Passover celebration, Jesus told His disciples that one of them would _____ Him. At that time, nobody knew which one of them it was.
12. Jesus spoke of the wine that they were drinking. He said that it represented His blood that would be shed for the _____ of sins.
13. The disciples heard these words but still could not understand that Jesus was going to _____ for their sins.
14. After dinner, they all went to the Mount of Olives and then to Gethsemane. Jesus prayed during the night while the disciples _____.
15. Jesus prayed, “If it is possible let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as _____ will.

While Jesus was still waking up His disciples, Judas, the one who had betrayed Him, arrived with a large group of people including the chief priests and religious leaders many carrying swords and clubs. Judas came up to Jesus and kissed Him saying, “Greetings, Rabbi!” Jesus answered Him, “Friend, why have you come?”

Suddenly, one of Jesus’ disciples rashly pulled out a sword and cut off the ear of one of the chief priest’s servants. Jesus called the disciple’s attention and healed the man’s ear. He informed this disciple that if He so desired there were twelve legions of angels ready to do battle, but that all that was occurring was the will of the Father for the Scriptures to be fulfilled.

Jesus then turned to the gang of people that had arrived and asked them, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

And His disciples quickly fled from that place leaving Him alone.

So those who had seized Him took Him to the house of a man named

Caiaphas who was at the time the highest priest. For at His house awaited all the priests and religious leaders ready to interrogate Him.

They had arranged for many false witnesses to testify against Him in order to condemn Him to death. And surely many did come forward, but even still they could not gather sufficient evidence to put Him to death until the high priest Himself came to interrogate Him. He finally asked Jesus, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

Jesus said to Him, "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."

Hearing this answer, the chief priest ripped off his clothes saying, "Blasphemy!" The people that had gathered there then took Jesus and began to spit on His face. Some beat Him while others struck Him with the palms of their hands saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

When morning finally came, the priests and religious leaders took Jesus to the Roman Governor of the region named Pontius Pilate. They told him that He claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Pilate took Him and interrogated Him asking Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "It is as you say."

But even after all of his interrogation, Pilate could not find a reason to crucify Jesus. Also, his wife had had a disturbing dream about the whole thing the night before and warned her husband to have nothing to do with Jesus. Pilate knew that the Jewish leaders had only turned Jesus into him out of envy, but he did not know what to do for the people had become stirred up.

Now, every year at the time of the Passover, it had been Pilate's costume to release one prisoner of the people's choice. And this year, there was an especially notorious criminal in the jail called Barrabas. So, he got Barrabas and Jesus and made an offer to the people, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barrabas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" But the people, who had been riled up by the Pharisees yelled out, "Barrabas!"

"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" asked Pilate. And the people cried out, "Let Him be crucified."

So Pilate, seeing that the people were beginning to riot got a basin of water and washed his hands saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person, you see to it." He released Barrabas to the people and sent Jesus to be whipped.

Pilate's soldiers took Jesus to Pilate's headquarters, the Praetorian and there they tortured and mocked Him. They gathered all around Him, stripped Him and dressed Him in a scarlet robe. Then they twisted a crown of thorns and put it into His head. They gave Him a reed to hold in His hand as if it were a scepter, and they kneeled before Him sarcastically saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on Him; they then took the reed that had been in His hand and hit Him on the head with it. After they had finished making fun of Him, they took the robe off, put His clothes back on Him and led Him away to the place called Golgotha, or the "Place of a Skull" for this was the place where He was to be crucified.

Jesus was crucified there, and on the cross the Romans put a plaque over His head reading, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Jesus was crucified between two thieves, one on either side of Him.

Now from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, while Jesus was hanging on the cross, a great darkness covered all the land. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out saying, "Eli Eli, lama sabachthani?" This means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" A little later He yelled again. It was with this yell that He surrendered His Spirit.

At the time that He surrendered His Spirit, many bizarre things occurred simultaneously. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked, many rocks split, and many graves were opened, so that many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised; These, after His resurrection, came out of their graves, went into Jerusalem, and were seen by many people.

Oral Questions

1. How was Jesus betrayed?
2. One of Jesus' disciples did something in an attempt to defend Jesus. What was it and what was Jesus' reaction?
3. At the time of His betrayal what did all of His disciples do?
4. Where did the men from the garden take Jesus?

5. Even though there were many false witnesses, how did they eventually convict Jesus of blasphemy?
6. Where did the Jewish leaders take Jesus as soon as morning broke?
7. Pilate, after his interrogation, did not find Jesus guilty but was afraid of the people, so he gave the people a choice. What was the offer he made the people, and what was the people's choice?
8. How did the soldiers treat Jesus?
9. After three hours of darkness, Jesus yelled out to God. What is the translation of this yell?
10. What were some of the things that happened when Jesus surrendered His Spirit?

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 6

Matthew 26-27

1. Who is Jesus? “The Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” This was the answer Jesus gave the chief priest, and it was this response that ultimately led to His crucifixion. It was an answer that those people could not accept. But, each person must also wrestle with this same question. Who really is Jesus? Because if Jesus really is sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven, we each must decide how we will respond to Him?
2. Jesus was crucified in the place of Barrabas, a despised criminal; and Barrabas was in turn set free.

*Maybe I am not a despised criminal, but just like Barrabas, I am a sinner and before God I too have earned a death penalty. The Bible says in Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” This means that we all deserve to die because of the bad things that we have done in our lives. It does not matter if we have many sins as in the case of Barrabas, or if we have been a relatively good person as some of His disciples had been.

3. Jesus was tortured, judged and killed to pay the penalty for the sins in our lives. This was the reason Jesus came to earth. He wanted us to be able to stand before God forgiven of our sins. Some people have said that Jesus was a martyr or a prophet. But this is not true according to Jesus’ own confession. He claimed to be God and to have come to earth to die for our sins.
4. Jesus surrendered His Spirit. At any moment Jesus could have descended from the cross. He could have killed all of the people who made fun of Him with a single word. But, by His own choosing, He endured the humiliation and stayed on the cross until the chosen hour. Then in His time, He surrendered His Spirit. He chose to die because He wanted to pay the debt for our sins. The Bible says in John 3:16

that, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him will not perish but have everlasting life.”

*In the next lesson, we will study the resurrection of Jesus. For the truth is that Jesus is not dead, but is alive and today wants to come into your life. He wants to purify your heart from all your sins, and transform your life completely.

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS

By
Christy A. Brawner

“The Resurrection of Jesus”- Lesson 7 **Matthew 27-28**

“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.” Matthew 28:5-6

Review

1. Jesus was born of a virgin girl named _____.
2. Jesus began His public ministry by being _____ by a man named John the Baptist.
3. At His baptism, the _____ descended upon Jesus like a dove, and the voice of God spoke from the heavens saying, “This is my beloved _____ in whom I am well pleased.” This shows us the three persons of the Trinity: God the _____, God the _____ and God the _____.
4. Jesus cured many people of diseases and forgave many people of their _____.
5. But even after many miracles, many people who lived in Galilee rejected His words and did not want to _____ of their sins.
6. What does the word “repent,” mean?
7. Jesus said that the wine represented His blood that would be _____ for many for the _____ of sins.
8. Pharisees seized Jesus in the garden where He had been praying, and took Him to the house of the High _____ whose name was Caiphias.
9. The high priest asked Jesus if He were _____ and Jesus answered that He was. At this time people came up to Jesus and _____

- in His face, _____ Him, and struck Him with the _____ of their hands.
10. When morning came, the Pharisees took Jesus to the Roman Governor whose name was _____.
 11. Pilate did not find Jesus to be guilty, but allowed Him to be crucified because he feared a _____ among the people.
 12. The Roman soldiers tortured Jesus. They put a crown of _____ upon His head and hit His head with a _____, which they had given Him to hold.
 13. On the cross where Jesus was hung, there was a plague saying, “THIS IS JESUS, THE _____ OF THE JEWS.”
 14. From the sixth hour to the ninth hour, there was _____ on the earth.

There was a very rich man named Joseph of Arimathea who also was a disciple of Jesus. This man asked Pilate if he could be allowed to take Jesus’ body and lay Him in his own tomb. Pilate agreed to this request, and Jesus was laid in a new tomb. After laying Jesus in the cave, a great rock was rolled against the door of the tomb.

The next day, the Pharisees met together and went before Pilate because they remembered the words of Jesus when He said that He would rise again on the third day. They asked Pilate if He would make the tomb secure until the third day in case something should happen to the body. So, Pilate gave them permission to make it as secure as they knew how. They went to the place, put guards in front of the tomb and sealed the stone.

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb where Jesus was laying. When they got there, there was an earthquake, the rock that had been used to seal the tomb was moved, and an angel of the Lord was sitting on the stone. The guards that had been protecting the tomb shook for fear and had become like dead men.

But the angel spoke to the ladies and he said, “Do not be afraid, 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 women ran out of the tomb with fear and great joy hurrying to tell the disciples what had happened. But as they went to find the disciples, Jesus met them saying, “Rejoice!” They stopped, held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. He told them to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee.

Now the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb entered into the city and told the high priests what had happened at the tomb. The high priests consulted each other and decided to give the soldiers a large sum of money for the soldiers to spread news around town that the disciples had stolen the body while they had fallen asleep on the site. They further promised the guards that if word got to Pilate that the soldiers had gone to sleep then they themselves would personally defend the soldiers before the governor. So the soldiers took the bribe, and spread many rumors that circulated around the city for several years.

The eleven remaining disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to meet Him. When they saw Him, they all worshiped Him, but some doubted.

So Jesus spoke to them for the last time saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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.” Amen.

Oral Questions

1. What did Joseph of Arimethea ask of Pilate?
2. The Pharisees were afraid that something would happen to Jesus’ body on the third day. Why?
3. Who went to see Jesus on the first day, and what did these ladies find when they arrived at the tomb?
4. While returning to tell the disciples what they had discovered, they ran into whom?
5. Jesus told his disciples to meet them at another place besides Jerusalem. Where?

6. On the mountain, Jesus had a very important command to give His disciples. Try to fill in the blanks with Jesus' words: Go, therefore and make _____ of all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father, the Son and the _____, 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."

Spiritual Truths- Lesson 7

Matthew 27-28

1. Jesus is alive today. Jesus is not a human being who can be imprisoned and killed. He is God eternal. He is without beginning and without end. God's plan from the beginning of the world was to come to earth in the form of a man as a suffering servant. It was His will to be crucified on that day and in that way. His plans cannot be frustrated, nor can anyone ever prevail over Him. He is still and always will be God, the only true living God.

2. The Pharisees believed the words of Jesus to the point that they had soldiers guarding His tomb after His death because He had promised to raise again. They believed the words of the soldiers when they told them what had happened. They even paid the soldiers to lie about this event. These same leaders had been present when John the Baptist baptized Jesus, and God's very own voice spoke from heaven confirming who He was. These men were witnesses to many of the miracles that He performed. They were even angry with Him when He cured the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath. They had seen Him expel many demons from tormented people, and they had watched Him forgive people of their sins. Almost no one knew more about the life and message of Jesus than did the Pharisees. But this same group of people did not accept the love of God that He offered in their own lives. They did not repent of their sins. They did not surrender the control of their lives to the authority of Jesus Christ. To have a relationship with Jesus Christ is more than learning and believing the facts of His life. It is more than a new and different religion. Jesus desires for us to repent of our sins, believe in Him, and give Him our lives. He wants to become the Lord or leader of our lives. He wants to control us every single day of our life.

3. Who is Jesus?
 - Jesus was born of a virgin.
 - Jesus claimed He was God.

- Jesus performed many miracles and forgave the people who repented of their sins.
- Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for the sins in our lives before a just God.
- Jesus resurrected from the dead and is alive today.
- Jesus wants for me also to repent of my sins and give my life to Him.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus did not die to become an example, He died to be a replacement for you and me who deserve to face God for all the things that we have done wrong in our lives.

The Bible says that “All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13

- ❖ This means that regardless of my past, I can ask Jesus to come into my life and He will forgive me of all my sins and live in my life.
- ❖ It means that from the moment that Jesus enters into my heart, all of my past sins, present sins, and future sins, are **ALREADY** forgiven before God. This is not because of anything that I have done. It is not because I have chosen a good religion. It is not because I have become a moral person. It is not because my parents are from a specific ethnic group or social class. It is **ONLY** because I have accepted the sacrifice that Jesus already paid when He died on the cross.
- ❖ It means that from this moment on, I am a pure person again in the Eyes of God, innocent. The Bible teaches that the wages of sin are death, but the death of Christ is enough to make me a new creature. If I make the choice to follow Him.

If you would like the forgiveness of God right now in your life, and would like to become a follower of Christ, you may ask Him to come into your heart right this moment. It is not necessary to be in any particular religious place, it is not necessary to say any special or magic words. It is only important that you come before God and declare that you believe that Jesus is God and want Him to be the Lord or controller of your life.

You may pray something like this:

“Father, I know that I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to save me from my sins. I repent of my sins. Come into my life and forgive me of all my sins. I give you my life. Thank you for your love for me. In Jesus’ name. Amen”

4. “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The Bible says in John 14:2, “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Jesus promised us that EVERYONE who gives his or her life to Him will spend eternity with Him in a place called heaven. Heaven is the home of the Father. Once we have accepted Jesus into our lives, we will spend eternity with Jesus. This means that Jesus will be with us here on earth, but when we die we will spend eternity with Him in heaven.

The love that Jesus has for us truly lasts forever!

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The Story of the Life of Jesus Christ

By

Christy A. Brawner

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

“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

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 will 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 will 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 will 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 promises. 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
Christy A. Brawner

“Jesus’ Flight to Egypt and His Baptism”- Lesson 2 Mathew 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 will 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 John 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 had 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 different 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 decide and confirm in our hearts 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 the 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?

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

By
Christy A. Brawner

“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 penetrate 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. It is a good idea to 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.

BEGINNING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

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 judgement.”

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