



SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOKLET

● JANUARY - DECEMBER, 2023 ●



Bro. Oludayo Uansohia
Church Secretary

Rev. Dr. Julius Omomola
Lead Pastor

TABLE OF CONTENT

PREFACE	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING AND BENEFITING FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS	ix
READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2023	xi

JANUARY	GOD'S PROMISES	
1	GOD PROMISES TO HEAR AND FORGIVE	17
8	GOD PROMISES TO RESTORE	20
15	GOD PROMISES TO GUIDE	23
22	GOD PROMISES LIGHT	26
29	GOD PROMISES HIS PRESENCE	29

FEBRUARY	GOD'S CALL	
5	RESUMÉ OF THE CALLED	32
12	REMINDER OF THE CALL	35
19	RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE CALLED	38
26	RESULTS OF THE CALL	41

MARCH	CALLED FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY	
5	THE PRODIGAL SON	44
12	THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM	47
19	JESUS TALKS WITH A SAMARITAN	50
26	JESUS OVERPOWERS LEGION	53

APRIL	EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION	
2	THE EMPTY TOMB	56
9	DISCIPLES BELIEVE THE RESURRECTION	59
16	JESUS COOKS BREAKFAST	62
23	JESUS REINSTATES PETER	65
30	JESUS MAKES A PROMISE	68

MAY	THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH	
7	THE DAY OF PENTECOST	71
14	JUMPING FOR JOY	74
21	AN ETHIOPIAN IS BAPTIZED	77
28	SAUL OF TARSUS	80

JUNE	THE PROPHETS PROCLAIM GOD'S POWER	
4	GOD REIGNS	83
11	GOD'S KINGDOM OF PEACE	86

18	GOD'S SERVANT-KING	89
25	RENEWED IN GOD'S LOVE	92
JULY	JESUS ENVISIONS THE KINGDOM	
2	PEACE TO THE NATIONS	95
9	THE KINGDOM HAS COME UPON YOU	98
16	THE SOWER AND THE SEED	101
23	WEEDS AMONG THE WHEAT	104
30	FINDING AND GATHERING	107
AUGUST	GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN	
6	INHERITING THE KINGDOM	110
13	THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM	113
20	JUDGEMENT IN THE KINGDOM	116
27	GOD'S KINGDOM WILL BE ALL IN ALL	119
SEPTEMBER	LOVE COMPLETES, LAW FALLS SHORT	
3	JESUS EATS WITH A PHARISEE	122
10	DOING GOOD THINGS AT ALL TIMES	125
17	JESUS GIVES GOD GLORY	128
24	JESUS EXTENDS FORGIVENESS	131
OCTOBER	FAITH TRIUMPHS, LAW FAILS	
1	A MATTER OF THE HEART	134
8	FINDING LIFE AND FREEDOM	137
15	JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, NOT LAW	140
22	THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GOSPEL	143
29	FREED TO BECOME AN HEIR	146
NOVEMBER	CHRIST FREES, LAW ENSLAVES	
5	REQUIREMENT FOR SALVATION	149
12	LOVE FULFILS THE LAW	152
19	LIVE AS YOU WERE TAUGHT	155
26	DO WHAT IS HELPFUL	158
DECEMBER	PROFILE OF FAITH	
3	CHANGING IDENTITY	161
10	THE FAITH OF DAVID	164
17	THE FAMILY OF FAITH	167
24	THE FAITH OF ELIZABETH AND MARY	170
31	THE FAITH OF THE WISE MEN	173

PREFACE

All gratitude and praise to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the grace He has given us to welcome the **Year 2023: OUR YEAR OF SUPERNATURAL LIGHT** **Genesis 1: 3 - And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.**

It is with great faith in our hearts that we receive this prophetic word and look expectantly for its manifestation in our church, New Heritage Baptist Church, Shomolu, Lagos.

The 2023 Sunday School Booklet has been written with the intention of helping every reader and user of this valuable resource live out the Word of God and thereby experience the fullness of the blessings therein. In line with this objective, the anchor text for the Sunday School Ministry for this year 2023 is found in **Joshua 1: 8 (NIV)** which says, ***“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”*** It is our prayer that, as we read, study, take notes, listen, meditate and put the word of God to action, we shall experience His glorious presence and be guided by the promised supernatural light in all that we do.

The Sunday School Ministry is an important arm of the local church which provides an avenue through which the Word of God is taught within small groups characterized by a relaxed and close-knit atmosphere of learning. It aims to complement and support the Word of God preached from the pulpit at the various Worship Services. During the Sunday School, questions are asked and answered, errors are corrected, obedience to all of God's commands is encouraged and the righteous lifestyle God expects of us is taught.

This Sunday School Booklet is the primary tool from which instruction is to be given in the Sunday School classes. It has been written to stimulate active participation and interaction in the classes. It comprises lessons for fifty two (52) weeks. Each lesson consists of the topic, scriptural text, memory verse, lesson aims, introduction, engaging questions, conclusion and practical lessons. The engaging introduction creates a longing in the participants to know more about the topic being considered, while the questions are designed to stimulate edifying participation by drawing from the Word of God to compare doctrinal standards with contemporary issues. Each lesson is

concluded with a short summary and practical lessons encapsulating the salient take aways/ action points.

In this edition of the 2023 booklet, the Read-The-Bible-Through-The-Year calendar has been retained for your spiritual development. This is aimed at encouraging a deeper acquaintance with God's Word through the insights gained from the systematic and daily study of the scriptures. The Read-The-Bible-Through-The-Year calendar is based on the chronological sequence with which the Bible was written, as best determined by theological and archaeological sources. You are hereby encouraged to make use of this priceless resource. We pray that as you read, study, meditate and take notes, the illumination from God's Word will grow brighter and brighter in your hearts.

This Sunday School Booklet is written from materials sourced from the International Sunday School Lessons 2022-2023 (published by Standard Publishing) and the 2023 Sunday School Lessons for Adults and Young Adults (published by the Publications Department, Nigerian Baptist Convention).

This Sunday School Manual is an effective resource used by thirty nine (39) daughter churches of the New Heritage Baptist Church, Shomolu, Lagos, located at the following locations: Epe, Oshodi, Lakowe, Awoyaya, Ikroodu (Lagos State); Abeokuta, Agbowa, Isheri-Oke, Mowe (Ogun State); Akure, Owo (Ondo State); Osogbo (Osun State); Ogbomoso, Oyo (Oyo State); Benin (Edo State); Port-Harcourt (Rivers State); Calabar, Obubra (Cross River State); Yenegwe, Opolo-Elebele, Azikoro-Agbura road (Bayelsa State); Oye-Ekiti (Ekiti State); Awka (Anambra State); Ikot-Ekpene, Eket (Akwa-Ibom State); Jos (Plateau State); Ilorin (Kwara State); Kuje (FCT-Abuja); Gombe (Gombe State); Jalingo (Taraba State); and the international churches in Onigbolo (Republic of Benin) and Youpougou, Abobo and Adjahui (Cote d'Ivoire). Some sister Baptist churches also usually make use of the NHBC Bible Study manuals, and we give God the glory for this.

This Booklet is recommended to you for your instruction and training in righteousness. May God's Word find full expression in our lives as we appropriate His word in this year **2023: OUR YEAR OF SUPERNATURAL LIGHT (Genesis 1: 3).**

Emmanuel Oladeji

*Sunday School Superintendent 2023
New Heritage Baptist Church
Shomolu, Lagos.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All glory goes to the Lord God Almighty, who richly supplied the grace, knowledge and ability to put together this 2023 Sunday School booklet for the New Heritage Baptist Church, Shomolu, Lagos.

I acknowledge and appreciate the following publishers for the resource materials utilized in this booklet. They are:

- International Sunday School Lessons 2022-2023 (Published by Standard Publishing, part of David C. Cook Family, Colorado Springs, Colorado)
- Sunday School Lesson for Adults 2023 (Published by the Publications Department, Nigerian Baptist Convention, Ibadan)
- The Read the Bible Through Calendar from <https://bibleplan.org/>
- Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc™

I appreciate the Church Pastor, Rev. Dr. Julius Omomola, for his steadfast support of the Sunday School Ministry as well as his spiritual leadership and guidance over the church.

I also appreciate the Deacon-in-Charge of the Sunday School Ministry, Dn. Ademola Obayomi, for his constant support and guidance.

Without mincing words, I am also appreciating the immediate past Sunday School Superintendent, Dr. Soladoye Iwajomo. Your sacrifice and dedication to the continuity of this ministry is highly commendable. May the Lord God bless you richly.

To all the teachers in the Sunday School Ministry, here at New Heritage Baptist Church, Shomolu, Lagos, and at her daughter and sister churches, may the Lord God bless your labour and dedication to the task of teaching His Word and promoting Kingdom values through His Word. Your resilience towards teaching the Sunday School lessons, even with the introduction of the virtual/online classes, is worthy of recognition.

Another round of appreciation goes to all our writers for this 2023 edition. Without their steadfast and diligent labour, in spite of their busy schedules, this booklet would not have been possible. They are Dn. Olufemi Aladejebi, Dn. Abiodun Oladele-Ojo, Pastor Ezekiel Oyebanji, Dr. Soladoye Iwajomo, Dn. Charles Ojelade, Bro. Obinna Ojekwe, Sis. Tomisin Oyeniyi, Rev. Deji Bashorun, Bro. Emmanuel Oladeji, Bro. Olaoluwa Ogunkoya, Bro. Bolaji Oyekan and Dr. Mrs. Atinuke Amao-Kehinde. May the Lord God reward you and empower you to be even more relevant in all affairs of life.

Lastly, my heartfelt gratitude also goes to our team of first-level editors: Dn. David Orimogunje, Sis. Damilola Oyebadejo, Bro. Ayo Oluwatomiwa, Bro. Tomilayo Olaniyi, Bro. Peter Ehwarieme, Bro. Adewumi Ajayi, Engr. Emmanuel Akinwale and Bro. Michael Ekundayo who diligently reviewed and edited the manuscripts submitted by the writers, upon which the manuscripts were further vetted by a team of second-level editors comprising Dn. Ademola Obayomi, Bro. Oludayo Uansohia, Rev. Mrs. Bola Omomola, Prof. Mrs. Elizabeth Sote and Dn. Clem Baiye. May the Lord God bless your labour of love for the advancement of His Kingdom.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING AND BENEFITTING FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

*"...I have treasured the words of his mouth more than
my daily bread" – Job 23:12b*

TO THE STUDENT

*"...If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all
without finding fault, and it will be given to him". – James 1:5 (NIV)*

Before the Class

1. Seek the help of the Holy Spirit prayerfully to understand the lesson and have a transformed life.
2. Treasure the word of God more than anything else.
3. Plan to attend and enjoy the class.
4. Study the lesson ahead of the class and ensure that you learn the memory verse(s).

During the Class

1. Maintain an attitude of attentiveness and reverence for God.
2. Show willingness to learn new things.
3. Participate actively in reading the scriptures and making contributions during class discussions.
4. Share personal testimonies about your Christian life.
5. Be quick to ask questions and get prompt clarification from class members.
6. Take note of specific issues that apply to your situations for necessary prayers and counselling after class.

After the Class

1. Observe quality prayer time on personal issues arising from the lesson.
2. When having difficulties, seek counsels from the teacher and/or from mature Christians and make use of those counsels.
3. Examine yourself and meditate upon striking scriptures and counsels.
4. Take time to perfect and apply the memory verse.
5. Recall, rehearse and review the memory verse.
6. Seek to know class members intimately through interaction and visitation.
7. Attend to all assignments and practical lessons.

TO THE TEACHER

"A wise teacher makes learning a joy..." Proverbs 15:2 (TLB)

Before the Class

1. First, be a student of the Holy Spirit for guidance, empowerment and fruitfulness.
2. Prayerfully study ahead of teachers' preparatory class to make invaluable contributions.
3. Be an informed teacher and doer of God's word through diligent study ahead of each lesson.
4. Consult other study aids to understand the background of every lesson.
5. Prepare to facilitate not to lecture.
6. Follow Jesus' example of doing before teaching (Acts 1:1a)
7. Attend teachers' preparatory classes regularly and promptly.
8. Invest love, care and friendliness in your class members. They are vital tools of life transformation.
9. Practice memory verses severally to be able to recite same off-hand before class members.

During the Class

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and discernment.
2. Present the lesson in a way that creates interest and excitement in class members, using biblical and life examples to illustrate lesson aims.
3. Encourage active class participation in a complementary and courteous manner.
4. Maximize the use of study aids like concordance, commentaries, Bible maps and good study bible.
5. Emphasize the central truth in the lesson for application purpose.
6. Correct class members in love, without being confrontational, and see every criticism as an opportunity for improvement.
7. Ensure that all lesson aims are adequately covered and relevant home work is given to class members when deemed necessary.
8. Pray briefly but fervently to close every lesson.

After the Class

1. Offer prayers regularly regarding specific issues shared during the class.
2. Meet one another's various needs in love even outside Sunday school class.
3. Show care through phone calls and possibly visit class members to remind them about the central truth in the lesson.
4. Demonstrate leadership by example.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2023

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Josh. 1: 8)

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: JANUARY

Jan 1. Genesis 1-3	Jan 16. Genesis 12-15
Jan 2. Genesis 4-7	Jan 17. Genesis 16-18
Jan 3. Genesis 8-11	Jan 18. Genesis 19-21
Jan 4. Job 1-5	Jan 19. Genesis 22-24
Jan 5. Job 6-9	Jan 20. Genesis 25-26
Jan 6. Job 10-13	Jan 21. Genesis 27-29
Jan 7. Job 14-16	Jan 22. Genesis 30-31
Jan 8. Job 17-20	Jan 23. Genesis 32-34
Jan 9. Job 21-23	Jan 24. Genesis 35-37
Jan 10. Job 24-28	Jan 25. Genesis 38-40
Jan 11. Job 29-31	Jan 26. Genesis 41-42
Jan 12. Job 32-34	Jan 27. Genesis 43-45
Jan 13. Job 35-37	Jan 28. Genesis 46-47
Jan 14. Job 38-39	Jan 29. Genesis 48-50
Jan 15. Job 40-42	Jan 30. Exodus 1-3
	Jan 31. Exodus 4-6

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: FEBRUARY

Feb 1. Exodus 7-9	Feb 15. Leviticus 8-10
Feb 2. Exodus 10-12	Feb 16. Leviticus 11-13
Feb 3. Exodus 13-15	Feb 17. Leviticus 14-15
Feb 4. Exodus 16-18	Feb 18. Leviticus 16-18
Feb 5. Exodus 19-21	Feb 19. Leviticus 19-21
Feb 6. Exodus 22-24	Feb 20. Leviticus 22-23
Feb 7. Exodus 25-27	Feb 21. Leviticus 24-25
Feb 8. Exodus 28-29	Feb 22. Leviticus 26-27
Feb 9. Exodus 30-32	Feb 23. Numbers 1-2
Feb 10. Exodus 33-35	Feb 24. Numbers 3-4
Feb 11. Exodus 36-38	Feb 25. Numbers 5-6
Feb 12. Exodus 39-40	Feb 26. Numbers 7
Feb 13. Leviticus 1-4	Feb 27. Numbers 8-10
Feb 14. Leviticus 5-7	Feb 28. Numbers 11-13

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: MARCH

Mar 1. Numbers 14-15; Psalm 90	Mar 17. Deuteronomy 17-20
Mar 2. Numbers 16-17	Mar 18. Deuteronomy 21-23
Mar 3. Numbers 18-20	Mar 19. Deuteronomy 24-27
Mar 4. Numbers 21-22	Mar 20. Deuteronomy 28-29
Mar 5. Numbers 23-25	Mar 21. Deuteronomy 30-31
Mar 6. Numbers 26-27	Mar 22. Deut. 32-34; Psalm 91
Mar 7. Numbers 28-30	Mar 23. Joshua 1-4
Mar 8. Numbers 31-32	Mar 24. Joshua 5-8
Mar 9. Numbers 33-34	Mar 25. Joshua 9-11
Mar 10. Numbers 35-36	Mar 26. Joshua 12-15
Mar 11. Deuteronomy 1-2	Mar 27. Joshua 16-18
Mar 12. Deuteronomy 3-4	Mar 28. Joshua 19-21
Mar 13. Deuteronomy 5-7	Mar 29. Joshua 22-24
Mar 14. Deuteronomy 8-10	Mar 30. Judges 1-2
Mar 15. Deuteronomy 11-13	Mar 31. Judges 3-5
Mar 16. Deuteronomy 14-16	

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: APRIL

Apr 1. Judges 6-7	Apr 16. Psalms 56, 120, 140-142
Apr 2. Judges 8-9	Apr 17. 1 Samuel 25-27
Apr 3. Judges 10-12	Apr 18. Psalms 17, 35, 54, 63
Apr 4. Judges 13-15	Apr 19. 1 Samuel 28-31; Psalm 18
Apr 5. Judges 16-18	Apr 20. Psalms 121, 123-125, 128-130
Apr 6. Judges 19-21	Apr 21. 2 Samuel 1-4
Apr 7. Ruth	Apr 22. Psalms 6, 8-10, 14, 16, 19, 21
Apr 8. 1 Samuel 1-3	Apr 23. 1 Chronicles 1-2
Apr 9. 1 Samuel 4-8	Apr 24. Psalms 43-45, 49, 84-85, 87
Apr 10. 1 Samuel 9-12	Apr 25. 1 Chronicles 3-5
Apr 11. 1 Samuel 13-14	Apr 26. Psalms 73, 77-78
Apr 12. 1 Samuel 15-17	Apr 27. 1 Chronicles 6
Apr 13. 1 Sam. 18-20; Ps. 11, 59	Apr 28. Psalms 81, 88, 92-93
Apr 14. 1 Samuel 21-24	Apr 29. 1 Chronicles 7-10
Apr 15. Psalms 7, 27, 31, 34, 52	Apr 30. Psalm 102-104

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: MAY

May 1. 2 Sam. 5; 1 Chr. 11-12	May 17. 2 Sam. 16-18
May 2. Psalm 133	May 18. Psa. 26, 40, 58, 61-62, 64
May 3. Psalms 106-107	May 19. 2 Sam. 19-21
May 4. 1 Chronicles 13-16	May 20. Psa. 5, 38, 41-42
May 5. Psa. 1-2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68	May 21. 2 Sam. 22-23; Psa. 57
May 6. Psa. 89, 96, 100-101, 105, 132	May 22. Psa. 95, 97-99
May 7. 2 Sam. 6-7; 1 Chr. 17	May 23. 2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr. 21-22; Psa. 30
May 8. Psalms 25, 29, 33, 36, 39	May 24. Psalms 108-110
May 9. 2 Sam. 8-9; 1 Chronicles 18	May 25. 1 Chronicles 23-25
May 10. Psalms 50, 53, 60, 75	May 26. Ps. 131, 138-139, 143-145
May 11. 2 Sam. 10; 1 Chr. 19; Psa. 20	May 27. 1 Chr. 26-29; Psa. 127
May 12. Psalms 65-67, 69-70	May 28. Psalms 111-118
May 13. 2 Sam. 11-12; 1 Chr. 20	May 29. 1 Kgs 1-2; Psa. 37, 71, 94
May 14. Psalms 32, 51, 86, 122	May 30. Psa. 119
May 15. 2 Samuel 13-15	May 31. 1 Kings 3-4
May 16. Psa. 3-4, 12-13, 28, 55	

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: JUNE

Jun 1. 2 Chronicles 1; Psalm 72	Jun 16. 1 Kings 9; 2 Chronicles 8
Jun 2. Song of Solomon	Jun 17. Proverbs 25-26
Jun 3. Proverbs 1-3	Jun 18. Proverbs 27-29
Jun 4. Proverbs 4-6	Jun 19. Ecclesiastes 1-6
Jun 5. Proverbs 7-9	Jun 20. Ecclesiastes 7-12
Jun 6. Proverbs 10-12	Jun 21. 1 Kings 10-11; 2 Chr. 9
Jun 7. Proverbs 13-15	Jun 22. Proverbs 30-31
Jun 8. Proverbs 16-18	Jun 23. 1 Kings 12-14
Jun 9. Proverbs 19-21	Jun 24. 2 Chronicles 10-12
Jun 10. Proverbs 22-24	Jun 25. 1 Kings 15; 2 Chr. 13-16
Jun 11. 1 Kings 5-6; 2 Chr. 2-3	Jun 26. 1 Kings 16; 2 Chr. 17
Jun 12. 1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 4	Jun 27. 1 Kings 17-19
Jun 13. 1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 5	Jun 28. 1 Kings 20-21
Jun 14. 2 Chr. 6-7; Psalm 136	Jun 29. 1 Kings 22; 2 Chr. 18
Jun 15. Psalms 134, 146-150	Jun 30. 2 Chronicles 19-23

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: JULY

Jul 1. Obadiah; Psalms 82-83	Jul 17. Isaiah 18-22
Jul 2. 2 Kings 1-4	Jul 18. Isaiah 23-27
Jul 3. 2 Kings 5-8	Jul 19. 2 Kgs 18; 2 Chr. 29-31; Ps. 48
Jul 4. 2 Kings 9-11	Jul 20. Hosea 1-7
Jul 5. 2 Kings 12-13; 2 Chr. 24	Jul 21. Hosea 8-14
Jul 6. 2 Kings 14; 2 Chr. 25	Jul 22. Isaiah 28-30
Jul 7. Jonah	Jul 23. Isaiah 31-34
Jul 8. 2 Kings 15; 2 Chr. 26	Jul 24. Isaiah 35-36
Jul 9. Isaiah 1-4	Jul 25. Isaiah 37-39; Psalm 76
Jul 10. Isaiah 5-8	Jul 26. Isaiah 40-43
Jul 11. Amos 1-5	Jul 27. Isaiah 44-48
Jul 12. Amos 6-9	Jul 28. 2 Kgs 19; Psalm 46, 80, 135
Jul 13. 2 Chr. 27; Isaiah 9-12	Jul 29. Isaiah 49-53
Jul 14. Micah 1-7	Jul 30. Isaiah 54-58
Jul 15. 2 Chr. 28; 2 Kings 16-17	Jul 31. Isaiah 59-63
Jul 16. Isaiah 13-17	

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: AUGUST

Aug 1. Isaiah 64-66	Aug 17. Jeremiah 35-37
Aug 2. 2 Kings 20-21	Aug 18. Jer. 38-40; Ps. 74, 79
Aug 3. 2 Chronicles 32-33	Aug 19. 2 Kgs 24-25; 2 Chr. 36
Aug 4. Nahum	Aug 20. Habakkuk
Aug 5. 2 Kgs 22-23; 2 Chr. 34-35	Aug 21. Jeremiah 41-45
Aug 6. Zephaniah	Aug 22. Jeremiah 46-48
Aug 7. Jeremiah 1-3	Aug 23. Jeremiah 49-50
Aug 8. Jeremiah 4-6	Aug 24. Jeremiah 51-52
Aug 9. Jeremiah 7-9	Aug 25. Lamentations 1-2
Aug 10. Jeremiah 10-13	Aug 26. Lamentations 3-5
Aug 11. Jeremiah 14-17	Aug 27. Ezekiel 1-4
Aug 12. Jeremiah 18-22	Aug 28. Ezekiel 5-8
Aug 13. Jeremiah 23-25	Aug 29. Ezekiel 9-12
Aug 14. Jeremiah 26-29	Aug 30. Ezekiel 13-15
Aug 15. Jeremiah 30-31	Aug 31. Ezekiel 16-17
Aug 16. Jeremiah 32-34	

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: SEPTEMBER

Sep 1. Ezekiel 18-20	Sep 16. Daniel 10-12
Sep 2. Ezekiel 21-22	Sep 17. Ezra 1-3
Sep 3. Ezekiel 23-24	Sep 18. Ezra 4-6; Psalm 137
Sep 4. Ezekiel 25-27	Sep 19. Haggai
Sep 5. Ezekiel 28-30	Sep 20. Zechariah 1-4
Sep 6. Ezekiel 31-33	Sep 21. Zechariah 5-9
Sep 7. Ezekiel 34-36	Sep 22. Zechariah 10-14
Sep 8. Ezekiel 37-39	Sep 23. Esther 1-5
Sep 9. Ezekiel 40-42	Sep 24. Esther 6-10
Sep 10. Ezekiel 43-45	Sep 25. Ezra 7-10
Sep 11. Ezekiel 46-48	Sep 26. Nehemiah 1-5
Sep 12. Joel	Sep 27. Nehemiah 6-7
Sep 13. Daniel 1-3	Sep 28. Nehemiah 8-10
Sep 14. Daniel 4-6	Sep 29. Neh. 11-13; Psa. 126
Sep 15. Daniel 7-9	Sep 30. Malachi

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: OCTOBER

Oct 1. Luke 1; John 1	Oct 17. Matt. 14; Mk 6; Lk 9
Oct 2. Matthew 1; Luke 2	Oct 18. John 6
Oct 3. Matthew 2	Oct 19. Matthew 15; Mark 7
Oct 4. Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3	Oct 20. Matthew 16; Mark 8
Oct 5. Matthew 4; Luke 4-5	Oct 21. Matthew 17; Mark 9
Oct 6. John 2-4	Oct 22. Matthew 18
Oct 7. Matthew 8; Mark 2	Oct 23. John 7-8
Oct 8. John 5	Oct 24. John 9-10
Oct 9. Matthew 12; Mark 3; Luke 6	Oct 25. Luke 10
Oct 10. Matthew 5-7	Oct 26. Luke 12-13
Oct 11. Matthew 9; Luke 7	Oct 27. Luke 14-15
Oct 12. Matthew 11	Oct 28. Luke 16-17
Oct 13. Luke 11	Oct 29. John 11
Oct 14. Matthew 13; Luke 8	Oct 30. Luke 18
Oct 15. Mark 4-5	Oct 31. Matthew 19; Mark 10
Oct 16. Matthew 10	

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: NOVEMBER

Nov 1. Matthew 20-21	Nov 16. Acts 1-3
Nov 2. Luke 19	Nov 17. Acts 4-6
Nov 3. Mark 11; John 12	Nov 18. Acts 7-8
Nov 4. Matthew 22; Mark 12	Nov 19. Acts 9-10
Nov 5. Matthew 23; Luke 20-21	Nov 20. Acts 11-12
Nov 6. Mark 13	Nov 21. Acts 13-14
Nov 7. Matthew 24	Nov 22. James
Nov 8. Matthew 25	Nov 23. Acts 15-16
Nov 9. Matthew 26; Mark 14	Nov 24. Galatians 1-3
Nov 10. Luke 22; John 13	Nov 25. Galatians 4-6
Nov 11. John 14-17	Nov 26. Acts 17
Nov 12. Matthew 27; Mark 15	Nov 27. 1 & 2 Thessalonians
Nov 13. Luke 23; John 18-19	Nov 28. Acts 18-19
Nov 14. Matthew 28; Mark 16	Nov 29. 1 Corinthians 1-4
Nov 15. Luke 24; John 20-21	Nov 30. 1 Corinthians 5-8

READ THE BIBLE THROUGH: DECEMBER

Dec 1. 1 Corinthians 9-11	Dec 17. Philippians
Dec 2. 1 Corinthians 12-14	Dec 18. 1 Timothy
Dec 3. 1 Corinthians 15-16	Dec 19. Titus
Dec 4. 2 Corinthians 1-4	Dec 20. 1 Peter
Dec 5. 2 Corinthians 5-9	Dec 21. Hebrews 1-6
Dec 6. 2 Corinthians 10-13	Dec 22. Hebrews 7-10
Dec 7. Romans 1-3	Dec 23. Hebrews 11-13
Dec 8. Romans 4-7	Dec 24. 2 Timothy
Dec 9. Romans 8-10	Dec 25. 2 Peter, Jude
Dec 10. Romans 11-13	Dec 26. 1 John
Dec 11. Romans 14-16	Dec 27. 2, 3 John
Dec 12. Acts 20-23	Dec 28. Revelation 1-5
Dec 13. Acts 24-26	Dec 29. Revelation 6-11
Dec 14. Acts 27-28	Dec 30. Revelation 12-18
Dec 15. Colossians, Philemon	Dec 31. Revelation 19-22
Dec 16. Ephesians	

JANUARY 1, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S PROMISES

TOPIC: GOD PROMISES TO HEAR AND FORGIVE

TEXT: 2 CHRONICLES 7: 12–22

MEMORY VERSE: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7: 14)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize the Lord's promises of blessing and discipline spoken to Solomon.
2. Categorize those promises in terms of their enduring or temporary nature.
3. State one or more “lessons learned” from times of being personally blessed or disciplined.

INTRODUCTION

Brian and Candy's 40th wedding anniversary was a hard-won victory. As their children, grandchildren, in-laws, and friends gathered, some people remembered another time, years earlier, when that marriage had almost ended. The family's spending had become so extravagant that Brian had involved himself in illegal business practices to cover the costs. When he was found out, he had faced possible jail term.

As a result, Brian and Candy spent time talking through the issues that had led the family to such overspending. They changed the spending habits that had led Brian to search for money in unethical ways. And over time, Brian and Candy rebuilt their marriage—they chose forgiveness as a lifestyle. Divine forgiveness is also a choice, requiring action from both God and His people.

QUESTIONS

A. ON TURNING BACK (2 Chronicles 7:12-16)

*.... I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself ...
(vs. 12)*

1. What gives one assurance that God Has answered one's prayer?
I John 5: 14; Jeremiah 33:3, Philippians 4:6.
2. (a) Under what circumstances can God shut up Heaven, bring about drought, command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among His people? *Deuteronomy 28: 23-24, Romans 6:23; Ecclesiastes 10:8; Romans 6:1-2*

(b) What can be done to change the situation in question 2(a)?
2 Chronicles 7:14a, James 4:7-8; Proverbs 1:10; Psalm 24: 3-5
3. How do you take care of God's temple – both in terms of your own body and the Church in the wider sense – as acts of dedication to God? *Romans 12: 1-2, 1 Corinthians 10: 31, Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 21:12-13; 1 Corinthians. 6:19-20*

B. ON TURNING AWAY (2 Chronicles 7:17-22)

1. In what ways do you hope your faithfulness to God will become a blessing to future generations? *Genesis 26: 4-5; 12: 2-3, 2 Timothy 1:5-6; Joshua. 24:15; Proverbs 22:6.*

2. In what ways do Christians subtly serve other gods today? How can they stop this? *Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 6:24; Matthew 6:33*

CONCLUSION

While sin has consequences, often dire, neither sin nor its consequences can utter the final word about the relationship between chosen people and the choosing God. Even when sin seems to have ruined God's plans entirely—as with the apostasy of the Davidic line—we do well to remember that God's promises and plans move forward. The loss of David's kingdom led to the greatest gift of all: salvation through Jesus' blood, bringing us out of our exile in sin and into God's kingdom.

We cannot anticipate how God will choose to work through our “exilic” experiences (*Romans 8:28*). Still, when asking for God's mercy, we must remember our own responsibility: to humble ourselves, to offer honest prayer, and to seek God's face as we turn from evil. He honours our repentance when we honour Him.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Our act of repentance is an honour to God.
2. Acknowledge your sinful ways and turn away from them.
3. The promises of God remain ever true and relevant.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Jan. 1</i>	<i>Walk Faithfully Before God</i>	<i>2 Chronicles 7:12–22</i>
<i>Mon, Jan. 2</i>	<i>God's Blessing, Israel's Unfaithfulness</i>	<i>Isaiah 43:14–28</i>
<i>Tue, Jan. 3</i>	<i>Dry Bones Shall Live</i>	<i>Ezekiel 37:1–14</i>
<i>Wed, Jan. 4</i>	<i>Israel Will Be God's People</i>	<i>Ezekiel 37:15–28</i>
<i>Thu, Jan. 5</i>	<i>God's Compassion</i>	<i>Hosea 11</i>
<i>Fri, Jan. 6</i>	<i>Stand Firm in the Spirit</i>	<i>2 Thessalonians 2:3–15</i>
<i>Sat, Jan. 7</i>	<i>A Faithful Protector</i>	<i>2 Thessalonians 3:1–5, 13–17</i>

JANUARY 8, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S PROMISES

TOPIC: GOD PROMISES TO RESTORE

TEXT: ISAIAH 43: 1-4, 10-12

MEMORY VERSE: *But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. (Isaiah 43: 1)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. List parallel elements in the lesson text—elements that say the same things in different words.
2. Compare and contrast the use of the word ransom in Isaiah 43:3 with that word's usage in Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; and 1 Timothy 2:6.
3. List ways to recognize God's protection today.

INTRODUCTION

Many citizens think of jury duty as an onerous task to be avoided. But for one man, actually serving on a jury made a world of difference in his attitude. In the case before him and his peers, a young woman was charged with theft, forgery, assault, and attempted murder. She testified truthfully, admitting freely to the first two charges and proving to be a reliably truthful witness in her own defence. It became obvious in the course of proceedings that she was innocent of the two more serious charges.

After rendering their verdict, the man learned that one of his peers had decided after the first day of the trial that the defendant was guilty on all

charges. This explained why it had taken several hours to persuade that jury that the evidence did not support her predetermined verdict. That's when the man realized his privilege: serving on that jury gave him opportunity to work with his peers to prevent a young woman from spending several unwarranted years in prison.

Israel was called as a witness to tell the truth about God's love and faithfulness. But unlike the young woman, Israel was not always a reliable witness. Isaiah's call was for people to act as reliable, truthful witnesses of all that God had done.

QUESTIONS

A. THE LORD ACTS (Isaiah 43:1-4)

1. How have the key verbs in verse 1, shaped your identity as God's child – created, formed, redeemed and called? *1 Peter 2: 9, Isaiah 43: 7, Colossians 3: 12, Romans 5:8.*
2. What events in your life give you confidence that God is always with you? *Isaiah 43: 2-4, Isaiah 66: 12, Daniel 3: 25, Psalm 68:19; Isaiah 63:9.*

B. THE LORD CALLS (Isaiah 43: 10-12)

1. How does witnessing about the Lord deepen your knowledge, faith and understanding of God? *Hosea 13: 4, Acts 1: 8, Colossians 3: 12-17, 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16*

... I, even I, am the LORD; and apart from me there is no saviour. (vs. 11)

2. (a) What modern "saviours" do people depend on instead of the Lord? *2 Timothy 4:3-4; Matthew 7:15; Matthew 13:22; Matthew 6:19-21.*

- (b) How does your life testify that the Lord is your only Saviour?
*2 Corinthians 3: 2, Galatians 2:20; Matthew 5: 14-16; 2
Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10;*

CONCLUSION

Much as we might be tempted to judge Israel's efforts to witness, we do well to appreciate that though Isaiah was not believed in his own ministry, his words were written down. These were considered precious enough (by God) to be preserved throughout generations, and Isaiah's words undergird the Christian's witness today.

As disciples of Christ, we are to be witnesses to the unbelieving world (see *Acts 1:8*). And though we might think of ourselves individually as witnesses, the church is the primary witness (*John 13:34–35; Colossians 3:12–17*). What do our worship services say about our God? How does our presence in the community tell the truth about our Lord? What do our relationships, work and pastimes say about our holy God?

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Be an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith and in purity;
2. God's restoration is possible when we yield our lives to him.
3. God promises restoration for His children.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Jan. 8</i>	<i>God's Chosen Witnesses</i>	<i>Isaiah 43:1–13</i>
<i>Mon, Jan. 9</i>	<i>The Lord Is My Shepherd</i>	<i>Psalms 23</i>
<i>Tue, Jan. 10</i>	<i>Guided by God's Word</i>	<i>Psalms 119:81–96</i>
<i>Wed, Jan. 11</i>	<i>Trust in the Lord</i>	<i>Proverbs 3:1–15</i>
<i>Thu, Jan. 12</i>	<i>Tested Faith</i>	<i>1 Peter 1:3–12</i>
<i>Fri, Jan. 13</i>	<i>Chosen for Holiness</i>	<i>1 Peter 1:13–25</i>
<i>Sat, Jan. 14</i>	<i>God Guides and Refines</i>	<i>Isaiah 48:1–11</i>

JANUARY 15, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S PROMISES

TOPIC: GOD PROMISES TO GUIDE

TEXT: ISAIAH 48: 3-8a, 17

MEMORY VERSE: This is what the Lord says-Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go." (Isaiah 48: 17)

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Understand that stubbornness can stand in our way before God.
2. Recognize that God is to be glorified for our blessings and achievements.
3. Meditate upon the promise of God's guidance.

INTRODUCTION

In 1942, science fiction author Isaac Asimov created a fictitious world in his Foundation series of books, in which a scientist developed an accurate model for predicting future events based on a discipline he called "psychohistory." While this seemed fantastic at the time, current computer programmers use "big data" collected on web and smartphone activity to predict all sorts of things. Adverts are created, based on this information, to motivate you to make a purchase for something you are likely interested in. Elsewhere, computer data analytics are widely used in professional sports leagues to predict future performance of players, which influences player drafts, trades, and contracts.

There is a marked difference, though, between discerning a likely future and knowing the future infallibly and in detail. This lesson will examine why God sometimes reveals the future to people and assures them of his guidance.

QUESTIONS

A. THE KNOWING GOD (Isaiah 48:3-8)

"For I know how stubborn you were; the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze." (vs. 4)

1. (a) Comment on the description of this degree of stubbornness.

(b) In those moments of stubbornness, is God honoured? If not, what needs to be done to address the issue of such stubbornness? *Romans 1: 28, 1 Kings 12: 8, Proverbs 29: 1.*
2. What are modern-day equivalents of idols that receive credit that is due to God alone? How can you guard against either taking credit for your own blessings or attributing them to someone or something else other than God Almighty? *Exodus 20: 4, 32: 4, Luke 12: 17-20.*
3. How can you motivate a friend, family or fellow to know, listen to and obey God's word? *John 13: 17, James 1: 25, Revelation 22: 14, Romans 10: 17*

B. THE LIVING GOD (Isaiah 48: 17)

"I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go." (vs. 17)

1. How can we at NHBC take full advantage of this promise of God?

2. What are the benefits of being a child of God? *Psalm 32: 7-8, Romans 8: 14*

CONCLUSION

The tragedy of Israel's history is that God had revealed many things to them: His law, His will for their nation, His choices of leaders, and so on. Despite the long history of such revelations, the nation often acted as though the people did not have ears to hear. Time after time, Israel ignored the Lord's directives and warnings. Iron-necked Judah would not change its course of action despite the warnings of the Lord's prophets, making punishment inevitable. We have a major advantage: we are empowered by the Spirit to grow in our relationship with the Father and become more like Jesus each day. When we do this, we will be better able to hear warnings when we are following a way set out by the Lord. And we will have ears hearing what the Lord is doing as He calls to us to join His work. Listen for the call!

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. God's promises never fail.
2. Stubbornness and Rebellion against God's Word is to our disadvantage.
3. Anything or anyone who takes the glory and honour due to God in our life is an idol.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Jan. 15</i>	<i>God Leads and Directs</i>	<i>Isaiah 48:12–22</i>
<i>Mon, Jan. 16</i>	<i>Passing from Death to Life</i>	<i>1 John 3:14-24</i>
<i>Tue, Jan. 17</i>	<i>You are Light in the Lord</i>	<i>Ephesians 5: 1-10</i>
<i>Wed, Jan. 18</i>	<i>Christ will Shine upon you</i>	<i>Ephesians 5: 11-20</i>
<i>Thu, Jan. 19</i>	<i>God's Word Lights My Path</i>	<i>Psalm 119: 97-112</i>
<i>Fri, Jan. 20</i>	<i>Your Light Has Come</i>	<i>Isaiah 60: 1-8</i>
<i>Sat, Jan. 21</i>	<i>Jesus, the Light of the World</i>	<i>John 8: 12-20</i>

JANUARY 22, 2023

THEME:

GOD'S PROMISES

TOPIC: GOD PROMISES LIGHT

TEXT: ISAIAH 58: 6-10

MEMORY VERSE: *And if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. (Isaiah 58: 10)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Understand what it means for our light to rise in the darkness.
2. Explain the context of the three undesirable actions of Isaiah 58:9b.
3. Make a commitment to live as light in this world of darkness.

INTRODUCTION

Government agencies and academic researchers have taken up research studies on why poverty persists. Their studies have produced specialized vocabulary, with terms such as “food insecurity,” “persistent poverty regions,” and “economic blight.” Nigeria was declared the Poverty Capital of the World. The poverty rate in Nigeria today is alarming. Every community has poor people in its midst, folks struggling to have adequate food, clothing, and shelter.

Isaiah repeatedly addressed care for all people, exhorting his hearers to recognize the poor among them and offer relief. This week's lesson has

wonderful, timeless teaching for us as we consider the Christian's obligations to the poor in our churches and communities.

QUESTIONS

A. GOD'S CHOSEN FAST (Isaiah 58: 6-7)

1. What kind of fast has God chosen? (*vs. 6*) *Matthew 6: 16-18, Esther 4: 16, Joel 2:12-13*
2. (a) Is there oppression in Nigeria? If yes, mention some of the instances?

(b) How can you aid the poor around you? *James 1: 27, Matthew 25: 35-36, 40; Micah 6:7-8; James 2:15-17*

B. A BRIGHT FUTURE (Isaiah 58:8-10)

1. (a) In what ways can you expect the blessings of *Isaiah 58: 8-9a* to come about as a consequence of righteousness in action? *2 Chronicles 7:14; Proverbs 28:13-17; Proverbs 14:34.*

(b) Are our expected blessing the reason for our righteous living? Discuss. *Galatians 6:7-8; Hosea 10:12; Matthew 6:33.*
2. How can we shine brightly for the Lord in a community where injustice prevails? *Matthew 5: 14-16, Isaiah 60:1, Daniel 1:8; Daniel 3:17-18; Matthew 10:28*
3. Discuss the conditions given by the Lord for our Light to shine (*vs. 9-10*)

CONCLUSION

A just and caring community will consider the “hungry” amongst its population and cater to their needs. It may be impossible for an individual to meet every community need, but this does not excuse us from keeping our eyes open to the plight of others or striving to meet the needs we see.

Testimonies confirm that fasting gains more depth when practiced in a community, with at least one partner. In collaboration, the limits of the people fasting are mutually agreed upon and there is an accountability that helps keep them focused and faithful to the practice. Maybe you should seek a “fasting partner” who will share the experience and grow with you. That way you can grow in grace and truth together (*see John 1:14, 17*).

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. God is always faithful in keeping his promises.
2. Believers should inculcate the habit of fasting regularly.
3. The church of Jesus is the light and hope of the dark world.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Jan. 22</i>	<i>Obeying God Brings Justice</i>	<i>Isaiah 58:1–14</i>
<i>Mon, Jan. 23</i>	<i>God Is Love</i>	<i>1 John 4:1–8</i>
<i>Tue, Jan. 24</i>	<i>God's Love Revealed</i>	<i>1 John 4:9–21</i>
<i>Wed, Jan. 25</i>	<i>Testimony to God's Love</i>	<i>1 John 5:10–21</i>
<i>Thu, Jan. 26</i>	<i>God Will Go with You</i>	<i>Exodus 33:12–23</i>
<i>Fri, Jan. 27</i>	<i>The Lord, Merciful and Gracious</i>	<i>Exodus 34:5–17</i>
<i>Sat, Jan. 28</i>	<i>God Is Near Despite Adversity</i>	<i>Joel 1:1–4, 14–20</i>

JANUARY 29, 2023

THEME:

GOD'S PROMISES

TOPIC: GOD PROMISES HIS PRESENCE

TEXT: JOEL 2: 21–27

MEMORY VERSE: *Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be ashamed. (Joel 2: 27)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Recognize that fear has no place in the light of God's promises.
2. Compare and contrast the positive and negative narrations in today's text.
3. Express confident assurance of God's presence in our lives now and forever.

INTRODUCTION

In 1874, swarms of grasshoppers swept through parts of the Great Plains of North America and laid waste crops, wood, paper, and even people's clothing. These kinds of insects measure no more than one-and-a-half inches long, but when numbered in their millions, they have the potential to destroy thousands of acres of crops. The result of the destruction was total; the ravaged land usually appeared as if it had been ravaged by wildfire.

Immigrants to Kansas were among the hardest hit by the swarms. People's livelihoods depended on bountiful crops, but the crops had been devoured and were no more. The renewal of the land and the restoration of the people took years and required assistance from the entire nation. A natural disaster of this nature would seem strange to modern readers

who have never experienced it. However, many people in today's world still suffer hardship because of destructive plagues of insects. The people of Judah and the prophet Joel could report on this type of destruction first hand. Both the people and their land needed God's miraculous renewal and restoration.

QUESTIONS

A. GOD'S RENEWAL (Joel 2:21-25)

1. What are some of the great things that God has promised you? How will you "be glad and rejoice" in light of these promises? *Nehemiah 8: 10 Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 43:19; 1 Corinthians 2:9*
2. What are the characteristics of God's promises? *Psalms 89: 34; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 6: 10; Numbers 23:19, Isaiah 66:9; Hebrews 10:23; Psalm 12:6; Isaiah 55:11*

The threshing-floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. (vs. 24)

3. How can you share with your neighbours from the overflow of your life's blessings? *Luke 6:38; Proverbs 19:17; John 3:16*

B. GOD'S REMINDERS (Joel 2:26-27)

1. How does God's promises combat the fears in our heart? *Jeremiah 33: 3, Isaiah 66:9; Hebrews 10:23; Psalm 12:6; Isaiah 55:11; 2 Timothy 1:7.*
2. What provisions does God have for His people? *Joel 2:26, Psalm 23; 91, 1 Corinthians 2:9.*
3. What gives you the Assurance that God is with you. *Matthew 28: 20; 1: 23, Isaiah 43:2-4*

CONCLUSION

Although sin brings consequences, as it did for the people of Judah, God will not ignore or disregard His people. Instead, God can bring joy to replace sorrow. His timetable may not be ours, and He may not immediately bring joy or fix our suffering. However, His people can take comfort in having unrestrained access to His presence, where there is fullness of joy (*Psalms 16:11*).

Second, this passage serves as a reminder of God's promises to renew all creation. Joel promised that not only would the people be restored, but creation—the land and the animals—would also be restored. God's plan of restoration is not only focused on the spiritual realm but also the physical realm (*see Romans 8:18–21*). All things—spiritual and physical—belong to the God who created them. Joel calls us to embrace all aspects of God's restoration and renewal. As a result, God's people of all eras can celebrate His presence in their midst.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The promises of God are ever so strong and ever so dependable, and capable of overcoming all manner of fear.
2. The presence of God takes care of all situations.
3. Believer should carry God's presence every day, everywhere.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Sun, Jan. 29 *God Will Pour Out the Spirit*

Joel 2:18–31

Mon, Jan. 30 *The Last Will Be First*

Matthew 20:1, 6–16

Tue, Jan. 31 *God, Teach and Guide Me*

Psalms 25:1–15

Wed, Feb. 1 *Majestic Is God's Name!*

Psalms 8

Thu, Feb. 2 *God Will Build a House*

2 Samuel 7:1, 4–17

Fri, Feb. 3 *Who Am I?*

2 Samuel 7:18–29

Sat, Feb. 4 *God Confounds the Wise*

1 Corinthians 1:18–24

FEBRUARY 5, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S CALL

TOPIC: RESUMÉ OF THE CALLED

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18–31

MEMORY VERSE: *He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:28-29)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify an appropriate context in which a Christian might boast.
2. Explain the difference between the world's wisdom and God's wisdom.
3. Share personal examples of worldly wisdom that you have rejected in contemporary times.

INTRODUCTION

The message of the cross despite being preached for over 2,000 years is still meaningless to many in our generation, especially those who view it from the viewpoint of the world. Unfortunately, the cross of Christ seemed like foolishness – both to the Jews, who expected a powerful Messiah and to the Greeks, who placed high value on human wisdom. They thought of themselves as thinkers and took pride in their supposed intellectual superiority because they were still bound by the world's way of thinking. What God considers as potentials for service may not align with man's wisdom, nevertheless his line of thought will always prevail. In today's study we shall get to see the differentiation between the Wisdom of God and the wisdom of man in the light of the admonition for believers to walk in the eternal and never-failing wisdom of God.

QUESTIONS

A. WORD OF THE CROSS (1 CORINTHIANS 1:18–25)

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”, v.18

1. Why is the preaching of the cross foolishness to the world, but power for the believers? *Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Isaiah 55:8-9.*
2. What is the difference between God's wisdom and worldly wisdom? *James 3:15-17.*
3. How can you share the gospel of the cross with an unbeliever who is seeking for signs and to another who is focused on logical reasoning? *John 4: 18,19,29,42; 1 Corinthians 1: 27, 1 Corinthians 1:22-24*

B. CALLING OF THE HUMBLE (1 CORINTHIANS 1:26–31)

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” v. 26

1. From this lesson's text who can be referred to as the “Humble”? *1 Corinthians 1:28-29*
2. Is it right for believers to be boastful? Explain *1 Corinthians 1:30-31, Jeremiah 9: 23-24*

CONCLUSION

Martin Luther-King Jr argued that the human doctrine of glory is centred on human wisdom that leads to the blinding of hearts. However, he stated

that the divine doctrine of the cross is centred on God's self-revelation of His Suffering Son, which softens hearts.

The message of the cross still looks like a scandalous stumbling block to many since historically, Jesus of Nazareth was executed like a criminal on a shameful cross. This was a brutal event, it did not seem like a victory at that time, rather a colossal defeat. Yet without the cross, there is no salvation!

The true way of salvation may seem foolish, weak, and shameful to the world. This remains the only means designed by God through which he has brought salvation to the world and there is no alternative. The only way to salvation is through the cross of Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The message of the Cross of Christ that brings salvation to human is simple yet it cannot be understood with human philosophies.
2. Godly wisdom is superior to worldly wisdom and through the wisdom of God we shall live in dominion.
3. Christians should boast in the fact that we know the Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world and everything in it were created

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Feb. 5</i>	<i>God Chooses the Lowly</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:25–31</i>
<i>Mon, Feb. 6</i>	<i>God's Children and Heirs</i>	<i>Galatians 4:1–7</i>
<i>Tue, Feb. 7</i>	<i>A Holy Nation</i>	<i>Exodus 19:1–8</i>
<i>Wed, Feb. 8</i>	<i>Abide in Christ</i>	<i>John 15:1–14</i>
<i>Thu, Feb. 9</i>	<i>Chosen by Christ</i>	<i>John 15:15–27</i>
<i>Fri, Feb. 10</i>	<i>Be Holy</i>	<i>Leviticus 19:2–4, 9–18</i>
<i>Sat, Feb. 11</i>	<i>Keep God's Statutes</i>	<i>Leviticus 20:22–26</i>

FEBRUARY 12, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S CALL

TOPIC: REMINDER OF THE CALL

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 1:3–14

MEMORY VERSE: *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1: 13)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify ways that Paul, Lois, and Eunice influenced Timothy's faith.
2. Explain and emulate Paul's mentoring style.
3. Know how to develop a personal plan or strategy that shields from heresy and ensures exposure to sound doctrines only.

INTRODUCTION

In a letter written by Apostle Paul to the younger Evangelist, Timothy, Paul thought quite highly of Timothy as a protégé, referring to him four times as a “son” in a spiritual sense (*1 Corinthians 4:17; Philipians 2:19–22; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2*). He had a good reputation among the believers of his native region. Paul's trust in him increased over time so much so that Timothy was named the co-sender of some of Paul's letters. Timothy's dedication to the Gospel resulted in his being imprisoned at some point. The repeated mention of his name in the New Testament indicates the importance of his role in the spread of the Gospel. Following his days as a traveling missionary with Paul, Timothy seems to have settled down in Ephesus, as a Minister of the Gospel.

In today's study, we shall see the relationship between Paul and Timothy in view of how we can tailor our mentorship and discipleship style in the pattern revealed.

QUESTIONS

A. REMINDER OF HERITAGE (2 Timothy 1: 3–7)

1. What is the heritage that Apostle Paul referred to in his letter?
2 Timothy 1: 5

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that is in thee also” (vs. 5)

2. Who were the people in Timothy's life and their respective relationships with him? What were their impact on Timothy's life?
3. What will be your legacy in terms of instilling discipline in younger believers or unbelievers? *1 Timothy 4:12, Titus 2:7-8, 2 Timothy 2:24-25*

B. REASON FOR FAITHFULNESS (2 Timothy 1: 8–12)

1. What is faithfulness? Why should believers be faithful to God and the gospel? *Acts 13:22, 1 Corinthians 4: 2, 2 Timothy 2: 2*
2. How can you encourage new Christians to be bold and unashamed in living out their faith? *Romans 1:16-17, 2 Timothy 2: 15, Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8; Matthew 10:28*

C. REQUIREMENT OF SOUNDNESS (2 Timothy 1: 13–14)

1. How do you distinguish between a sound doctrine and heresy?
2 Timothy 2:15, Acts 17:11; Matthew 7:15-18

CONCLUSION

Every believer was first called by God to be like Him before they were sent to make disciples of all nations. We have a heritage in Christ Jesus which is love and compassion for the souls of mankind. As priests and kings we have been commissioned to shine as the light of the world and to guard the truth of God's word jealously with the wisdom of God. We need to continually study God's word so that we shall be rooted, immovable and always abiding in the presence of God all the days of our lives.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. We are called of God to be His ambassador and are answerable to Him daily with respect to how we live.
2. It is important for believers to be rooted in the scriptures so that we are not deceived by heretic teachers.
3. We need to leave a legacy of faithfulness and righteousness for our children and the future generations.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Feb. 12</i>	<i>Kindle God's Gift</i>	<i>2 Timothy 1:3–14</i>
<i>Mon, Feb. 13</i>	<i>Pure and Undeified Religion</i>	<i>James 1:19–27</i>
<i>Tue, Feb. 14</i>	<i>Defender of the Oppressed</i>	<i>Amos 5:7–15</i>
<i>Wed, Feb. 15</i>	<i>Father of Orphans, Protector of Widows</i>	<i>Psalms 68:1–13</i>
<i>Thu, Feb. 16</i>	<i>Defend the Poor and Needy</i>	<i>Proverbs 31:1–9</i>
<i>Fri, Feb. 17</i>	<i>Good News for the Poor</i>	<i>Luke 4:16–30</i>
<i>Sat, Feb. 18</i>	<i>Coming Miseries upon the Rich</i>	<i>James 5:1–11</i>

FEBRUARY 19, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S CALL

TOPIC: RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE CALLED

TEXT: JAMES 2: 1–12

MEMORY VERSE: *Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? (James 2: 5)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize why favouritism is incompatible with the Christ-centred life.
2. Compare and contrast the biblical concept of favouritism with modern definitions of discrimination.
3. Propose a way to identify and correct any NHBC practice that does not treat people equally.

INTRODUCTION

As humans we tend to associate with people who are like us. Sometimes the more differences that exist in a group, whether on the basis of culture, socioeconomic status, race or other reasons which are either real or imagined, the greater the likelihood of instability in that group. This calls for deliberate action by the Church to address diversity and inclusion at all levels of the Church life. When this is properly addressed, it will further promote unity of faith and purpose within the body of Christ universal and the local church in particular.

The problems faced by the readers of the book of James are readily recognizable as the same problems we face in contemporary churches. Likewise, the solutions James presents are relevant and applicable today. We shall learn about the responsibilities of every member of the body of Christ in promoting unity of purpose and avoiding discrimination and favouritism.

QUESTIONS

A. PROBLEM IDENTIFIED (*James 2:1–4*)

1. (a) What is favouritism? Are there differences between: “favouritism”, “discrimination” and “partiality”? If yes, please explain.

(b) List some examples of partiality that James identified in today's lesson text. *James 2:2-4*
2. Are the identified examples of partiality present in our church (NHBC)? Have you personally identified any other form of partiality at any time in the church or any of the small groups within the church?

B. PROBLEM EVALUATED (*JAMES 2:5–7*)

1. What is the basis of God's election or call of anybody? *James 2:5, 1 Timothy 3: 2-13, Acts 1: 24; 6: 5*
2. How do Christians support or encourage partiality at work and other spheres of life? *Exodus 23:2; James 4:17;*

C. PROBLEM'S SOLUTION (*JAMES 2:8–12*)

1. Why should we avoid partiality at home? *Romans 2:11*

2. What is the solution to the problem of favouritism in the church?
Nehemiah 5:9, Romans 2:10-11, Galatians 3: 28, 1 Samuel 30: 22-23

CONCLUSION

This lesson shows that discrimination or favouritism is sinful and condemnable. God does not show favouritism and we should not. Favouritism grows out of the fallen human nature, a nature that is drawn to material wealth, human status and other forms of prejudice. This is not part of God's nature and not part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit; therefore God's children should not embrace favouritism. May the Holy Spirit teach and help us to see those around us as God sees them. May we be delivered from the sins of partiality, prejudice, and discrimination in Jesus' name, Amen.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. God does not show favouritism. He will always answer anyone that calls on Him.
2. As children of God we should not show favouritism because it is not a fruit of the Holy Spirit
3. Christians should treat other people based on how God views them.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Feb. 19</i>	<i>God Has Chosen the Poor</i>	<i>James 2:1–12</i>
<i>Mon, Feb. 20</i>	<i>Rescued from Darkness</i>	<i>Colossians 1:9–22</i>
<i>Tue, Feb. 21</i>	<i>A Charge to a Young Leader</i>	<i>1 Timothy 6:11–16</i>
<i>Wed, Feb. 22</i>	<i>God Turns Darkness into Light</i>	<i>Isaiah 42:8–17</i>
<i>Thu, Feb. 23</i>	<i>God's Word Gives Light</i>	<i>Psalms 119:121–136</i>
<i>Fri, Feb. 24</i>	<i>You Are Children of Light</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians 5:1–10</i>
<i>Sat, Feb. 25</i>	<i>You Are Chosen</i>	<i>1 Peter 2:1–12</i>

FEBRUARY 26, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S CALL

TOPIC: RESULTS OF THE CALL

TEXT: 1 PETER 2:1–10

MEMORY VERSE: *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2: 9)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the stone that causes people to stumble.
2. Explain why certain thoughts and actions are incompatible with us believers as members of a holy priesthood.
3. Identify the four attributes mentioned in *1 Peter 2:9a* and understand their implications

INTRODUCTION

We live in times when questions of identity predominate in areas such as politics, professional calling, career, business, entertainment industry, sports and other walks of life.

Jews from the religious leadership class all the way down to the common people found their identity in God and in the specific religious practices of the Law of Moses. When we read the New Testament today, we should not lose sight of the fact that becoming a Christian by the early church members was a huge step in their cultural and religious context (compare Luke 14:26). Beginning with the apostles, Christian leaders worked

tirelessly to help new believers come to see themselves in a new light as they had a new identity in Christ.

This also applies to every believer today, once we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour the bible defines our identity and we need to believe it and live up to His Calling upon our lives.

QUESTIONS

A. AS NEWBORN BABIES (1 Peter 2:1–3)

1. Mention few characteristics of a new born baby within the first three months of his/her birth?
2. What can new believers do to grow in Christ? *1 Peter 2:1, 2 Peter 1:5-9, John 3: 3-4, Romans 12: 1-2, Acts 17: 11*

B. AS LIVING STONES (1 Peter 2:4–8)

1. Who are “living stones” and “lively stones” respectively? (vs. 4-5)
2. What are the responsibilities of lively stones to God? *1 Peter 2:5, 9*
3. Who is the Chief cornerstone? What are his attributes? *1 Peter 2:6-8*

C. FOR A NEW BEGINNING (1 Peter 2:9–10)

1. What are the consequences of becoming a believer? (vs. 10) *Ephesians 2: 10, 12-13; Matthew 5:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20*

CONCLUSION

The question of identity is at the center of today's lesson. In the face of persecution and suffering, the believers to whom Peter wrote seemed to

have had their doubts. In our contemporary world, the issue of our identity as Christians is just as important. Our world bombards us with endless identity options. These options in and of themselves range from the harmless to the sinful. But what all of these have in common is that they must give way because of our allegiance to King Jesus.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Believers should serve Jesus Christ their King as members of the royalty.
2. We should treat fellow believers as princes and princesses.
3. We should honour King Jesus in all that we do as His obedient servants as we work towards the unity of believers, the holy, royal nation of King Jesus.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Feb. 26</i>	<i>The Light Brings Freedom</i>	<i>1 Peter 2:13–25</i>
<i>Mon, Feb. 27</i>	<i>Lord, Hear My Prayer</i>	<i>Psalms 28</i>
<i>Tue, Feb. 28</i>	<i>Come to Me, You Weary</i>	<i>Matthew 11:25–30</i>
<i>Wed, Mar. 1</i>	<i>Jesus Shows Compassion</i>	<i>Matthew 14:13–21</i>
<i>Thu, Mar. 2</i>	<i>I Take Refuge in the Lord</i>	<i>Psalms 71:1–12</i>
<i>Fri, Mar. 3</i>	<i>I Will Proclaim God's Work</i>	<i>Psalms 71:13–24</i>
<i>Sat, Mar. 4</i>	<i>Heavenly Rejoicing!</i>	<i>Luke 15:1–10</i>

MARCH 5, 2023

THEME:

CALLED FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

TOPIC: THE PRODIGAL SON

TEXT: LUKE 15: 11-24

MEMORY VERSE: : *"The son said to him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son". (Luke 15: 21)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the younger son's choices and the outcome of each choice.
2. Identify who each figure in the parable represents in real life.
3. Deal with the factors that make it difficult for us to forgive others.

INTRODUCTION

Today's Scripture is frequently called the parable of the Prodigal Son. While modern audiences sometimes use the designation "prodigal" to speak of the rebellion of the younger son, the word's meaning is associated with reckless waste and spending. This parable is the third in a series in Luke 15. The other parable describes a lost sheep (*Luke 15:3-7*) and a Lost Coin (*Luke 15:8-10*). All three parables include similar THEME: (1) Something valuable was lost (2) The lost thing found (3) Celebration ensues.

Jesus told these parables in response to criticism from Pharisees and teachers of the law. These groups were upset because Jesus welcomed sinners and ate with them (*Luke 15:2*).

Jesus' association with sinners was critical to his mission to seek those who are lost (*Luke 19:10*) and bring them to repentance and salvation.

QUESTIONS

A. THE DISHONOURABLE SON (*Luke 15:11-19*)

1. From our text, what was the request of the younger son and its implications? *Luke 15: 12, 1 Timothy 6:6; Luke 15: 2.*
2. What lessons can be learnt from the younger son's life? *Psalms 10:4, 1 Timothy 6: 9-10.*
3. In what ways do our younger ones display prodigal-spirit today and how can they be helped? *1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Exodus 20:12; 2 Timothy 3:2-4.*

B. THE COMPASSIONATE FATHER (*Luke 15: 20-24*)

1. Who do the Father and the younger son in this parable represent in real life? Explain.
2. Identify factors that make it difficult for people to forgive others? How can such attitude be changed for good? *Proverbs 4: 23, Matthew 6:14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Luke 15: 20.*

CONCLUSION

Today's parable shows that God offers and desires reunion where broken relationships exist. We may feel shamefully unworthy, as the parable's younger son felt. However, like the father in the parable, God is generous and merciful. His generosity has been displayed for centuries like a shepherd who cares for his flock. God cares for His people and provides for their needs (*Psalms 23:1*). Such gestures from our Heavenly Father are

a testimony to all people of God's generosity and faithfulness (*Acts 14:17*).

God welcomes all people to become His beloved children in His family. Whatever be the gravity of your sins, God's arm is always open for forgiveness and reunion.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Greed must be identified and literally uprooted from our lives.
2. Godliness with contentment should be our guidepost.
3. God is compassionate to receive us when we repent of our flaws and return to him.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Mar. 5</i>	<i>A Rebellious Son Restored</i>	<i>Luke 15:11–24</i>
<i>Mon, Mar. 6</i>	<i>Jesus Heals a Gentile Girl</i>	<i>Matthew 15:21–28</i>
<i>Tue, Mar. 7</i>	<i>Let the Little Children Come</i>	<i>Matthew 19:13–22</i>
<i>Wed, Mar. 8</i>	<i>Learn Wisdom, My Child</i>	<i>Proverbs 1:7–16</i>
<i>Thu, Mar. 9</i>	<i>Teach Your Children God's Laws</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 4:7–14</i>
<i>Fri, Mar. 10</i>	<i>Consecrated from the Womb</i>	<i>Jeremiah 1:1–10</i>
<i>Sat, Mar. 11</i>	<i>The Praises of Children</i>	<i>Matthew 21:12–17</i>

MARCH 12, 2023

THEME:

CALLED FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

TOPIC: THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

TEXT: MATTHEW 18:1-9

MEMORY VERSE: *“Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven”. (Matthew 18:4)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize Jesus' view of greatness
2. Distinguish Jesus' view of greatness with that of the disciples.
3. State one way that we can practice childlike humility always.

INTRODUCTION

Children can't wait to grow up. They think that “growing up” means experiencing a life of unchecked freedom and complete autonomy. Ask any child how they would act as a grown-up, and their answers will reflect an expectation for freedom. For example, as a child, I anticipated that I would express my grown-up freedom by eating a container of cake frosting whenever I desired. However, I am yet to do that as an adult.

Although children want freedom and power, they depend on caretakers to provide for their needs and wants. For this reason, the world does not customarily regard children as examples of greatness and power. But that did not prevent Jesus from using a child to teach His followers about greatness in the kingdom of heaven as we shall consider in today's lesson.

QUESTIONS

A. MEASURE OF GREATNESS (Matthew 18:1-5)

1. What is Jesus' view of greatness and how to cultivate it. *Matthew 18: 4-5, Philippians 2: 3-4, 1 Peter 5: 5-6.*
2. What are the differences between Jesus' view of greatness and that of the disciples? *Matthew 18: 4, Mark 10: 37-40.*
3. In what situations can a focus on secular greatness become a distraction or even an idol? How can this be checkmated? *Matthew 6:33; Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 2: 8, 1 Timothy 6:10.*

B. WARNING OF SIN (Matthew 18: 6-9)

Humility is becoming a scarce commodity today, especially with the worldly slogan "If you got it, flaunt it"

1. How can believers display childlike humility in our society today? *James 1: 22-25*

"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away ... and if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away" (vs. 8-9)

2. In what ways can parts of our bodies make us sin and cause others to stumble? *Proverbs 6:17-19; Exodus 20:14-15; Proverbs 10:19; Matthew 5:28; Psalm 1:1-2.* Discuss and proffer solutions. *1 John 2:15; Colossians 3: 8-9*

CONCLUSION

Most people, sometime or another, desire to have power and be seen as great by the world. We are bombarded with messages and images that

celebrate people who appear powerful, prestigious, and famous- great by the standards of the world. The response to these messages requires that believers immerse themselves in Jesus' teaching regarding the required attitudes toward greatness.

Furthermore, followers of Jesus must remove those things that would cause themselves or others to stumble. These include disregarding the world's definition of greatness, power, and prestige. Believers should also be wary of the temptations to sin, and take necessary precautions with regard to what they see, hear, touch and do(1 Thessalonians 5:22-23). Do you have sinful habits or habits that cause others to sin? If so, do something about it immediately by approaching the Throne of Grace, where you are sure to obtain mercy, and find grace.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Let us be humble with our achievements.
2. Humility leads to real greatness in the kingdom of God.
3. Let's be intentional in taking steps to glorify God and not self.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Mar. 12</i>	<i>The Greatest in the Kingdom</i>	<i>Matthew 18:1–9; Mark 10:15</i>
<i>Mon, Mar. 13</i>	<i>Rivers of Living Water</i>	<i>John 7:37–43</i>
<i>Tue, Mar. 14</i>	<i>Worship God Alone</i>	<i>2 Kings 17:24–34</i>
<i>Wed, Mar. 15</i>	<i>Handling Opposition to God's Plans</i>	<i>Ezra 4:1–8, 11b–16</i>
<i>Thu, Mar. 16</i>	<i>Water on a Thirsty Land</i>	<i>Isaiah 44:1–8</i>
<i>Fri, Mar. 17</i>	<i>Jesus Offers Living Water</i>	<i>John 4:1–15</i>
<i>Sat, Mar. 18</i>	<i>Worship in Spirit and Truth</i>	<i>John 4:16–26</i>

MARCH 19, 2023

THEME:

CALLED FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

TOPIC: JESUS TALKS WITH A SAMARITAN

TEXT: JOHN 4:7-15, 28-30, 39-41

MEMORY VERSE: *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." (John 4: 39)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the barriers that Jesus ignored when talking with the Samaritan woman.
2. Explain the significance of Jesus' discussion with the woman in light of the prevailing cultural, political, and religious barriers.
3. Identify elements of Jesus' approach to evangelism that we can use.

INTRODUCTION

As a little child, I lived in a mobile home park associated with ethnic diversity and low-income families. When I learned that my friends who lived across the street from the mobile home park were not allowed to come over and play with me, I was hurt and embarrassed. Apparently, I lived in the "wrong" neighbourhood. Yet I remember ministers, Sunday school teachers, and youth ministers. They would take me to Church services, out to eat, to baseball games, and even to a rodeo (an exhibition). I do not know where I would be today if they had not disregarded social barriers in order to invest time in a kid like me.

In today's text, Jesus himself modelled breaking barriers in ministry. What would be the impact of reaching out to a perceived 'wrong'

neighbourhood? Today's lesson presents the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in which cultural and religious barriers were broken to make the woman have access to the gospel of salvation.

QUESTIONS

A. THE STRANGER (John 4:7-15)

1. From the text, itemize the barriers that could have hindered Jesus Christ from reaching out to the Samaritan woman. *John 4: 9*
2. What hurdles do Christians face in spreading the gospel today and how applicable is Jesus' strategy in overcoming the barriers? *Galatians 3: 28-29, 1 Corinthians 9: 22-23*

"...and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? (vs. 11)

3. What or Who is the living water? What are the benefits of having this Living Water, and how can we obtain Living Water today? *John 9: 14, John 7: 38, Isaiah 58: 11*

B. THE PROMISED ONE (John 4:28-30, 39-41)

"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did." vs. 29a.

1. There is a correlation between personal testimony and evangelism – Discuss.
2. List some benefits of sharing and hearing testimonies. *Romans 10:17; Psalm 19:7.*

CONCLUSION

Jesus' earthly ministry was not influenced by limits based on typical human barriers. His encounter with the Samaritan woman is a prime

example. In Jesus' presence, many of the boundaries that we have put up or that others have put up around us disappear (*Romans 3:22, 10:22; Ephesians 2:11-22*).

When we truly identify with Jesus, we become conveyors of mercy and grace to those we encounter. The Living Water Jesus gives us is available now and will continue to well up in us. The gift we find in Jesus is not a stagnant thing: it moves us from old to new, death to life, slavery to freedom.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Tradition should not stop the spread of the Gospel.
2. Seize every opportunity to shine the light of the gospel.
3. We must be eager to present Jesus to everyone as the source of the Living Water.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Mar. 19</i>	<i>Jesus, the Saviour of the World</i>	<i>John 4:27–42</i>
<i>Mon, Mar. 20</i>	<i>Resist the Devil</i>	<i>James 4:1–10</i>
<i>Tue, Mar. 21</i>	<i>The Weapons of Our Warfare</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 10:1–6</i>
<i>Wed, Mar. 22</i>	<i>Lord, Remember Your People</i>	<i>Psalms 106:1–7, 36–41, 47–48</i>
<i>Thu, Mar. 23</i>	<i>The Lord Delivers the Fearful</i>	<i>Psalms 34:1–15</i>
<i>Fri, Mar. 24</i>	<i>Let God's Enemies Be Scattered</i>	<i>Numbers 10:29–36</i>
<i>Sat, Mar. 25</i>	<i>Jesus Sets a Demoniac Free</i>	<i>Mark 5:1–13</i>

MARCH 26, 2023

THEME:

CALLED FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY

TOPIC: JESUS OVERPOWERS LEGION

TEXT: MARK 5:1-13, 18-20

MEMORY VERSE: *"The man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed" (Mark 5: 20)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Describe some key elements in Jesus' encounter with the demon-possessed.
2. Discover the right application of the power of Jesus Christ in our situations.
3. Share testimonies about Jesus' salvation and interventions in our lives.

INTRODUCTION

A unique characteristic of the Gospel of Mark is the portrayal of Jesus' tendency to tell people whom Jesus had healed to keep quiet about the matter (*Mark 1:44, 7:36, 8:30*). This has been referred to as the messianic secret.

Many theories have been proposed for this counter intuitive command to silence. One such is that Jesus did not want the people to have the wrong notion about what it meant for him to be the Messiah. While the people were looking for a political Messiah to deliver them from Roman Imperialism, Jesus used the time of secrecy to teach about the larger role

of the Messiah – beyond Israel and its politics. Jesus also wanted His ministry to be defined as a preaching and teaching ministry more than a healing and miracle ministry. The constant needs of people around Him and of crushing crowds looking for healing could have taken all His time, if Jesus had not guarded carefully. His preaching ministry was supported by miracles, not the other way round. The account of the Gadarene demoniac occurred during Jesus' preaching ministry in Galilee. This story is in a section of the book of Mark that contains several other accounts focusing on Jesus' power and authority over demons.

QUESTIONS

A. ARRIVALS (Mark 5:1-5)

1. Describe the characteristics of the Gadarene demoniac and his encounter with Jesus Christ. *Mark 5: 2-5*

B. CONFRONTATION (Mark 5:6-13)

“... he ran and fell on his knees in front of Him.” (vs. 6)

1. What made the “mad man of Gadarene” to bow at Jesus' feet?
Philippians 2: 9-11

“Legion ordinarily referred to a Roman military unit consisting of approximately 6,000 foot soldiers plus a mounted attachment. This fact notwithstanding, Jesus overpowered and flushed the demons out of the man.”

2. What does this encounter teach you about the power and authority of Jesus Christ and how can they be applied by Christians today? *Philippians 2: 9-11; Matthew 18:18; Luke 17:6, Proverbs 18: 10, James 5: 16b*

C. DEPARTURES (Mark 5:18-20)

1. Explain why Jesus prevented the delivered Gadarene man from following Him? *Mark 5: 18-20*
2. Can you share with your class members testimony of how your encounter with Jesus Christ set you free from the world? How have you been able to sustain your new life in Christ Jesus? *Colossians 1: 13-14; 2: 6-7, Galatians 2: 20*

CONCLUSION

We too have been delivered by Jesus Christ. And like the former demoniac, we have stepped out of a life that was more like death (*Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 2:13-15*). We too are called to share the story of what Jesus has done for us, to prepare our own communities to meet Christ and come to the new life (*Matthew 28:18-20*). No matter the legions aligned against us, Jesus is in control! All we have to do is place our faith in Him, with joy and obedience.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Jesus has power over demons.
2. Jesus came to set the captives free from all manner of oppression.
3. Go and share your deliverance experience with others

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Mar. 26</i>	<i>Sent to Bear Witness</i>	<i>Mark 5:14–20</i>
<i>Mon, Mar. 27</i>	<i>The Stones Would Shout</i>	<i>Luke 19:28–40</i>
<i>Tue, Mar. 28</i>	<i>Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem</i>	<i>Luke 19:41–48</i>
<i>Wed, Mar. 29</i>	<i>As Fleeting as Shadows</i>	<i>Job 14:1–15</i>
<i>Thu, Mar. 30</i>	<i>This Is My Body</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 11:23–34</i>
<i>Fri, Mar. 31</i>	<i>Why Have You Forsaken Me?</i>	<i>Psalms 22:1–2, 7–19</i>
<i>Sat, Apr. 1</i>	<i>Deliver Me, O Lord</i>	<i>Psalms 22:20–31</i>

APRIL 2, 2023

THEME:

EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION

TOPIC: THE EMPTY TOMB

TEXT: LUKE 24:1-12

MEMORY VERSE: *The men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” (Luke 24:5c-6a)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Narrate the importance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. Compare and contrast the women's expectation at the tomb versus the reality.
3. Renew our commitment to sharing the Good News.

INTRODUCTION

In the early months of 2020, people around the world were desperate to receive some good news. Shutdowns related to the corona virus pandemic had begun, creating in people a sense of unease and uncertainty. Further, many people were unable to see their families and friends for an extended period because of concerns about exposure to the virus. Loneliness and sadness were unavoidable. While the global news cycle repeated bad news, actor and filmmaker John Krasinski felt that it was the perfect time to share good news. On March 29, 2020, his web video series *“Some Good News”* premiered. Each episode, about 20 minutes long, was filmed in his house and was posted across various social media platforms. The episodes highlighted several positive, feel-

good stories from the previous week. By late 2021, there have been over 70 million views of the nine-episode run of video – Some Good News – evidence that many people want good news. However, just because people hear good news does not always mean that they will believe that good news.

Today's lesson centres on the good news that an empty tomb brought and how valid that good news is for all time.

QUESTIONS

A. EARLY MORNING DISCOVERY (Luke 24:1-7)

“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,” - vs. 2

1. What were the expectations of the women regarding the tomb when they embarked on this journey?

...but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”-vs. 5

2. Why was it important for Jesus to die and rise again from the dead? *Matthew 17:22-23; John 12:24*

B. BEARING WITNESS (Luke 24:8-12)

“Then they remembered his words. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others” – vs. 8-9

1. What practical steps can we take to ensure that we remember scriptures? How does this help us in retelling the Good News? *Deuteronomy 6:6-8; Joshua 1:8*

“But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.” – vs. 11.

2. What are the possible reasons for the display of unbelief by the disciples? *John 20:9, 24-25.*

CONCLUSION

For the women at the tomb, the angels brought true good news. Jesus had defeated death as he had been raised from the dead. As a result, he is now the resurrected King who rules over all creation. Although other disciples initially doubted the women's witness, those same disciples would eventually see their resurrected Lord. As they received and believed in that good news, they were called to proclaim it to the whole world (see *Matthew 28:16–20*). The good news of the resurrection began with the women's witness and went out to all nations. We believers have a role to play in proclaiming that very same good news!

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The resurrection of Jesus grants access to eternal life.
2. Christ's death and resurrection is the Good News we have an obligation to share with others.
3. In the resurrected Christ, God is redeeming and reconciling all men to Himself. This is the Good News.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Apr. 2</i>	<i>A Surprising Encounter</i>	<i>Luke 24:1–12</i>
<i>Mon, Apr. 3</i>	<i>I Have Seen the Lord!</i>	<i>John 20:11–18</i>
<i>Tue, Apr. 4</i>	<i>Blessed Are Those Who Believe</i>	<i>John 20:19–31</i>
<i>Wed, Apr. 5</i>	<i>The Lord Is My Strength</i>	<i>Psalms 118:1–14</i>
<i>Thu, Apr. 6</i>	<i>I Shall Not Die, But Live</i>	<i>Psalms 118:15–29</i>
<i>Fri, Apr. 7</i>	<i>Jesus Meets Two Disciples</i>	<i>Luke 24:13–24</i>
<i>Sat, Apr. 8</i>	<i>Jesus Opens the Disciples' Eyes</i>	<i>Luke 24:25–35</i>

APRIL 9, 2023 – EASTER SUNDAY

THEME:

EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION

TOPIC: DISCIPLES BELIEVE THE RESURRECTION

TEXT: LUKE 24:13-27, 30-31

MEMORY VERSE: *Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight (Luke 24: 31)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize the conversation that took place on the road to Emmaus.
2. Understand that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fulfilment of the scriptures
3. Strive to develop spiritual sensitivity to the move of God.

INTRODUCTION

Today's lesson focuses on the journey of two disciples travelling to a village called Emmaus. It highlights how the two were returning from Jerusalem saddened by the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. They were still perplexed by the news of the women about Jesus' resurrection. Their story changed from that of individuals who did not recognise Jesus and who needed to fully understand the scriptures, to that of fully experiencing the spiritual illumination required for truly knowing the Lord. This encounter transformed the lives of these disciples so much so that they could not wait to share their testimony with others.

QUESTIONS

A. THE JOURNEY BEGINS (Luke 24:13-16)

As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; - vs. 15

1. What were the discussions of the two disciples centred on?

B. THE TRAVELLERS LAMENT (Luke 24: 17-24)

"What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. – vs. 19

1. How should believers respond when God's plans turn out differently than they had expected? *Proverbs 16:9; Jeremiah 29:11*

C. THE STRANGER RESPONDS (LUKE 24:25–27, 30–31)

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself –vs. 27

1. How would you respond to someone who says that the Old Testament is no longer relevant or applicable to us Christians? *Matthew 5:17-18; Galatians 3:8*

"Then their eyes were opened... –vs. 31

2. What can prevent people from having their spiritual "eyes" open to see what God is doing? *Ephesians 1:17-18; Hebrews 12:1*

CONCLUSION

The encounter of the two disciples with the resurrected Jesus brought them joy, enthusiasm, and peace. It reordered their priorities; their disappointment was addressed and they were reminded of how Christ's resurrection is a fulfilment of the Scriptures. We must live by faith, trusting in the promises of God even when there seems to be no immediate evidence of their fulfilment.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Jesus' death and resurrection give us the power to overcome sin and the world
2. Jesus' resurrection brings Salvation
3. Make the resurrection of Jesus part of your regular conversation

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Apr. 9</i>	<i>You Are Witnesses of These Things</i>	<i>Luke 24:36–49</i>
<i>Mon, Apr. 10</i>	<i>Hospitality and Redemption</i>	<i>Luke 7:36–50</i>
<i>Tue, Apr. 11</i>	<i>Raised with Christ</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 15:27–31, 35–44</i>
<i>Wed, Apr. 12</i>	<i>Death Swallowed Up in Victory</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 15:45–58</i>
<i>Thu, Apr. 13</i>	<i>God, Hear My Morning Prayer</i>	<i>Psalms 5</i>
<i>Fri, Apr. 14</i>	<i>Great Is God's Faithfulness</i>	<i>Lamentations 3:21–36</i>
<i>Sat, Apr. 15</i>	<i>Joy Comes with the Morning</i>	<i>Psalms 30</i>

APRIL 16, 2023

THEME:

EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION

TOPIC: JESUS COOKS BREAKFAST

TEXT: JOHN 21: 1-14

MEMORY VERSE: : *Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast. None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. (John 21: 12)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Narrate the encounter of the disciples with Jesus after resurrection as recorded in John 21.
2. Recognize ways of identifying the voice and presence of God
3. Make a commitment to continue to hunger for fellowship with God.

INTRODUCTION

Today's lesson focuses on the events recorded in *John 21:1-14*. The reason behind Simon Peter's decision to go fishing which also influenced the other disciples is not fully known. Perhaps it was related to not fully understanding the mission that Jesus had called them to take up in *Matthew 4:18-19* or perhaps it was borne out of a desire not to be idle. Whatever the reason may have been, their efforts were futile that night. When Jesus appeared to them in the morning, they did not immediately recognize him until they followed his instructions which led to a net-breaking breakthrough. The fellowship that followed after this great catch was indeed refreshing to Jesus' disciples.

QUESTIONS

A. GONE FISHIN' (John 21:1-6)

"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."- vs. 3a

1. What could have made Simon Peter and the other disciples to go fishing? Was it a wrong decision on their part to get busy?
He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."... - vs. 6a
2. The familiarity of the above instruction did not immediately strike the hearts of the disciples (*see Luke 5:4*). What could have caused this? Vs. 4. What practical steps can we take to ensure we identify when God is speaking to us? *Jeremiah 29:13*

B. "IT IS THE LORD" (John 21:7-14)

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast..."- vs. 12a

1. Jesus is the only one that can satisfy the hunger in the soul of man. Share your views on this statement *Amos 8:11-13; John 6:27; 35*

Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish - vs. 13.

2. What benefits do Christians enjoy from the Lord's Supper?
1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

CONCLUSION

The grave could not contain Jesus; he had risen just as he said. The events leading to the meal shared in today's lesson were meant to remind the disciples of their priorities. It was also another opportunity for Jesus to

spend time with His dear friends and celebrate the bond between them. And with this meal, Jesus was preparing his disciples for the work he would commit into their hands. We also have been commissioned by Jesus to spread His love throughout the world.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Jesus is waiting for you to spend time with Him today.
2. Only Jesus can truly satisfy the longings of our soul
3. Time spent with Jesus is always refreshing

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Apr. 16</i>	<i>Jesus Appears by the Sea</i>	<i>John 21:1–14</i>
<i>Mon, Apr. 17</i>	<i>Jesus Brings Danger and Conflict</i>	<i>Matthew 10:28–42</i>
<i>Tue, Apr. 18</i>	<i>Peter Denies Jesus</i>	<i>John 18:13–27</i>
<i>Wed, Apr. 19</i>	<i>Repent, Turn, and Live</i>	<i>Ezekiel 18:13–27</i>
<i>Thu, Apr. 20</i>	<i>Godly Sorrow Produces Repentance</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 7:1–11</i>
<i>Fri, Apr. 21</i>	<i>Blot Out My Transgressions</i>	<i>Psalms 51:1–9</i>
<i>Sat, Apr. 22</i>	<i>Create in Me a Clean Heart</i>	<i>Psalms 51:10–19</i>

APRIL 23, 2023

THEME:

EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION

TOPIC: JESUS REINSTATES PETER

TEXT: JOHN 21: 15-19

MEMORY VERSE: *When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." (John 21: 15)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize the conversation between the risen Jesus and Peter and the reason(s) for it.
2. Explain the relationship between loving Jesus and caring for his sheep.
3. Renew our commitment to loving Jesus and caring for his sheep.

INTRODUCTION

A hockey team may struggle a while and then turn the game around at the end to earn a comeback win. A runner may experience a painful injury only to finish the race with grim determination and an indomitable spirit. A redemption story is often characterised by early failure but is ultimately defined by a finishing which made what came before pale in comparison.

Popular cultures love these stories, especially because of the self-determination that is required for redemption. Redemption stories feature characters who change their attitudes, make different decisions, and perform more nobly in the end. They redeem themselves.

Our story today is also one of redemption. But it is not the story of a man who failed and then brought himself to a redemptive success. Instead, it is the story of the Lord who called the man to accept redemption.

QUESTIONS

A. JESUS QUESTIONS PETER (John 21: 15-17)

“do you love me more than these?” – vs. 15b

1. Given that Jesus is omniscient, why did he ask Peter the above question? What are some of the things that can compete with the love of God in the heart of a Christian?

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” – vs. 15d

2. Who are Jesus' lambs? *John 10:11* What is our role in caring for the lambs of Jesus?
3. What proofs or evidence should we look out for in our lives to show that we truly love the Lord?

B. JESUS SPEAKS TRUTH TO PETER (John 21: 18-19)

1. What did the statement of Jesus in verse 18 imply? Any lesson for believers today?

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. –vs. 19a

2. Jesus revealed to Peter what faithfulness to the task would cost him, yet Peter boldly took up the assignment. What helped him? How can we leave behind a legacy that draws others to the Lord? *John 15:5; Galatians 2:20.*

CONCLUSION

Just as Jesus did for Peter, so also Jesus does for us. He made the first move toward our redemption long ago on the cross and continues to invite us to accept his sacrifice as the atonement for our own sins (Romans 3:25). God's grace is magnified by the fact that Jesus himself, the offended party, initiated the process. This is consistent with the biblical story in which God, who is always the offended party, initiates reconciliation with sinful humanity.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Everyone needs redemption.
2. After redemption we are commissioned to live the life of faith in Jesus
3. Faithfulness to our commission comes with a cost.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Apr. 23</i>	<i>If You Love Me, Follow Me</i>	<i>John 21:15–25</i>
<i>Mon, Apr. 24</i>	<i>Go and Make Disciples</i>	<i>Matthew 28:1–10, 16–20</i>
<i>Tue, Apr. 25</i>	<i>The Day of the Lord Approaches</i>	<i>Joel 2:1–15</i>
<i>Wed, Apr. 26</i>	<i>The Son Sits at God's Right Hand</i>	<i>Hebrews 1:1–14</i>
<i>Thu, Apr. 27</i>	<i>Jesus, Our Great High Priest</i>	<i>Hebrews 8:1–13</i>
<i>Fri, Apr. 28</i>	<i>An Eternal Inheritance</i>	<i>Hebrews 9:8–22</i>
<i>Sat, Apr. 29</i>	<i>Lift Up Your Heads, O Gates!</i>	<i>Psalms 24</i>

APRIL 30, 2023

THEME:

EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION

TOPIC: JESUS MAKES A PROMISE

TEXT: ACTS 1:1-11

MEMORY VERSE: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1: 8)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Understand the context of conversation between Jesus Christ and the disciples.
2. Recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit's power in witnessing
3. Remember and prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Serialized television shows often feature brief flashbacks at the beginning of each episode. These flashbacks typically condense the key parts of the previous episodes into 90 seconds or less. The resulting salient points help viewers make sense of the new instalment. These are particularly important for those of us who watch only one episode at a time rather than binge-watch multiple episodes!

Unlike any other pair of books in the New Testament, Luke begins his second volume (the book of Acts) with a summary of the first volume (the Gospel of Luke). This is a little like a modern flashback, a highly condensed version of the previous “episode” as a key to understanding the

instalment at hand. That's how the book of Acts begins. Today's lesson examines how the church began as recorded by Luke the physician.

QUESTIONS

A. PROMISE NUMBER 1 (Acts 1:1-5)

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach—vs. 1

1. How important is the evidence of history (“proofs”) to the spread of Christianity? 1 John 1:1

“but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”—vs. 4-5

2. Why was the baptism of water not sufficient for the disciples? What role will the baptism of the Holy Spirit play in the life of a believer?

B. PROMISE NUMBER 2 (Acts 1:6-8)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”—vs. 8

1. What role will the power of the Holy Spirit play in evangelising the lost? How can we receive this power? (vs. 8)

C. PROMISE NUMBER 3 (Acts 1:9-11)

“...This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”—vs. 11b

1. How can believers be ready for Christ's return while pursuing life ambitions and goals? *Matthew 24:22; Luke 21:34; Hebrews 10:25*

CONCLUSION

If we are truly Christ's disciples, we will be involved in spreading the saving testimony about Jesus to all the people of the earth. For some Christians, this involves strategic relocation to interact with people groups in countries that have no Christian witness. For other Christians, it means funding and supporting such cross-cultural evangelism. For all Christians, it involves ensuring that our talk matches our walk (*Colossians 4:5; 1 Timothy 3:7; etc.*).

The New Testament teaches that all Christians are to be involved in making disciples. This is to be motivated by our love for those who do not know Jesus, as well as the need to obey His commands as our Lord (John 14:15). Jesus went to the cross out of his love for the world and his obedience to His Father's will. We should do no less.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The power of the Holy Spirit is a requirement for every believer
2. Jesus has commissioned us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth
3. Jesus will return soon.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Apr. 30</i>	<i>You Shall Receive Power</i>	<i>Acts 1:1–11</i>
<i>Mon, May 1</i>	<i>God's Strength Revealed</i>	<i>Psalms 68:17–19, 24–35</i>
<i>Tue, May 2</i>	<i>The Spirit of Truth</i>	<i>John 14:15–27</i>
<i>Wed, May 3</i>	<i>The Spirit Testifies of Jesus</i>	<i>John 16:1–15</i>
<i>Thu, May 4</i>	<i>The Lord, My Chosen Portion</i>	<i>Psalms 16</i>
<i>Fri, May 5</i>	<i>Amazement at the Spirit's Power</i>	<i>Acts 2:1–13</i>
<i>Sat, May 6</i>	<i>The Promise Fulfilled</i>	<i>Acts 2:14–28</i>

MAY 7, 2023

THEME:

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

TOPIC: THE DAY OF PENTECOST

TEXT: ACTS 2: 1-8, 14-24, 37-39

MEMORY VERSE: *The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call. (Acts 2: 39)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Narrate the events of the day of Pentecost.
2. Describe how the events of the day of Pentecost were a fulfilment of prophecy.
3. Make a commitment to allow the Holy Spirit lead you daily

INTRODUCTION

All things in life, whether organizations, projects, building, family and community including the church has a beginning. The birth of the church can be traced to the event that took place in Jerusalem during the Jewish harvest festival called Pentecost. The day of Pentecost marked the final day of the Passover. Most believers who were visiting Jerusalem to attend these events often returned the next day. People gathered to observe the ceremony. Today's lesson focuses on how the Pentecost experience led to the birthing of the church. The presence of the Holy Spirit brought remarkable difference in the life of the disciples because it marked the birth of the first church.

QUESTIONS

A. THE SPIRIT COMES (Acts 2:1-8)

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place." Vs. 1.

1. What were the events that marked the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers? *Acts 1: 14; 2: 3-4, Joel 2: 28.*
2. What factors stood out in the conduct of the crowd before and after the Holy Spirit came upon them? *Galatians 5:22, Acts 1: 14, 2: 42-47*

B. THE APOSTLE PREACHES (Acts 2:14-24)

"Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you..." vs. 14.

1. Why did Apostle Peter stand up to address the crowd? What did his explanation achieve? *Acts 2: 37-41.*
2. What was the prophesy by Prophet Joel? Is this proclamation having any effect in our days and if yes, to what extent? *Joel 2:28-32; Luke 24:49.*

"And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Vs. 21.

3. What aspects of the prophecy are yet to be fulfilled? *Joel 2: 30-32*

C. THE CROWD REACTS (Acts 2: 37-39)

1. What must have made Peter's audience to respond the way they did in verse 37? *John 16: 2, Matthew 5: 11-12.*
2. What can you make of Peter's response to the crowd? Any lesson for the church today?

CONCLUSION

The message of the cross is still as valid today as it was in the days of the Apostles. The church has a continued responsibility to preach the gospel to individuals and groups of persons. The salvation of our families and nation begins with the winning of souls of men that we meet daily in our neighbourhood and workplace. In today's church, the average believer in Christ essentially needs the infilling of the Holy Spirit in their daily walk with the Lord.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is still possible today.
2. The experience of Pentecost is available to all believers.
3. Miracles happen when believers act in unity of purpose.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, May 7</i>	<i>Receive the Gift of the Spirit</i>	<i>Acts 2:29-42</i>
<i>Mon, May 8</i>	<i>Sent to Preach and Heal</i>	<i>Luke 10:1-9</i>
<i>Tue, May 9</i>	<i>Rejoice in Salvation, Not Power</i>	<i>Luke 10:10-24</i>
<i>Wed, May 10</i>	<i>God Protects and Preserves</i>	<i>Psalms 41</i>
<i>Thu, May 11</i>	<i>My Soul Longs for God</i>	<i>Psalms 42</i>
<i>Fri, May 12</i>	<i>Sorrow Will Flee</i>	<i>Isaiah 35:1-10</i>
<i>Sat, May 13</i>	<i>Walking, Leaping, and Praising</i>	<i>Acts 3:1-11</i>

MAY 14, 2023

THEME:

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

TOPIC: JUMPING FOR JOY

TEXT: ACTS 3:1-11

MEMORY VERSE: *He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. (Acts 3: 8)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Describe the life of the man who was lame.
2. Describe the reaction of the lame man to the Apostle's offer.
3. Take steps to apply your faith in the face of life's challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Abatere is a village in the community of Ilenla. Abatere is rich in human and material resources but suffers lack of infrastructure. It has no good roads, poor water supply, inadequate feed supply for the animals and so much more. This myriad of challenges made the people cry out to God for help. Shortly after, a church was planted in that village and that was the beginning of good things in the community. With the help of God, the church facilitated the building of a bridge, sinking of a borehole, construction of classrooms and a standard clinic with qualified medical personnel. The villagers were overjoyed by this development which made life better for them. This development made it easy for them to accept the gospel message brought to them by the church. This underscores the fact that the church is not to only preach the gospel of salvation but also help meet some community needs within their reach.

The story of today reveals the birth of the Church in Jerusalem which included the miraculous displays after the day of Pentecost. Such displays were described as being “*many wonders and signs performed by the apostles*” (Acts 2:43).

QUESTIONS

A. THE SETTING (Acts 3: 1-2)

“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.” (vs. 1).

1. What can we learn from the attitude of Peter and John in joining other worshippers, even after the ground-breaking Pentecost experience? Acts 2: 1-4; Hebrews 10: 25.
2. The crippled man was carried to the temple to beg, not to join others in worship. Discuss.

B. THE EXPECTATIONS (Acts 3: 3-6a)

“when he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.” Vs. 3.

1. Was the lame man wrong in asking for money? Why do you think the lame man was asking for money? Discuss. Matthew 6:2; Luke 12:33.

Then Peter said, “Look at us!” (vs. 4b)

2. What was significant in the command issued by Peter before the lame man was healed? Romans 10: 17, Colossians 3: 1-3

C. THE WONDER (Acts 3:6b-11)

"...all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade" (vs. 11)

1. How should we react to miracles that happen both within and outside the church? *Luke 17:15-18; Mark 13:22; Acts 4:30.*
2. Do miracles like these still happen in our generation? Discuss. *John 4:48. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 14:3; Mark 1:34.*

CONCLUSION

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is a powerful authority in the healing ministry for all believers. We saw that in operation when Peter raised the hand of the lame man and commanded him to walk in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Blood shed on our behalf by Jesus Christ is also very powerful and is available for all believers in the prophetic ministry of the church. It is important that we utilise the opportunities that come our way as believers to bring healing and relief to many that need such in our society. Jesus' miracles were primarily intended to authenticate him as the Messiah and the Son of God so that eternal life might result for those who believe. (John 20:30-31). May the Lord help us to do so.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Miracles are still possible today.
2. Whatever the circumstances, we should look up to God for help.
3. We must return the glory to God for every miraculous intervention.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, May 14</i>	<i>Prophets Foretold, God Fulfilled</i>	<i>Acts 3:12-26</i>
<i>Mon, May 15</i>	<i>The Witness of Stephen</i>	<i>Acts 6:8-15</i>
<i>Tue, May 16</i>	<i>The First Martyr</i>	<i>Acts 7:48-8:2</i>
<i>Wed, May 17</i>	<i>The Far Countries Wait for God</i>	<i>Isaiah 60:9-14</i>
<i>Thu, May 18</i>	<i>Many People Will Come</i>	<i>Zechariah 8:1-8, 20-23</i>
<i>Fri, May 19</i>	<i>God Is Present Everywhere</i>	<i>Psalms 139:1-10</i>
<i>Sat, May 20</i>	<i>Samaritans Embrace the Gospel</i>	<i>Acts 8:4-17</i>

MAY 21, 2023

THEME:

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

TOPIC: AN ETHIOPIAN IS BAPTIZED

TEXT: ACTS 8: 29-40

MEMORY VERSE: *He gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. (Acts 8: 38)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Recite from memory the passage from Isaiah studied by Philip and the Ethiopian.
2. Analyse the importance of biblical knowledge for recognizing Christ as the Messiah.
3. Commit to following the leading of the Holy Spirit in evangelizing your neighbourhood.

INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the stoning of Stephen to death, a great persecution broke out targeted at the early church. The believers left Jerusalem and wherever they went, they preached the good news, in Judea and Samaria as Jesus had instructed them. At last the proclamation of the good news was extended outside Jerusalem with more opportunity to share the word of God. Thereafter, God commanded Phillip to go southward, precisely to the Ethiopian eunuch, the treasurer of Ethiopia, to share the gospel with him. Today's study focuses on the conversation of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch following Philip's prompt obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS

A. EVANGELIST RUNNING (Acts 8:29-31)

1. It is common place in Nigeria for people of different faiths to travel outside of the country for religious purposes. Christians travel to Jordan and Israel for holy pilgrimages. What is the significance of these travels? How do they enhance the standing of believers and their faith?

“How can I, he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” vs. 31.

2. Failure to understand the scripture can have serious consequences for unbelievers coming to Christ. What are such consequences and how can these be remedied? *2 Corinthians 4: 4, Romans 10: 14-17, Mark 4: 15*

B. GOSPEL PREACHING (Acts 8:32-35)

1. What was significant about the prophesy of Isaiah referred to by the eunuch? How was the prophesy fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ? *Isaiah 53:5; Acts 8:36.*

C. WATER BAPTISM (Acts 8: 36-40)

“Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptised” (vs. 36)

1. What is the significance of water baptism? *Matthew 28: 19-20, Mark 16: 16, Colossians 2: 12-14.*
2. After being baptized the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. What lesson does this hold for us? *Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.*

CONCLUSION

Evangelism is the core of our belief as the church of God. The primary duty of the church that Jesus Christ left for us is to preach the gospel and reach all the unreached peoples of the world. The desire of the eunuch to have someone to explain the scripture to him underlines the need for evangelism. It is important for us as believers to go out there and reach out to unbelievers and let them know what Jesus Christ came to do. We should not allow the fire of evangelism to go down.

The Holy Spirit was fully in charge of the story with the eunuch and Philip. That explains the mind of God with regard to evangelism. When we evangelize, we also need to ensure that whatever we do is in consonance with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Proper knowledge of God's word is necessary for fruitful evangelism.
2. Evangelistic efforts must be backed by the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Water baptism helps us to publicly identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, May 21</i>	<i>The Spirit Guides Us</i>	<i>Acts 8:26–40</i>
<i>Mon, May 22</i>	<i>The Heavens Tell God's Glory</i>	<i>Psalms 19</i>
<i>Tue, May 23</i>	<i>Responding to the Gospel</i>	<i>Galatians 1:10–24</i>
<i>Wed, May 24</i>	<i>Only Christ Matters</i>	<i>Philippians 3:1–14</i>
<i>Thu, May 25</i>	<i>Our Citizenship Is in Heaven</i>	<i>Philippians 3:15–21</i>
<i>Fri, May 26</i>	<i>Blinded by the Light</i>	<i>Acts 9:1–9</i>
<i>Sat, May 27</i>	<i>Saul Preaches Jesus</i>	<i>Acts 9:10–22</i>

MAY 28, 2023

THEME:

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

TOPIC: SAUL OF TARSUS

TEXT: ACTS 9: 9-17

MEMORY VERSE: *Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, Brother Saul, the Lord - Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here - has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9: 17)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize Ananias' objection and the Lord's response.
2. Explain the significance of blindness as a possible spiritual metaphor.
3. Cultivate an attitude that seeks clearer spiritual sight.

INTRODUCTION

The power and effect of forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be fully described except when it is experienced. The old ways of any man should not be made to haunt him or her after a genuine conversion to the life of Christ. The church has a responsibility to help new converts stay firm and grow in their new-found faith. Criticism of new converts from believers is unacceptable to God. The least we can do is to pray for such individuals. Today's lesson focuses on the reconciliatory role of Ananias in the life of Saul of Tarsus who newly encountered the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ while on his deadly mission to persecute more Christians.

QUESTIONS

A. SAUL'S WAITING (Acts 9: 9-12)

"For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything." Vs. 9.

1. What are some highlights about the past life of Saul of Tarsus?
Acts 8:3; 26:10; Acts 7:5-8
2. What do you think was in the mind of Saul of Tarsus in the three days when he was fasting and did not eat anything? What was the purpose of his fasting? *Acts 9:4.*

B. ANANIAS' OBJECTION (Acts 9: 13-16)

"Lord, Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man' ... vs. 13.

1. Why was Ananias reluctant to take up the assignment of God?
Acts 9:13-14
2. What strategies can we employ to share the gospel with people notorious for wickedness and criminal activities?

C. THE LORD'S HEALING (Acts 9:17)

"...has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Vs. 17b.

1. What are the spiritual implications of the scales that fell off Saul's eyes? *Ephesians 1: 18, 2 Corinthians 4: 4.*
2. Ananias overcame his fears to minister to a fearsome persecutor, Saul of Tarsus. What lesson does this hold for us? *2 Timothy 1: 7.*

CONCLUSION

Despite the initial reluctance of Ananias to the assignment that God had for him he eventually obeyed God's instruction. The man that was a notorious persecutor of believers in Jerusalem was eventually converted by God. He was given a call by God to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. A beautiful story that shows that no man is beyond redemption.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. No man is beyond redemption.
2. When God sends us, he backs us up with his power.
3. The regenerated and reconciled sinner is a great asset to God's kingdom.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, May 28</i>	<i>Saul Escapes to Jerusalem</i>	<i>Acts 9:23–31</i>
<i>Mon, May 29</i>	<i>God's Servant Will Establish Justice</i>	<i>Isaiah 42:1–7</i>
<i>Tue, May 30</i>	<i>Live by Faith, Not Works</i>	<i>Galatians 2:16b–21</i>
<i>Wed, May 31</i>	<i>My Servant Shall Restore Israel</i>	<i>Isaiah 49:1–13</i>
<i>Thu, June 1</i>	<i>God Will Not Forget You</i>	<i>Isaiah 49:14–23</i>
<i>Fri, June 2</i>	<i>God Desires You Live in Purity</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians 3:11–4:8</i>
<i>Sat, June 3</i>	<i>Clothe Yourselves with Love</i>	<i>Colossians 3:8–17</i>

JUNE 4, 2023

THEME:

THE PROPHETS PROCLAIM GOD'S POWER

TOPIC: GOD REIGNS

TEXT: ISAIAH 52:7–12

MEMORY VERSE: *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (Isaiah 52: 7)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the “good tidings.”
2. Explain the reason for those good tidings and how to proclaim them.
3. Identify the role of spiritual purity in the fulfilment of God's prophecies.

INTRODUCTION

Many of us have experienced situations where we felt downcast or helpless, and anticipated good news. News that will not just brighten our mood, but elevate us out of our place of despair. Describing this more vividly is the case of Mr. John, who has a family of four to cater to, but has been plagued by under-paying jobs which made living a struggle for him and his family. He then receives 'good news' in the form of a prophecy from one of the pastors in his church – a job interview he attended will be successful! He will get a 300% salary increase, he and his family will be redeemed from their place of despair and lack. They shall breakout in song of joy, proclaiming the goodness of the Lord.

This was the case of the Israelites captured in Isaiah 52. They had been under the bondage of Assyria. They were made slaves and their toiling went without wages or rewards. They were brazenly exploited and could do nothing about it. God had seen enough. Through the prophet Isaiah, God revealed his intentions to the Israelites - He will redeem His people.

QUESTIONS

A. CALL TO REJOICE (Isaiah 52:7–10)

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news... vs. 7a

1. What do you describe as good news? Through what mediums do Christians receive good news? *Proverbs 15: 30, Matthew 4: 24, Luke 23: 8.*
2. How should we celebrate good news and then proclaim it? *Psalm 145: 6-8; Psalm 47:1; Psalm 107: 8.*
3. What are some practical ways to bless and encourage spiritual leaders who spread the good news? Is this biblical? *1 Corinthians 9:14; Ezekiel 44:30; 1 Timothy 5:17.*

B. A CALL FOR A NEW EXODUS (Isaiah 52:11–12)

Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure... vs. 11

1. What is the role of spiritual purity in the fulfilment of God's prophecies? *2 Kings 20:1-6; Luke 1:31-35.*
2. Mention some obstacles to the fulfilment of God's prophecies. *Isaiah 57: 14, Romans 16: 17.*

3. Can a prophecy be reversed by God? If so, under what circumstances? *Isaiah 59: 1, 2 Chronicles 7: 14, Jonah 3: 5-10.*

CONCLUSION

There can be no greater calling than that of bearing God's words of hope to people who are without hope. That is true whether we are talking about the sixth century BC or the twenty-first century AD. The good news of God's saving work should always create a climate of gratitude, joy, desire to share the good news, and generous acceptance of all who receive it.

Because God was in the picture, all was not lost for the Jews in Babylonian exile. The same is true today for those who find themselves in situations of despair or exiled spiritually by sin. Today's gospel messengers—all Christians—are to join God's work in spreading the message of eternal rescue (*Matthew 28:19–20*). The courage and faith required of the ancient Israelites are must-haves for us as well. God can use us as his vessels to transform the lives of those around us.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Good tidings should be acknowledged and celebrated.
2. Bearers of good tidings have to be encouraged and blessed.
3. Spiritual purity and uprightness influence the fulfilment of prophecies.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, June 4</i>	<i>You Shall Be Redeemed</i>	<i>Isaiah 52:1–12</i>
<i>Mon, June 5</i>	<i>The River of Life</i>	<i>Ezekiel 47:1–13</i>
<i>Tue, June 6</i>	<i>Receiving Everlasting Joy</i>	<i>John 16:20–33</i>
<i>Wed, June 7</i>	<i>The Right Kind of Spirit</i>	<i>James 3:13–18</i>
<i>Thu, June 8</i>	<i>Peace in the Midst of Distress</i>	<i>Psalms 4</i>
<i>Fri, June 9</i>	<i>God Is Our Refuge</i>	<i>Psalms 46</i>
<i>Sat, June 10</i>	<i>Christ Is Our Peace</i>	<i>Ephesians 2:11–22</i>

JUNE 11, 2023

THEME:

THE PROPHETS PROCLAIM GOD'S POWER

TOPIC: GOD'S KINGDOM OF PEACE

TEXT: ISAIAH 65:17–25

MEMORY VERSE: *“The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the Lord. (Isaiah 65: 25)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. State the reason why weeping will be undetectable.
2. Establish that God loves to rejoice over us
3. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the future He plans for us.

INTRODUCTION

When we think about our great country Nigeria, it is often with a sense of deep regret about how much better things could have been, and at times it leaves us with a certain sense of hopelessness as some believe that our country is irredeemable. Have you heard people say this before? I believe you have. This however is not how our dear country will end up. This was the case of Israel as captured in Isaiah 68. The holy city of Jerusalem was described as a city in ruins. Notwithstanding Israel's rather dire condition, God through the prophecy proclaimed by Prophet Isaiah reiterated his commitment not only to restoring the nation of Israel but also committing to ensuring that her citizens thrived both spiritually and physically.

God promised the people of Israel “a new heaven and a new earth”, further stating that the things of the past will not be remembered. God

revealed his intentions through the prophecy and proved his word is never void by fulfilling his prophecy.

QUESTIONS

A. CELEBRATING NEWNESS (Isaiah 65:17–19)

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. vs. 17.

1. Describe the “new heavens and a new earth” God said he will create. *Revelation 21: 1-6.*
2. Why will “the sound of crying and weeping” be heard no more? How can this verse (*Isaiah 65: 17*) be likened to salvation? *2 Corinthians 5:17.*

“I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people...”

3. What biblical examples can you share of God rejoicing over his people? *Zephaniah 3: 17.*

B. GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS (Isaiah 65:20–25)

“Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear. (vs. 24).

1. Have you ever experienced God addressing your needs or concerns before you presented them to Him? Share your experience.
2. How will you respond to someone who believes that since God is all-knowing (foreknowing) there is no need for prayers?

Philippians 4:6; 1 John 5:14; 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 7: 7
The wolf and the lamb will feed together vs. 25

3. Is it possible to live life without having foes or holding grudges? What are you willing to do to demonstrate 'God's peace here on earth? *Romans 12:14; Proverbs 24:17; Proverbs 25: 21, Hebrews 12: 14.*

CONCLUSION

Isaiah 65 is a visionary text that should inspire us to see beyond past failures and the challenges of the present. It invites us to imagine a different world from that which we inherited, a world in which old wounds will be healed and citizens will dwell in peace, prosperity and harmony. Reading this text requires us to use our imagination so we can visualize what God might be creating in our lives as individuals and in our churches. The language of creation does not apply to the beginning of time alone, but also to a new era which emerges when people who have experienced God's mercy embrace the possibilities of a new and holy way of life. The text of today's lesson shows this more dramatically. It does not portray the citizens of Israel as being able, by their power, to bring about the new world described but emphasizes the power of God to turn things around for good.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Acknowledge God's ability to change our world.
2. Take your prayer life seriously given the assurance that our God answers prayers.
3. Endeavour to live at peace with all men, while keeping to God's standard.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, June 11</i>	<i>A New Heaven and Earth</i>	<i>Isaiah 65:17–25</i>
<i>Mon, June 12</i>	<i>The Confidence of God's Servant</i>	<i>Isaiah 50:4–9</i>
<i>Tue, June 13</i>	<i>God's Servant Will Make Many Righteous</i>	<i>Isa. 2:13–53:12</i>
<i>Wed, June 14</i>	<i>Forsaking All for the Kingdom</i>	<i>Mark 10:17–27</i>
<i>Thu, June 15</i>	<i>The Greatest Must Be a Servant</i>	<i>Mark 10:35–45</i>
<i>Fri, June 16</i>	<i>Who Is Like the Lord?</i>	<i>Psalms 113</i>
<i>Sat, June 17</i>	<i>A Humble Act of Love</i>	<i>Mark 14:1–9</i>

JUNE 18, 2023

THEME:

THE PROPHETS PROCLAIM GOD'S POWER

TOPIC: GOD'S SERVANT - KING

TEXT: EZEKIEL 37:21–28

MEMORY VERSE: *“My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Ezekiel 37: 27)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us

1. Describe God's love for the Israelites.
2. Identify our insufficiency as humans and emphasize dependence on God.
3. Recognize the importance of unity.

INTRODUCTION

A Father's love for his children is often enduring and selfless, such that a parent's chastisement is often followed by comforting the child, either expressly or subtly. Hence, it is not strange to hear parents go to the extreme of disowning a child, only to make a U-turn to draw the child back and restore all the rights previously held back. We see a similar display of this love displayed by God in his message proclaimed by Prophet Ezekiel. In his message to the people of Israel, God promised restoration, unification, spiritual cleansing, peace and prosperity among others. God also promised to dwell with them. Our conduct, just like those of the Israelites determines the nature of our relationship with God. Today's text also paints a picture of our insufficiency as humans and emphasizes our dependence on God for peace, restoration and prosperity.

QUESTIONS

A. RE-GATHERING (Ezekiel 37: 21-22)

“I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land” vs. 21b

1. God spoke about the unification of his people in verse 21. We have a growing number of denominations in Christianity. Is this a positive trend? Discuss.
2. What is the importance of unity in Christianity, particularly in NHBC? *1 Corinthians 1: 10; Acts 4:32 2 Corinthians 13:11.*

B. RE-DEDICATION (Ezekiel 37: 23-28)

“They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offences” Vs. 23a

1. In what ways do people defile themselves today? *Leviticus 18:22; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 1:10*
2. What can we define as modern-day idolatry? Mention some of the implications of idolatry? *Jonah 2:8; Judges 10:14; Psalm 135:15-18*
3. How do we go about reconciling ourselves to God? *1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:14; Galatians 5:16*

“My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.”— Ezekiel 37:27.

4. How do we ensure that God continues to dwell with us? *James 4:8, Isaiah 59: 1-3, 2 Chronicles 7: 14.*

CONCLUSION

The significance of unity in Christianity cannot be over-emphasized. Apostle Paul urged us to maintain unity – “*to be of one mind*”. Being of one mind removes the possibility of jeopardizing our relationship with God our father. It also facilitates reconciliation of members of our fold who have strayed or have the tendency to stray from God.

A 'stranger' can lay no claim to the inheritance of the king, except those fathered by him. Similarly, God's promises of restoration, unification, spiritual cleansing, peace and prosperity can only be accessed by those who have been reconciled with God the Father. Have you been reconciled?

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Unity is important in the body of Christ, including NHBC.
2. Believers should identify and avoid/repent of modern forms of idolatry.
3. We must remain reconciled with God.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, June 18</i>	<i>God's Servant David Shall Be King.</i>	<i>Ezekiel 37:15–28</i>
<i>Mon, June 19</i>	<i>Loved with an Everlasting Love</i>	<i>Jeremiah 31:1–9</i>
<i>Tue, June 20</i>	<i>A New Covenant</i>	<i>Jeremiah 31:27–34</i>
<i>Wed, June 21</i>	<i>We Walk by Faith</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 5:1–11</i>
<i>Thu, June 22</i>	<i>Renewed in Christ</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 5:12–21</i>
<i>Fri, June 23</i>	<i>God Abounds in Steadfast Love</i>	<i>Psalms 86:1–7, 9–16</i>
<i>Sat, June 24</i>	<i>Love Is the Greatest</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 13</i>

JUNE 25, 2023

THEME:

THE PROPHETS PROCLAIM GOD'S POWER

TOPIC: RENEWED IN GOD'S LOVE

TEXT: ZEPHANIAH 3:14–20

**MEMORY VERSE: *“The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you;”*
*(Zephaniah 3: 17)***

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the importance of joyful singing.
2. Establish the needlessness of fear and needfulness of faith.
3. Indicate some evidence of restoration here on earth

INTRODUCTION

A task that no one wants to do is to notify the next of kin that a loved one has passed on. We all can attest to the fact that no matter how long we have to prepare to break such traumatizing news, it is a responsibility we would not gladly accept. Old Testament prophets also had the unpleasant task of breaking bad news. Their task involved not news of deaths that had happened, but deaths that were to come, and reactions to the prophecies differed. At one extreme was wholesale repentance (example: *Jonah 3:5–9*). Much more common was the other extreme of rejection of the message and persecution of the prophet (example: *Jeremiah 38:1–6*).

Zephaniah was a prophet like others in bringing news both good and bad. How he was treated is unknown to us. But his prophecies bear study yet today.

QUESTIONS

A. CALLS TO SING (Zephaniah 3: 14)

"Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!" Vs. 14

1. What is the significance of singing praises to God? What are the hindrances to God's people singing and shouting for joy at all times? *Psalm 89:1; Acts 16:25; Colossians 3:16*
2. What Bible verses encourage you to offer even more joyful worship? *Psalm 71:23, Psalm 132:9; James 5:13*

B. FEAR NOT (Zephaniah 3: 15-18)

"The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you" vs. 15a.

1. What spiritual practices do you resort to when you need to overcome fear? *Psalm 34:4-5; Psalm 55:22; Joshua 8:1.*
2. How does God's presence ease the burden of overcoming fear? *Deuteronomy 3:22; Isaiah 41:13*

C. THE PROMISE OF RESTORATION (Zephaniah 3: 19-20)

"I will give them praise and honour in every land where they have suffered shame" Vs. 19c

1. Have you ever experienced God's restoration in any area of your life? In what ways?
2. How can we bring unbelievers to partake of God's promise of restoration?

CONCLUSION

God has said time and again that he will always be with us. This assurance negates the need for us to be fearful. Knowing this should put us at ease and make us to break forth with joyful songs as the Lord, “...*the Mighty Warrior who saves*” is with us. He shall protect us, provide for us and fulfil his promises of restoration. One of the ways to nurture our love for God is to remember what God has done in and around our lives.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Sing Praises to God at all times regardless of the circumstances.
2. Do away with fear.
3. Remain confident in God's promises.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, June 25</i>	<i>The Lord Is in Your Midst</i>	<i>Zephaniah 3:14–20</i>
<i>Mon, June 26</i>	<i>The Redeemed from Every Nation</i>	<i>Revelation 7:4–17</i>
<i>Tue, June 27</i>	<i>God's Invitation to Peace and Care</i>	<i>Isaiah 55</i>
<i>Wed, June 28</i>	<i>Dreams and Visions Revealed</i>	<i>Daniel 7:1–14</i>
<i>Thu, June 29</i>	<i>God's Peace Will Be with You</i>	<i>Philippians 4:4–9</i>
<i>Fri, June 30</i>	<i>God Makes All Things New</i>	<i>Revelation 21:1–14</i>
<i>Sat, July 1</i>	<i>Glory and Honour of the Nations</i>	<i>Revelation 21:15–27</i>

JULY 2, 2023

THEME:

JESUS ENVISIONS THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: PEACE TO THE NATIONS

TEXT: ZECHARIAH 9: 9-13, 16-17

MEMORY VERSE: *The Lord their God will save his people on that day as a shepherd saves his flock. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. (Zechariah 9:16)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the biblical fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy.
2. Explain the significance of that fulfilment.
3. State the benefits enjoyed from the fulfilment of God's prophecies to your life.

INTRODUCTION

Peace means freedom from disturbance and tranquillity. It is also a state or period in which there is no war or a war has ended. In a world full of unrest from time to time, with nations rising against nations; and prevalence of diseases, banditry, kidnapping and persecution of Christians, we have a promise of peace from the Prince of Peace. The presence of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, in our "boat" is enough assurance for believers that we have His peace and we should rejoice.

QUESTIONS

A. THE LORD'S KING (Zechariah 9: 9)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (vs. 9)

1. Compare and contrast the arrival of our King and those of other kings. Do the differences between our King and other kings give us hope? How? *2 Chronicles 36:17; 12:6.*

B. THE LORD'S KINGDOM (Zechariah 9: 10-13)

1. The peace we are promised is for believers, how can we promote peace among the nations as a sign of the coming eternal peace Jesus brings? *Leviticus 26: 6, Matthew 28: 19-20, Psalm 34: 12-14, Isaiah 26: 3-4.*
2. What strategies can be employed in promoting peace in our contemporary world?

C. THE LORD'S CARE (Zechariah 9: 16-17)

1. State practical ways we can remember God in trying times. *1 Peter 5: 7, Romans 8: 18.*
2. Discuss practical ways of remembering God in our feastings, anniversaries and celebrations. *2 Chronicles 30: 21*

CONCLUSION

God is intent on bringing eternal life (peace) to those created in His image. To those under the Old Testament, a physical and earthly deliverance; and much more to beneficiaries of the New Testament a spiritual deliverance which surpasses physical deliverance. Spiritual deliverance implies freedom from sin and the bondage it brings.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Jesus' Kingdom is superior to other kingdoms on earth.
2. Peace cannot be found outside Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
3. Resolve to make it a daily goal to remember that our citizenship is in heaven and we should be good citizens of His Kingdom.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, July 2</i>	<i>Rejoice! The King Is Coming!</i>	<i>Zechariah 9:9–17</i>
<i>Mon, July 3</i>	<i>Teach Us to Pray</i>	<i>Luke 11:1–13</i>
<i>Tue, July 4</i>	<i>Your Kingdom Come</i>	<i>Matthew 6:5–15</i>
<i>Wed, July 5</i>	<i>The Lord Is King!</i>	<i>Psalms 97</i>
<i>Thu, July 6</i>	<i>Shout to God, the King</i>	<i>Psalms 47</i>
<i>Fri, July 7</i>	<i>The Lord of the Sabbath</i>	<i>Matthew 12:1–13</i>
<i>Sat, July 8</i>	<i>God's Gentle Servant</i>	<i>Matthew 12:14–21</i>

JULY 9, 2023

THEME:

JESUS ENVISIONS THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM HAS COME UPON YOU

TEXT: MATTHEW 12: 22-32

MEMORY VERSE: *If it is by the spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew 12:28)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Understand the Kingdom of God and what it entails.
2. Know what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is.
3. Acknowledge the power of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of God is pure bliss! The hymn, “Thy Kingdom come, Oh God” written by Lewis Hensley has elements of what the Kingdom of God is. A place where the rod of tyrannies of sin is broken, where love, peace and purity reign and where hatred has ceased. Ever imagined a place with no war, lust, oppression or even crime? Then you've imagined the Kingdom of God. Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy ghost; that's the Kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS

A. KINGDOM AND HEALING (Matthew 12: 22-24)

1. (a) Jesus brought both spiritual and physical healing. Discuss. *Matthew 12:22*

(b) How should such situations be handled? *Galatians 6: 9-10*.

2. Many good actions of Christians today are termed evil. Discuss.

B. KINGDOM AND UNITY (Matthew 12: 25-30)

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. (vs. 25)

1. Can a kingdom stand against itself? How has denominational divisions in Christendom affected us?
2. How should Christians react to criticism? *John 8: 7, Proverbs 15: 31*

C. KINGDOM AND THE SPIRIT (Matthew 12: 31-32)

1. Having understood how delicate blasphemy is, from the text, how can a believer guard against it? *Philippians 4: 8, Romans 12: 1-2*.
2. How should believers in Christ Jesus handle cases of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit with unbelievers? *Romans 12: 19, 1 Thessalonians 5: 25*

CONCLUSION

Some will say today that evil and depravity are more celebrated than good but we must not turn our backs on the unrepentant people in our society. Do not be so used to sin that it becomes normal to you even in this perverse world. By the renewing of our minds with the Word of God, we shall not lose focus on the Kingdom of God.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to do good works and to please God.
2. Believers should help those who slander God ignorantly.
3. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is totally unacceptable from believers and unbelievers.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, July 9</i>	<i>The Kingdom of God Has Come</i>	<i>Matthew 12:22–32</i>
<i>Mon, July 10</i>	<i>The Kingdom's Small Beginnings</i>	<i>Mark 4:21–32</i>
<i>Tue, July 11</i>	<i>The Wind and Sea Obey Jesus</i>	<i>Mark 4:33–41</i>
<i>Wed, July 12</i>	<i>Listen to God's Voice</i>	<i>Psalms 95</i>
<i>Thu, July 13</i>	<i>God's Wisdom Is Unconventional</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 2:1–8</i>
<i>Fri, July 14</i>	<i>The Spirit Reveals God's Ways</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 2:9–16</i>
<i>Sat, July 15</i>	<i>God's Harvest of Righteousness</i>	<i>Isaiah 61</i>

JULY 16, 2023

THEME:

JESUS ENVISIONS THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE SOWER AND THE SEED

TEXT: MATTHEW 13: 1-9, 18-23

MEMORY VERSE: *The seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (Matthew 13: 23)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize the parable of the Sower.
2. Identify the relevance of soil from which men was made in spiritual matters.
3. State the different soil categories and suggest the solution to them.

INTRODUCTION

One definition that many learned in Sunday school is that “a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” Another is that “a parable is a narrative of some real or imaginary event in nature or in common life which is adapted to suggest a moral or religious truth.” Jesus' disciples themselves had a hard time comprehending both the “why” and “what” of Jesus' use of figurative language in general and parables in particular much to the consternation of Jesus himself.

With elementary Agricultural science knowledge, we understand that for a crop to be produced, a seed needs to be sown and a seed sown gives a harvest based on many factors, part of which is the soil. Today, we will learn from the parable of the Sower.

QUESTIONS

A. TEACHING BY THE SHORE. (Matthew 13:1–3a)

1. Can telling a story, whether fiction or not communicate the gospel message more clearly? How can the true story of your own salvation inspire others to follow Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus speak in parables? *Matthew 13: 10-15, 1 Corinthians 2: 7-8, 11-14*
3. Jesus' ministry would have the best evangelistic team with improved technology if the ministry were in the contemporary world. Discuss.

B. SOWING OF SEED (Matthew 13:3b–9)

1. Considering believers to be the seed, give characteristics of their lives based on the soil (hardened, shallow, thorny and fertile soils). *Ephesians 2: 5, Matthew 7: 23.*
2. What are the kinds of spiritual soils you experience in your community? How will you adapt the proclamation of the gospel so as to make the most of the type of soil you are faced with?

C. EXPLANATION OF THE FAILURES (Matthew 13:18–23)

1. State practical ways of helping believers to be enthusiastic about their spiritual growth. What challenges do Believers face in their quest for spiritual growth and how can we overcome the challenges? *1 Peter 2: 2*

CONCLUSION

A common application for the parable of the sower is to ask, “What kind

of soil are you?” While this question may cut to the heart of being a disciple and give us a pause for self-examination, the parable is also about the sower, about preachers who spread the divine seed of God's Word. Preachers and teachers who faithfully communicate the gospel will meet many reactions, just as the seed encountered several soils.

We will not always be able to know the hearts and minds of those with whom we share the gospel. Even so, the wise and talented sower spreads the seed widely, ever knowing that some seed will not produce fruit. The wise preacher keeps preaching, and the wise teacher keeps teaching—always looking for opportunities to share the gospel. Always remember that you, as a believer, are of the Royal Priesthood. *1 Peter 2: 9.*

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Be careful about the condition of your soil.
2. Producing kingdom fruit is not optional.
3. Be a fruitful disciple.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, July 16</i>	<i>Receiving and Understanding the Word</i>	<i>Matt. 13:1–9, 18–23</i>
<i>Mon, July 17</i>	<i>Preparing for God's Harvest</i>	<i>Matthew 3:1–12</i>
<i>Tue, July 18</i>	<i>The Righteous Yield Their Fruit</i>	<i>Psalms 1</i>
<i>Wed, July 19</i>	<i>Examine the State of Your Faith</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 13:1–10</i>
<i>Thu, July 20</i>	<i>Search Me, O God</i>	<i>Psalms 139:11–18, 23–24</i>
<i>Fri, July 21</i>	<i>God Brings Every Deed into Judgment</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes 12</i>
<i>Sat, July 22</i>	<i>God Will Deal with the Weeds</i>	<i>Matthew 13:24–33</i>

JULY 23, 2023

THEME:

JESUS ENVISIONS THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: WEEDS AMONG THE WHEAT

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:24–30, 36–43

MEMORY VERSE: *“Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.” (Matthew 13: 30)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize the parable of the weeds.
2. Compare and contrast the parable of the weeds with the parable of the sower (last week's lesson)
3. Explain one personal challenge of being a stalk of wheat living among weeds.

INTRODUCTION

This parable involves sowing seed, as mentioned in the first parable in Matthew chapter 13 (last week's lesson). The practice of sowing seed in a pre-industrial era involved spreading it by hand. Wheat and barley were the staple grains planted in this way.

An enemy of the farmer now appears in the story. The weeds that the enemy sowed translated in Greek word refers to a plant known as darnel (technical name: *Lolium temulentum*). It looks very much like wheat until it matures. These are not weeds that merely threaten the growth of the crop; rather, these are weeds easily confused with the crop itself.

Ingesting darnel can cause nausea, leading some to call it “poison wheat.”

Wheat was a vitally important field crop in the ancient world and still is today, being the primary ingredient of bread. Remember the impact of the war between Ukraine and Russia on the inability to export wheat from Ukraine and the eventual effect on the price of bread and other products. Ancient wheat fields in Egypt depict a much taller plant than we see today, which were literally shoulder-high. Galilean farmers grew wheat not only to meet their household needs, but also as a cash crop to be sold.

QUESTIONS

A. WEEDS WITH THE WHEAT (Matthew 13:24–30)

But while everyone was sleeping. His enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. (vs. 25)

1. What does weeds among the wheat represent? *Isa. 5: 3-6, Lk 6: 44.*
2. Does this parable change your thinking about the nature of God's Kingdom? If yes, how? *(Matthew 7:21-23)*

B. WICKED WITH THE RIGHTEOUS (Matthew 13:36–43)

1. In what ways can we support evangelists and missionaries in sowing the gospel message.
2. (a) Discuss factors working against the propagation of the gospel. *Mark 16: 15-18.*

(b) How can we conquer more lands (people) for the Lord in spite of the factors working against evangelism?
3. How can believers transition from hearing the Word of God to doing and obeying the Word? *James 1: 22-25.*

CONCLUSION

The parable of the weeds among the wheat explains one of the greatest mysteries of the kingdom: why God allows the wicked to prosper alongside his holy people. The parable teaches us that God is aware of wickedness but he chooses to leave such wickedness unjudged for the time being. God is neither oblivious to wickedness nor does he allow the wicked to go unpunished.

The point of the parable of the weeds among the wheat must not be lost: the presence of the wicked among us is temporary.

Jesus taught in this parable that God is not oblivious to these injustices. But we should not be in a hurry for the wicked to be punished than He is. (2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 6:10). We should remember that if God took immediate vengeance on a person with every sin committed, many of us who are today God's children, would not have had the opportunity of repenting and coming to the saving knowledge of Christ..

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. You are either wheat or weed. There is no in-between.
2. We make every effort in righteousness to ensure that we and all whom we love are harvested as wheat, and not as weeds.
3. The harvest of the wicked and the righteous will come in God's own time.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, July 23</i>	<i>The Righteous Will Shine</i>	<i>Matthew 13:34–43</i>
<i>Mon, July 24</i>	<i>Wisdom Is Better than Jewels</i>	<i>Proverbs 8:1–12</i>
<i>Tue, July 25</i>	<i>Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?</i>	<i>Job 28:1–2, 12–19</i>
<i>Wed, July 26</i>	<i>A Miraculous Catch of Fish</i>	<i>Luke 5:1–11</i>
<i>Thu, July 27</i>	<i>Praise the Lord from the Heavens</i>	<i>Psalms 148</i>
<i>Fri, July 28</i>	<i>Store Up Treasures in Heaven</i>	<i>Matthew 6:19–33</i>
<i>Sat, July 29</i>	<i>God's Word Is Great Treasure</i>	<i>Psalms 119:161–176</i>

JULY 30, 2023

THEME:

JESUS ENVISIONS THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: FINDING AND GATHERING

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:44–52

MEMORY VERSE: *He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” (Matthew 13: 52)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Give the perfect understanding of the Kingdom of God.
2. Understand stewardship of possession.
3. Evangelize using contemporary measures.

INTRODUCTION

Visitors to the Crater of Diamonds State Park in Arkansas get to search for rocks, minerals, various gemstones, and real diamonds. The park is one of the few places where people can keep what they find. In May 2021, Christian Liden brought his homemade mining equipment and searched the crater. On the third day, he found a 2.2 carat diamond! He was so excited when he found it that he asked his friend to pick it up for him because his hands were shaking so much.

Mining for diamonds involves, among other things, a single-minded focus that disregards look-alike diamond wannabes. So does our search for the kingdom of Heaven. What would have to happen for you to have that focus?

QUESTIONS

A. SELLING EVERYTHING (Matthew 13:44–46)

1. (a) Is God concerned about the state of a believer's life in the Kingdom? If yes, what are His concerns? *Revelations 3: 15-17.*

(b) How can you discern what you need to give up in order to more seriously pursue a flourishing life in God's Kingdom?
2. (a) What does stewardship of possession mean to you? *1 Corinthians 4: 2.*

(b) What can be too big for people to give to God? What is the counsel for such people?

B. CATCHING AND REJECTING (Matthew 13:47–52)

1. How will you cast a wider net to evangelize a wide variety of people? *Luke 5: 4.*
2. What new treasure concerning the Christian life has been most helpful in maturing your faith in the past years?

CONCLUSION

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” This speaks to the core point of the parables in today's lesson. To remain dedicated to the kingdom of Heaven is a treasure far beyond any material possession. But its cost is a willingness to give up what we have to follow Jesus.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Following Jesus means giving up on the world.
2. The kingdom of Heaven is of ultimate value.

3. Evangelize Christ in words and in deeds.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, July 30</i>	<i>Heaven's Hidden Treasures</i>	<i>Matthew 13:44–52</i>
<i>Mon, July 31</i>	<i>You Must Be Born Again</i>	<i>John 3:1–9</i>
<i>Tue, Aug. 1</i>	<i>God Loves the World</i>	<i>John 3:10–21</i>
<i>Wed, Aug. 2</i>	<i>Take Up Your Cross</i>	<i>Matthew 16:21–28</i>
<i>Thu, Aug. 3</i>	<i>God Sweeps Away Our Sins</i>	<i>Isaiah 44:21–28</i>
<i>Fri, Aug. 4</i>	<i>God's Spirit and Words Remain</i>	<i>Isaiah 59:1–8, 16–21</i>
<i>Sat, Aug. 5</i>	<i>Rebirth and Renewal Through the Spirit</i>	<i>Titus 3:1–8</i>

AUGUST 6, 2023

THEME:

GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN

TOPIC: INHERITING THE KINGDOM

TEXT: GALATIANS 5:13 - 26

MEMORY VERSE: *"You, my brothers and sisters were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh rather, serve one another humbly in love." (Galatians 5: 13)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. List the fruit of the Spirit.
2. Contrast the fruit of the Spirit with the works of the flesh.
3. Identify and make plans to eliminate unhealthy fruit in our lives.

INTRODUCTION

There was a kingdom that recognizes the first born son as the heir apparent. For many decades, the heir apparent always became king after the death of the father. There was in the kingdom a king whose first son assumed that the throne was his to take on a platter of gold. He boasted about it and lived an uncaring life style. He was proud and had no regard for would-be subjects: male or female, young or old. The report of his bad behaviour came constantly to his father who weakly corrected him. He did not heed his father's correction. The younger son was however an embodiment of godliness, love, kindness, respectfulness, and was friendly toward all. Upon the death of their father, the king, the chiefs decided that the first-born son of the king could not rule over the kingdom due to his ill manners, hence, for the first time in the history of the kingdom, the "heir apparent" did not become king.

Similarly, we need to know that it takes more than being born again to inherit the kingdom of our father. It takes living in the spirit, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit and Christ-likeness.

QUESTIONS

A. LIVING IN FREEDOM (Galatians 5:13-18)

1. What is freedom? How can it be used to glorify God? *2 Corinthians 3:17; Isaiah 61:1; Galatians 5:1.*
2. What do you need to do to continue to walk in the Spirit? *James 4:7, Proverbs 3:5-6, Galatians 5: 22-23, Ephesians 5: 2; 5: 8*

B. REJECTING SELFISHNESS (Galatians 5:19-21)

".....I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:21

1. Should the world's inclination for hatred, strife and cruelty affect the church's display of sacrificial love? Give reason. *James 1: 19-22, 2 Corinthians 5: 14, Galatians 5: 21*
2. How does selfishness contrast with every part of the fruit of the Spirit?

C. PURSUING GODLINESS (Galatians 5:22-26)

1. List the fruit of the Spirit and explain how you will exhibit them in your life?
2. Look at the fruit of the flesh. Which of these are you struggling with and how do you hope to overcome them?

CONCLUSION

Today's topic reminds us of our goal as children of God. Apostle Paul took us through what is necessary for our goal to be achieved first as individuals and then as a community of believers. God's kingdom is a holy and spiritual place, he therefore points out the need to walk in the spirit and distance ourselves from the works of the flesh in order to inherit God's kingdom. The fruit of the Spirit is well spelt out and shows that the result of exhibiting this fruit is a result of love for our neighbours. On the other hand exhibiting the works of the flesh is a reflection of selfishness which has no place in the kingdom. (*John 3:16*).

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Inheriting the kingdom is the goal of every Christian.
2. A continuous walk in the Spirit guarantees attainment of this goal.
3. Love for God and our neighbours remain key to walking in the Spirit.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Aug. 6</i>	<i>Called to Freedom</i>	<i>Galatians 5:13–26</i>
<i>Mon, Aug. 7</i>	<i>God Guards the Paths of Justice</i>	<i>Proverbs 2:1–11</i>
<i>Tue, Aug. 8</i>	<i>Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness</i>	<i>Matthew 5:3–12</i>
<i>Wed, Aug. 9</i>	<i>Righteousness in God's Kingdom</i>	<i>Matthew 5:13–20</i>
<i>Thu, Aug. 10</i>	<i>God Keeps the Steadfast in Peace</i>	<i>Isaiah 26:1–11</i>
<i>Fri, Aug. 11</i>	<i>Rejoice in God's Word</i>	<i>Nehemiah 7:73–8:3, 5–6, 9–12</i>
<i>Sat, Aug. 12</i>	<i>Rejoice in Hope</i>	<i>Romans 12:9–21</i>

AUGUST 13, 2023

THEME:

GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN

TOPIC: THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

TEXT: ROMANS 14:10 - 23

MEMORY VERSE: *"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." (Romans 14: 19)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the danger of sitting in judgment over others.
2. Explain the concept of mutual edification.
3. Make effort to put an end to self-righteousness and intolerance.

INTRODUCTION

Quite often, we easily regard others by their looks or by their activities, which to us may be meant for the lowly in the society. The story is told of a chief executive of a big company in a city, who goes to her church very early every Sunday morning to wash and mop the church and clean and arrange the seats.

A senior manager member of the church who has been noticing this woman's Sunday activity thought she was a lowly person who needed to be helped for her devotion. One Sunday this senior manager approached the woman and gave her his card requesting her to visit his office that he may be of help to her. He also offered to give her a lift to her house. As they walked along the woman stopped and opened an exotic car and from it gave him her card.

Do not judge others by what you see them do or what you expect them to do that they are not doing. God is the ultimate judge; He sees what we do not see.

QUESTIONS

A. ON INAPPROPRIATE JUDGING (Romans 14:10-13)

"For we will all stand before God's judgement seat" (Romans 14:10b)

1. Should believers or the church ever pass judgement on issues and people? Give reason(s) for your answer. *Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Matthew 18: 15-17, Hebrews 12: 8.*
2. How should the consciousness of *verse 12* help us in our daily activities?

B. ON PERSONAL CONVICTIONS (Romans 14: 14-18)

"I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean." (vs. 14)

1. How will you correct a backslidden believer in love without condemning him/her? *1 Corinthians 13: 4-8.*
2. How will you counsel believers who may have different views about issues not specifically prohibited by scripture? *1 Corinthians 10.31; Acts 10:14; 1 Timothy 1:19; Romans 10:19.*
3. How should a believer respond to societal rules that seem uncomfortable but not against scripture? Name some of them. *Matthew 22:17-21; Romans 13:1-3.*

C. ON VITAL IMPERATIVES (Romans 14: 19-23)

1. What will you do to bring about peace and edification in New Heritage Baptist Church? *Romans 15:2-3; Ephesians 4:29.*
2. What steps will you take to avoid being a stumbling block to other believers by your religious stand?

CONCLUSION

When we come to know the Lord and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour, there is that urge to want to know more of Him by availing ourselves of every opportunity of fellowship. This is good and commendable. Jesus however taught that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all our hearts, ... and the second is to love our neighbours as ourselves. This describes the nature of the Kingdom, for we are not complete and ready to inherit the kingdom if our obedience to these great commandments is not complete.

Acting in a visible way that violates another person's conscience can result in spiritual destruction of someone for whom Christ died. This is not a minor issue as it goes to the core of the gospel. We are called to have a high regard for the conscience of other believers than we have for our own.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Concern for the conscience of other believers helps to maintain peace.
2. Peace should be seen as more than absence of conflict but edification of one another.
3. The nature of the kingdom compels us to live Christ-like life..

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Aug. 13</i>	<i>Righteousness, Peace, and Joy</i>	<i>Romans 14:10–23</i>
<i>Mon, Aug. 14</i>	<i>Fear Not; God Is with You</i>	<i>Isaiah 41:1–14</i>
<i>Tue, Aug. 15</i>	<i>No More Condemnation</i>	<i>Romans 8:1–15</i>
<i>Wed, Aug. 16</i>	<i>Wait for Redemption with Patience</i>	<i>Romans 8:16–25</i>
<i>Thu, Aug. 17</i>	<i>The Spirit Helps in Our Weakness</i>	<i>Romans 8:26–39</i>
<i>Fri, Aug. 18</i>	<i>Rescue the Weak and Needy</i>	<i>Psalms 82</i>
<i>Sat, Aug. 19</i>	<i>Stewards of God's Mysteries</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 4:1–6</i>

AUGUST 20, 2023

THEME:
GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN

TOPIC: JUDGEMENT IN THE KINGDOM

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6; 17-21

MEMORY VERSE: *“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.” (1 Corinthians 4:5)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify why Paul sent Timothy to Corinth.
2. Compare and contrast the issue of judgement of/by God with judgement of man.
3. Choose an accountability partner to help you overcome judging others.

INTRODUCTION

No matter the level of some people in an organization, there is always a feeling or desire of not wanting to be bossed around. However, for many of these people, they desire to boss others. Being a boss demands that you correct the ones you lead in order to help them overcome mistakes and errors that lead to failure. This only takes place through your judgement of their actions.

However, there is an ultimate boss for all Christians, the Lord Jesus Christ. An individual Christian may have a mistaken and distorted view of what it means to follow and submit to Jesus. We are called by our Lord Jesus to help one another overcome our misunderstandings and failures, and

identifying such issues involves judgement (*Matthew 12:33*).

In the early church we found the Jews trying to make themselves the boss/the Judge over the Gentiles because of the circumstances of Jesus' birth. Here we find Paul writing and sending Timothy to Corinth to emphasize that no one is a judge over the other but God is the ultimate judge. (*Romans 10:12-13*).

QUESTIONS

A. FAITHFUL SERVANTS (1 Corinthians 4:1-6)

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (vs. 2)

1. What are the qualities Paul saw in Timothy that gave him the confidence to send him to Corinth? *1 Corinthians 4:17*.
2. What steps will you take to be a faithful steward of the gospel like Paul? *1 Peter 4:8-10*.
3. How do you recognize the attitude of pride in church members? How can the church help such members in overcoming such attitude?

B. FAITHFUL CORRECTION (1 Corinthians 4:17-21)

"shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in..."

1. How should believers decide whether a situation should be addressed through a corrective "rod" or with a "gentle spirit"?
2. How do you correct with a rod of discipline without straining relationships? *Revelation 3: 19, Hebrews 12: 6*.

CONCLUSION

Paul's language toward the Corinthians appears judgmental. This helps us to understand what it means to live in God's Kingdom. God indeed is our ultimate judge but He calls us into a kingdom where His subjects are answerable only to Him, yet humbly and lovingly nurture one another towards Christlikeness. This happens as we submit ourselves to correction from those who help us to grow. To do this, we are obliged to acknowledge our weaknesses and see these corrections as helping us move towards attaining the goal of inheriting the kingdom.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. We are not to allow pride and judgmental spirit in our relationships.
2. When we see God as our Judge, the Church lives in humble fellowship.
3. Christ was humble, humility is Christ-likeness not foolishness or weakness.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Aug. 20</i>	<i>God's Power Exhibited in Weakness</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 4:7–21</i>
<i>Mon, Aug. 21</i>	<i>Earth Is Full of God's Glory</i>	<i>Isaiah 6:1–8</i>
<i>Tue, Aug. 22</i>	<i>In Him We Have Our Being</i>	<i>Acts 17:22–31</i>
<i>Wed, Aug. 23</i>	<i>Many Will Go to God's House</i>	<i>Micah 4:1–7</i>
<i>Thu, Aug. 24</i>	<i>Jesus Is Able to Save Forever</i>	<i>Hebrews 7:11–25</i>
<i>Fri, Aug. 25</i>	<i>Awake and Sing for Joy!</i>	<i>Isaiah 26:12–21</i>
<i>Sat, Aug. 26</i>	<i>The Most Important Message</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 15:1–14</i>

AUGUST 27, 2023

THEME:

GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN

TOPIC: GOD'S KINGDOM WILL BE ALL IN ALL

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28

MEMORY VERSE: *"When He has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under Him so that God may be all in all."* (1 Corinthians 15: 28)

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Summarize the roles of Adam, Jesus and God the Father.
2. Explain why death is an enemy.
3. State why Christians look forward to resurrection.

INTRODUCTION

God is a master planner and has His presence in every profession of man. Think of him as an unusual artist who designed the universe and held it up with forces that have been studied by scientists over centuries and are yet to get answers to all the mysteries.

He created man as the beginning of existence. Sin separated man from God. He was not done with man so He executed His plan to reunite man to Himself through His Son - Jesus who died and was raised from the dead.

The last of His master work is His plan of the resurrection of man when His people will live in body and spirit with God as Jesus was resurrected. This will be the fulfilment of Kingdom inheritance which is slated for the end, only for those who lived or will be living in Christ before the end will come. Will you be a partaker?

QUESTIONS

A. GUARANTEED VICTORY (1 Corinthians 15:20-22)

"... Christ has indeed been raised from the dead ..." 1 Corinthians 15:20

1. How does the resurrection of Jesus Christ encourage you regarding death? *2 Corinthians 5:1, 6; 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 17.*
2. What steps will you take to be focused on preparation for His coming than on prophetic date of His coming? *Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7; Romans 6:12*

B. ENEMY DEFEATED (1 Corinthians 15:22-26)

1. What will convince you of the power of Christ to overcome all His enemies? *2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 19:20; 21:3-4.*
2. What steps will you take to work for the overcoming of evil in the world? *2 Corinthians 6:6-8; 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-11.*
3. How and why did death become our enemy? *Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23.*

C. TOTAL VICTORY (1 Corinthians 15:27-28)

1. When is total victory won in war? How is the total victory of Christ to be recognized? *1 Corinthians 15:27; Colossians 2:10.*

CONCLUSION

God's promise to us that our death is followed by life with God in heaven is real, true, important and a real comfort. It is a life that makes us a body-spirit unity again fitting us for a new existence. Without resurrection of

those who died in the Lord, all things that God will rule over will leave out these precious people of God. That is why the resurrection is of great importance as it brings together those who died in the Lord before Christ's return and those who will be raptured on His return. This will bring about a new, never-ending life in the new heavens that God has prepared for us. In whatever situation we find ourselves, our hope should be inspired by the knowledge that our present world and bodies are temporary. These will be replaced by the permanent ones and we shall live and reign with Him as He promised us.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Our focus should be eternal.
2. Believe in the word of God and remain hopeful.
3. Our permanent home can only be imagined, aim to be there.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Aug. 27</i>	<i>The First fruits of the Dead</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 15:15–28</i>
<i>Mon, Aug. 28</i>	<i>Follow God, not Human Traditions</i>	<i>Mark 7: 1-8</i>
<i>Tue, Aug. 29</i>	<i>Obedience, not Sacrifice</i>	<i>1 Samuel 15: 19-23</i>
<i>Wed, Aug. 30</i>	<i>Be Gracious to me, O Lord</i>	<i>Psalm 6</i>
<i>Thu, Aug. 31</i>	<i>Jesus, a Friend of Sinners</i>	<i>Luke 7: 24-34</i>
<i>Fri, Sep. 1</i>	<i>Humility before God and others</i>	<i>Luke 14: 7-14</i>
<i>Sat, Sep. 2</i>	<i>Come to God in Holiness</i>	<i>Exodus 30: 17-21</i>

SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

THEME:

LOVE COMPLETES, LAW FALLS SHORT

TOPIC: JESUS EATS WITH A PHARISEE

TEXT: LUKE 11: 37-44

MEMORY VERSE: *Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." (Luke 11: 39)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify the various behaviours and practices Jesus observed in the Pharisees.
2. Discuss Jesus' counsel to the Pharisees and expectations from believers.
3. Understand the importance of showing love and being just towards others.

INTRODUCTION

Invitations are expressions of interest by the host to the invitee to partake of an event. But when the host begins to be unfriendly and to criticise the conduct of the invited guest, then the atmosphere can be unsettling. Jesus was invited by a Pharisee to a meal. Jesus' visit to the Pharisee's led to conversation that forms the basis of our lesson today. The Pharisees were strictly legalistic and believed in rigid observance of the law and traditions, including the ceremonial washing of hands before eating. However, Jesus never hesitated to denounce traditions whenever it undermined scriptural principles. Jesus' teaching centred on the fact that it is not clean hands that matter but clean hearts.

QUESTIONS

A. A PHARISEE'S INVITATION TO JESUS (Luke 11: 37-41)

Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." (vs. 39)

1. Identify some superficial practices that are common with believers today? How can these practices be corrected? *2 Timothy 2: 4-5, 1 Corinthians 10: 30-33.*
2. When culture and tradition clash with biblical injunctions, how should believers respond? *Ephesians 6: 1, Daniel 3: 16-18, Ephesians 6: 1-4.*

B. JESUS CONDEMNS THE PHARISEES (Luke 11: 42-44)

Woe to you Pharisees... (vs. 42)

1. What is the implication of these woes directed at the Pharisees? *Psalms 32: 10.*
2. Discuss some ways believers today act like the Pharisees. What is God's counsel concerning this? *3 John 1: 11, Isaiah 41: 6, Ephesians 5: 1-2, Galatians 6: 1.*
3. Discuss the relationship between faithfulness in giving our tithe and showing love and justice to others. *Luke 18: 11-14, Matthew 25: 37-40.*
4. What did Jesus point out as being wrong with loving important seats and greetings in the marketplaces? *Luke 11: 43, Philippians 2: 3-4, Matthew 7: 1.*

CONCLUSION

The counsel of God is to prioritize his commands over cultural traditions of men. Do not be like the Pharisees who daily watch out for where Jesus would err so that they can have a basis for judging him. Rather we should be on the lookout for the well-being of our brothers and sisters in Christ. The love we show to others is a vivid demonstration of the validity of our son-ship in Christ which is the emblem of our Faith.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Our conduct should align with the commandments of God.
2. Show love to everyone without discrimination.
3. The Commandments of God supersede the culture, traditions and laws of man.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Sep. 3</i>	<i>Be Cleansed Inside and Out</i>	<i>Luke 11: 37-44</i>
<i>Mon, Sep. 4</i>	<i>Bless the Lord who Heals</i>	<i>Psalms 103: 1-12</i>
<i>Tue, Sep. 5</i>	<i>Bless the Lord of Compassion</i>	<i>Psalms 103: 13-22</i>
<i>Wed, Sep. 6</i>	<i>Remember the Sabbath</i>	<i>Exodus 20: 8-11</i>
<i>Thu, Sep. 7</i>	<i>Rest for God's People</i>	<i>Hebrews 4: 1-10</i>
<i>Fri, Sep. 8</i>	<i>Enter God's Rest</i>	<i>Hebrews 4: 11-16</i>
<i>Sat, Sep. 9</i>	<i>God's People must care for others</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 22: 1-4</i>

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

THEME:

LOVE COMPLETES, LAW FALLS SHORT

TOPIC: DOING GOOD THINGS AT ALL TIMES

TEXT: LUKE 14: 1-6

MEMORY VERSE: *Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the Law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" But they remained silent. So, taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way. (Luke 14: 3-4)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Speak to the reasons Jesus always had problems with the Pharisee.
2. Discuss why Jesus healed the sick man on the Sabbath day.
3. Remain resolute against any criticism that could arise when standing up for what is right.

INTRODUCTION

The healing ministry of Jesus was an important part of his mission on earth. Jesus engaged the Pharisees in a conversation to erase the notion that even good deeds towards others should not be done on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was God's idea to make man appreciate the importance of rest but the Pharisees took it further to restrain man from doing anything, even in helping others. However, Jesus was not deterred by their accusation of contravening the law of the Sabbath but went ahead and healed a man. This was to help man understand that the Sabbath was made for man, not that man was made for the Sabbath.

QUESTIONS

A. JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH DROPSY (Luke 14: 1-4)

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. Luke 14: 1

1. What should be the attitude of a leader towards members who are constantly in conflict with him or watching his ways in order to find a fault? *1 Peter 2: 15, Romans 12: 17-21.*
2. Why were the Pharisees and the teachers of the law not able to answer Jesus' questions in verses 3-4? *Psalms 119: 99.*

B. JESUS' PERTINENT QUESTION (Luke 14: 5-6)

1. Why were the Pharisees more concerned about saving their animals than showing compassion to humans on the Sabbath? What was Jesus' position? *Matthew 12: 10-12, James 2: 8.*

And they had nothing to say. Luke 14: 6.

2. Discuss what might have been in the mind of the Pharisees and why they were not able to give an answer to Jesus' question this second time? *Romans 11: 33, Job 36: 26*

CONCLUSION

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2: 10). The lifestyle of believers should be to show love in helping others without allowing ourselves to be limited by man's doctrinal rules anytime, anywhere. These conduct can by themselves minister to unbelievers who may be reluctant to allow us speak to them about our faith in Christ. By

these fruits of good deeds, people come to know where we belong. (Matthew 5:16; Matthew 7:16-20).

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Do good at all times regardless of what the traditions of men say.
2. Leaders should always allow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. Be open to learn new things in silence.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Sep. 10</i>	<i>Do Good to others</i>	<i>Luke 14: 1-6</i>
<i>Mon, Sep. 11</i>	<i>God demands Justice and Promises Healing</i>	<i>Isa. 58: 6-14</i>
<i>Tue, Sep. 12</i>	<i>Do you want to be well?</i>	<i>John 5: 1-9</i>
<i>Wed, Sep. 13</i>	<i>God's Work Faces Resistance</i>	<i>John 5: 10-16</i>
<i>Thu, Sep. 14</i>	<i>God is at Work</i>	<i>John 5: 17-21</i>
<i>Fri, Sep. 15</i>	<i>Obedience shows Wisdom and Discernment</i>	<i>Deut. 4: 1-14</i>
<i>Sat, Sep. 16</i>	<i>God, teach us your Statues</i>	<i>Psalms 119: 113-128</i>

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

THEME:

LOVE COMPLETES, LAW FALLS SHORT

TOPIC: JESUS GIVES GOD GLORY

TEXT: JOHN 7: 15-24

MEMORY VERSE: *Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; therefore, there is nothing false about him. (John 7: 18).*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Learn what it means to give God the glory in what we do.
2. The basis of Jesus conversation with the Jews.
3. Know what to do when confronted for speaking and standing by the truth.

INTRODUCTION

Following the previous week's study where Jesus emphasized that the Sabbath should pose no limitation to doing good deeds, Jesus took this teaching to another level by bringing it up in the temple gathering during the Feast of Tabernacles. This time he pointed the attention of his listeners to God Almighty who is the receiver of the glory. Jesus took advantage of a public gathering to drive home the truth and stood firmly by it even when it did not go down well with his listeners. Hence, believers should be known for the truth both in the open and secret places.

QUESTIONS

A. JESUS ASCRIBES GLORY TO GOD (John 7: 15-18)

The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" John 7: 15

1. Discuss what could have made the people to say, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?" Luke 2: 46-47, Acts 4: 13, 2 Timothy 3: 12, Philippians 1: 29.
2. Explain what Jesus meant by saying that his teachings came from God. John 4: 34; 5: 19; 8: 38.
3. What does it mean to give glory to God in what we do? What is the implication of doing otherwise? 1 Corinthians 10: 31, Acts 12: 21-23, Luke 12: 16-21.

B. JESUS JUSTIFIES HIS HEALING ON THE SABBATH (John 7: 19-24)

1. What exactly was Jesus' offence that made the people conclude that He was demon possessed? What is the lesson for believers? John 7: 19-20, Matthew 5: 11-12.

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment. John 7: 24

2. What lessons does verse 24 teach believers? 1 Samuel 16: 6-7, Revelation 3: 19.
3. How can believers grow in confidence when it comes to speaking the truth and standing by the truth at all times? 2 Timothy 1: 7, Matthew 10: 28.

CONCLUSION

The existence of man was not the doing of any man. Our lives are gifts from God which he magnanimously gave to us to serve His purpose. Our daily conducts should therefore reflect the beauty and radiance of His glory. All glory, honour and majesty should be ascribed to Him alone. In doing this, we play our role in our relationship with God while we allow God do His part. Because He is faithful, he will surely bless us so we can be empowered to do more.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Believers should attribute glory to God in everything.
2. Believers should do good everywhere and every time.
3. Believers should read the Word of God daily to conform with the Will of God.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Sep. 17</i>	<i>Jesus speaks to Glorify the Father</i>	<i>John 7: 14-24</i>
<i>Mon, Sep. 18</i>	<i>Forgive as God in Christ has Forgiven you</i>	<i>Eph. 4: 17-32</i>
<i>Tue, Sep. 19</i>	<i>God Forgives</i>	<i>Psalms 130</i>
<i>Wed, Sep. 20</i>	<i>Adultery in the Heart</i>	<i>Matthew 5: 27-32</i>
<i>Thu, Sep. 21</i>	<i>You Get the Judgement You Give</i>	<i>Matthew 7: 1-5</i>
<i>Fri, Sep. 22</i>	<i>Rejoice in God's Forgiveness</i>	<i>Psalms 32</i>
<i>Sat, Sep. 23</i>	<i>Let the Wicked Forsake Their Way</i>	<i>Isaiah 55: 6-13</i>

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

THEME:

LOVE COMPLETES, LAW FALLS SHORT

TOPIC: JESUS EXTENDS FORGIVENESS

TEXT: JOHN 8: 1-11, 56-59

MEMORY VERSE: *"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8: 11b)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us::

1. Understand the reason why the issue of adultery was taken seriously by the Jews.
2. Appreciate Jesus' response in dismissing the woman that committed adultery without any punishment contrary to the people's expectation.
3. Appreciate the fact that no offence is unforgivable, and no conflict is irreconcilable.

INTRODUCTION

The sin of adultery is unacceptable to God. According to the Jewish culture, the sin of adultery was punishable by death for both the man and the woman (*Leviticus 20: 10, Deuteronomy 22: 22*). It was against this background that the Pharisees brought a woman who was caught in the act of adultery to stand before Jesus. They demanded to know from Jesus what should be done to the woman, according to the law of Moses, in order to trap him. Surprisingly, Jesus forgave the woman and commanded her to sin no more. This lesson teaches that forgiveness is the act of showing mercy, pardon or compassion to an offender. Extensively, we shall also get to see Jesus' claim about his true identity and his pre-existence before Abraham was born.

QUESTIONS

A. JESUS FORGIVES A WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY (John 8: 1-11)

1. Differentiate between judging people and correcting people when they do wrong? *Matthew 7: 1-2, Galatians 6: 1, 2 Timothy 3: 16.*

In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say? They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. John 8: 5-6.

2. The accusers referenced the Law to entrap Jesus. What lesson is there for believers today when evangelising unbelievers? *Matthew 10: 16, Psalm 91: 3.*
3. What message does Jesus' last words to the woman hold for the world today? *John 8: 11, Romans 6: 1-2; 8: 1-2.*
4. Should there be anything like unforgiveable offences or irreconcilable conflicts in Christendom? If No, how can we help people with this mind set? *Romans 5: 8, Hebrews 4: 16*

B. JESUS' CLAIM ABOUT HIMSELF (John 8: 56-59)

Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad. John 8: 56

1. What did Jesus mean in saying this? *John 8: 56.*

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" John 8: 58.

2. What again did Jesus mean by this statement? *John 8: 58.*
3. Why did his listeners choose to respond the way they did in vs. 57 and 59? Any lesson for believers today. *John 8: 57,59.*

CONCLUSION

Forgive others so that you may also enjoy the grace of forgiveness from others. Our imperfect nature as man sets us up to offend one another. There should be no offence against one another that is either unforgiveable or irreconcilable. *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5: 8). Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4: 16).* So, when you find yourself struggling to let go of an offence, go to the Lord in prayer and God, ask for the grace to forgive, and, according to Heb. 4:16, you will surely find **grace to help** in such times of need.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Make a commitment to forgive those who offend you.
2. Extend a hand of love to everyone without discrimination.
3. Leave that life of sin and cleave to holiness in Christ.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Sep. 24</i>	<i>Neither do I Condemn You</i>	<i>John 8: 1-11</i>
<i>Mon, Sep. 25</i>	<i>Keep God's Law in your Heart</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 6: 4-9</i>
<i>Tue, Sep. 26</i>	<i>Practice your Piety in Secret</i>	<i>Matthew 6: 1-8, 16-18</i>
<i>Wed, Sep. 27</i>	<i>Abide in Christ</i>	<i>John 15: 1-8</i>
<i>Thu, Sep. 28</i>	<i>God will Give the Spirit</i>	<i>Ezekiel 36: 25-30</i>
<i>Fri, Sep. 29</i>	<i>God will Repay each one's Deed</i>	<i>Romans 2: 1-8</i>
<i>Sat, Sep. 30</i>	<i>God Shows No Partiality</i>	<i>Romans 2: 9-16</i>

OCTOBER 1, 2023

THEME:

FAITH TRIUMPHS, LAW FAILS

TOPIC: A MATTER OF THE HEART

TEXT: ROMANS 2: 12-24; 28-29

MEMORY VERSE: *No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God. (Romans 2: 29)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Discover why some people find it difficult to obey the laws of God wholeheartedly.
2. State some religious practices that are against God's injunction.
3. Make a commitment to live in obedience to God's word, even when it is not convenient

INTRODUCTION

Paul's frightful picture of man's sinfulness is true of the Jews also, even though they were God's own nation, for they commit sins that are common to mankind. Martin Luther-King Jr. used three metaphors to describe the law: he said, *'it's like a mirror that shows who they really are before God. It is a hammer that crushes human arrogance when humans see who they are before God. It is a mask; behind this mask is the mercy of God, to which the law drives the sinner and the saint'*

Romans Chapter 2 was written primarily to the Jews. They were proud to be called "Jews" with the understanding that "salvation belongs only to them". Unfortunately, even though they claimed to be the custodian of

the Law and boasted about God's expectation from them, they were the "vilest of the offenders" when it comes to obeying the Law. Paul, however, told them that it is not the hearer or custodian of the law who are righteous in God's sight, and that it is the doers of the law who will be justified. Therefore, there are no special privileges for Jews and Gentiles but God expects obedience to His word. This is the focal point of today's lesson.

QUESTIONS

A. THE NECESSITY OF THE LAW (Romans 2: 12-16)

1. Discuss the reasons people find it difficult to obey the laws of the land, at home and abroad? *Romans 13:1-7.*
2. Discuss how the law of God can be written in the hearts of people? *Hebrews 10:16; Psalm 19:7-8; Jeremiah 31:33-34*

B. VAIN PRIDE OF THE JEWS (Romans 2: 17-24)

As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (vs. 24)

1. Describe some common attitudes in believers that easily make unbelievers have contempt for God? What are the implications of these attitudes on the lives of unbelievers? *1 Corinthians 3:1, 2 Timothy 3:5.*

C. THE PRIDE OF PHYSICAL CIRCUMCISION CONDEMNED (Rom. 2: 28-29)

1. What makes a Jew different from a non-Jew? *Romans 2: 28-29, Philippians 3: 3-5.*
2. Discuss how some common religious activities are wrongly practised by Christians? *Matthew 23:3-11.*

CONCLUSION

Although there is a further focus on Jews in today's lesson, we need to be careful to remember that the Jews are being condemned not because they have certain covenantal privileges, but because they do "the same things" as the Gentiles do and so deserve the judgment. The Law and circumcision are not everything. There is in a sense a covenant behind the covenant. Paul denies "*covenantal nomism*" where everyone in the covenant is saved and adopts "*covenantal pistism*" which states it is faith within the covenant which makes them saved.

Paul addresses three false confidences of the self-righteous Jew. These things are good in and of themselves but were used wrongly by the Jews just as many religious Christians wrongly use the gifts of God. These religious activities were never to excuse the Jews from simple obedience. Unfortunately, the Christian church is filled with those who think their relationship with God has been taken care of because they own or read a Bible or belong to the church or have been baptized. Paul knocks these false confidences down, one by one: the possession of the Law, their heritage as Jews and their rite of circumcision. *Please read Ephesians 2: 8-9.*

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Commitment to religious activities and efforts cannot save anyone.
2. Faith in the finished works of Jesus Christ can make us to be in right standing with God.
3. Christians should always match their words with their actions

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Oct. 1</i>	<i>God Looks at Your Heart</i>	<i>Romans 2: 17-29</i>
<i>Mon, Oct. 2</i>	<i>Living Before God</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 5: 1-15</i>
<i>Tue, Oct. 3</i>	<i>Living with Others</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 5: 16-22</i>
<i>Wed, Oct. 4</i>	<i>Who will Rescue me</i>	<i>Romans 7: 14-25</i>
<i>Thu, Oct. 5</i>	<i>Outward Piety Earns God's Wrath</i>	<i>Jeremiah 7: 1-15</i>
<i>Fri, Oct. 6</i>	<i>Dead to Sin; Alive in Christ</i>	<i>Romans 6: 1-12</i>
<i>Sat, Oct. 7</i>	<i>Present Yourself to God</i>	<i>Romans 6: 13-23</i>

OCTOBER 8, 2023

THEME:

FAITH TRIUMPHS, LAW FAILS

TOPIC: FINDING LIFE AND FREEDOM

TEXT: ROMANS 7: 1-12

MEMORY VERSE: By now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. (Romans 7: 6)

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Describe what it means to be dead to the law.
2. Contrast the freedom of the law in the old testament and freedom of righteousness in Christ Jesus.
3. Make personal commitment to finding life and freedom in Christ instead of strict adherence to the law.

INTRODUCTION

Laws are commandments, regulations, decrees or rulings that are made to guide people in their relationship with one another and with God. Where there are no laws, people live according to their own will and desire, which may be contrary to God's purpose for them. The law was given to the people of Israel to teach them how to live in fellowship with God.

According to the passage, Apostle Paul testified that he would not have been aware of sin if not for the law. The desire might have existed, but he would not have known it to be sinful. The law must be understood for us to appreciate the freedom we have in Christ, and discover the pathway

God has marked out for us. The focus of today's lesson is that the Law, although a guide to believers at a time, has been set aside by virtue of our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are no longer bound by the law. We have been released from the law so that we will be able to live by the Spirit.

QUESTIONS

A. FREEDOM FROM THE LAW (Romans 7: 1-6)

"So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God". (Vs. 4)

1. What does it mean to be "Dead to the Law"? *Romans 6:14; Galatians 4:4-5; Colossians 2: 13-14.*
2. What should be the attitude of believers in response to the freedom we are enjoying through Christ Jesus? *Galatians 5:1,13; Galatians 2: 20, Matthew 5: 14-16.*
3. Identify some laws in the Church that seems to have enslaved members from serving God? Discuss what can rightly be done after now?

B. GOD'S PERFECT LAW (Romans 7: 7-12)

"What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet". (Vs. 7).

1. Discuss the benefits of the law of God according to the passage? *Psalms 19:7-8; Romans 5:20-21.*

2. Differentiate between serving in the old way of a written law and in the new way of the Spirit? *Romans 8:1-4*.

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ came and lived like Adam without a sinful nature in the “likeness of human flesh”, which means He had a body like ours but a soul that was unlike ours in that it was not fallen. Jesus lived by the power of the Holy Spirit, under the law, perfectly fulfilling its every demand. Jesus died on the cross for our sins so that His perfect obedience and righteousness could be imputed on us. Jesus rose from death, fulfilling the demands of the law for us so that His power and presence could be imparted on us through the Holy Spirit. The result is that we are now free to live for Christ, and live like Christ, as Christ lives in and through us by the Spirit. This is the upward path of the Christian life which leads to freedom and peace.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Believers should not be controlled by the law but by the Spirit of God.
2. As long as we continue to live under the law, we will continue to be enslaved by sin.
3. The weakness of the law is not in the law but in the corrupt nature of man.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Oct. 8</i>	<i>Dead to the Law Through Christ</i>	<i>Romans 7: 1-13</i>
<i>Mon, Oct. 9</i>	<i>The Lord Preserves the Faithful</i>	<i>Psalms 31: 1-5, 19-24</i>
<i>Tue, Oct. 10</i>	<i>Your Faith Has Made You Well</i>	<i>Mark 10: 46-52</i>
<i>Wed, Oct. 11</i>	<i>My Heart Trusts in God</i>	<i>Psalms 28</i>
<i>Thu, Oct. 12</i>	<i>The Gospel Sets Us Free</i>	<i>Acts 15: 22-35</i>
<i>Fri, Oct. 13</i>	<i>God Demands Justice, Kindness and Humility</i>	<i>Micah 6: 1-8</i>
<i>Sat, Oct. 14</i>	<i>The Gospel for all People</i>	<i>Galatians 2: 1-10</i>

OCTOBER 15, 2023

THEME:

FAITH TRIUMPHS, LAW FAILS

TOPIC: JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, NOT LAW

TEXT: GALATIANS 2: 11-21

MEMORY VERSE: *The life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2: 20)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Define the terms 'Justification' and 'Faith'.
2. Identify some of the hypocritical behaviours found in believers.
3. Make a commitment to lovingly correct erring brethren.

INTRODUCTION

The term justification means to be declared righteous or innocent of an accusation. Justification by faith therefore refers to God's pronouncement that anyone who believes in Jesus Christ is no longer guilty of any offence but righteous in the sight of God. Faith is described as the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (*Hebrews 11:1*). However, the works rejected by Paul in his letter to the Galatian brethren are those which the Jews claimed as earning God's favour and salvation. In his view, no amount of works and observance of Jewish law can offer salvation. It is through our faith in Christ Jesus that we are saved and justified.

Today's lesson focuses on how believers are justified. Paul made it clear in the epistle to the Galatians that justification cannot be obtained through

the law or good deeds, but that God works through the Holy Spirit to make those who believe righteous. Therefore, it involves no human effort because by the works of the law, no one will be justified (*Galatians 2:21; 3:21*)

QUESTIONS

A. PETER'S HYPOCRITICAL LIFESTYLE CONDEMNED (*Galatians 2: 11-14*)

1. Mention some of the hypocritical lifestyles of some Christians in our contemporary days? What are the best ways to correct them? *Mark 7:6; 1 John 4:20; Titus 1: 16, Galatians 6: 1-2.*
2. Should Christian leaders be corrected when they err? If yes, what are some of the best ways to do so? *Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 1:20; Mathew 18:15-17; Titus 3:10-11.*
3. When corrected, how should we react? *Psalms 38:1-2, 21-22. Proverbs 9:8-11.*

B. JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE (*Galatians 2: 15-21*)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2: 20

1. According to the passage, 'What does it mean to be crucified with Christ'? And what are the importance of Grace in the work of Justification? *Acts 11: 26; 2 Corinthians 5: 21; Ephesians 2: 8.*
2. We are justified by faith and not by our good deeds, Discuss? *Romans 5: 1; Genesis 15: 6; Romans 4: 5.*

CONCLUSION

Paul explains that Jews are saved by faith, not by keeping the law: “We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (vs. 15-16).

We cannot claim to be righteous on our own merits — if we are going to be declared righteous, it must be on the basis of Christ's righteousness. That is why the Jewish believers, like the Gentiles, put their trust in Christ, not in themselves. The implication here is that since Jews and Gentiles are accepted by God on the same basis, for the same reason, then they ought to accept one another.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. We are justified by faith and not by works of the law.
2. Believers should avoid hypocritical lifestyles
3. Erring believers and leaders should be corrected in love and with the aim of expanding God's kingdom, not with ulterior motives.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Oct. 15</i>	<i>We are Justified In Christ</i>	<i>Galatians 2: 11-21</i>
<i>Mon, Oct. 16</i>	<i>So Great a Salvation</i>	<i>Hebrews 2: 1-9</i>
<i>Tue, Oct. 17</i>	<i>Christ Destroys the Power of Death</i>	<i>Hebrews 2: 10-18</i>
<i>Wed, Oct. 18</i>	<i>Delight in the Law of the Lord</i>	<i>Psalms 1: 1-6</i>
<i>Thu, Oct. 19</i>	<i>Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing</i>	<i>Ephesians 1: 3-14</i>
<i>Fri, Oct. 20</i>	<i>The Hope to which We Are Called</i>	<i>Ephesians 1: 15-23</i>
<i>Sat, Oct. 21</i>	<i>You Receive The Spirit by the Word</i>	<i>Galatians 3: 1-5</i>

OCTOBER 22, 2023

THEME:

FAITH TRIUMPHS, LAW FAILS

TOPIC: THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GOSPEL

TEXT: GALATIANS 3: 1-14

MEMORY VERSE: *Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? (Galatians 3: 2b)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. State why believers were redeemed by Christ Jesus according to verse 14.
2. Discuss ways that the Gospel is superior to the law.
3. Make a commitment to hold on to the true Gospel to the end without wavering.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible confirms that through the law, nobody would be justified (*Romans 3:20*), but justification and salvation are received through faith in Jesus Christ. It is clear, however, that the breaking of the law brings about some punishments and condemnation, which support the fact that the law fails but faith triumphs.

The central truth of today's lesson is that all who have faith in Christ have been redeemed from the law of sin. Due to this fact, we should learn to appreciate Paul's teaching in *Romans 8:1* that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Him, the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death. It is in Christ that

all believers are set free. Paul in today's lesson argues that the Gospel is the only way to obtain salvation, anyone that put his faith in Christ will be saved. Therefore, the Gospel is superior to any other method to get salvation. Christ is the only source of salvation and no one else. *Acts 4: 12.*

QUESTIONS

A. PAUL'S PERTINENT QUESTION (*Galatians 3: 1-5*)

1. Mention some trending teachings that easily distract believers from their faith? *2 Timothy 2:16-18; Hebrew 13: 9.*
2. Discuss reasons why some believers are insecure in their faith and what the church can do to help them? *Ephesians 4: 14, 2 Timothy 3: 7, Acts 17: 11, 2 Timothy 4: 2.*

B. THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM (*Galatians 3: 6-9*)

1. What does it mean to obtain salvation through faith in Christ? And what are the importance of Grace in the work of Justification? *Act 16:31; Ephesian 2:8-9.*
2. What are the requirement for obtaining the blessings of Abraham? *Romans 4:1-6; Genesis 12:2-3; Deuteronomy 4: 40, John 8: 33-36.*

C. FUTILITY IN RELYING ON THE LAW (*Galatians 3: 10-14*)

1. How is the Gospel superior to the law? *Act 13: 38-39; Romans 6: 14.*

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." (vs. 13)

2. State the reasons why Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law? *James 2:10, Ephesians 2: 12.*

CONCLUSION

The law cannot save, "for by the deeds of the law no flesh is justified"; but the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The law is all righteousness — the gospel all grace. The law can only justify the just; the gospel justifies the sinner. The law demands obedience, but it never helps men to obey; the gospel effectually helps those who cannot help themselves. The law cries out, "Do this and live"; the gospel, in gentler tones, says, "Believe and live." The law has a prison in which to punish; the gospel has a reformatory in which to save. The law is a taskmaster sternly commanding. The law can only show the sins; the gospel, with an almighty fling, casts them into the depths of the sea. The law can say, "*If Thou, Lord, should mark iniquities, who shall stand?*" The gospel gives the grand reply, "There is forgiveness with Thee." The law can say, "Sin hath abounded"; the gospel, "Grace hath much more abounded." The law has not saved one soul; the gospel has saved myriad of souls. Thank God that where the law fails the gospel triumphs.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The law cannot save but the Gospel does.
2. By faith in Christ, we are all God's children, regardless of our race or status.
3. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Sun, Oct. 22	<i>Redeemed from the Law's Curse</i>	<i>Galatians 3: 6-18</i>
Mon, Oct. 23	<i>A Promise to Abram's Offspring</i>	<i>Genesis 12: 1-9</i>
Tue, Oct. 24	<i>An Imperishable Inheritance</i>	<i>1 Peter 1: 3-12</i>
Wed, Oct. 25	<i>God chose the Poor to be Heirs of the Kingdom</i>	<i>James 2: 1-7</i>
Thu, Oct. 26	<i>The Lord is my Portion</i>	<i>Psalms 16</i>
Fri, Oct. 27	<i>God's Inheritance is God's People</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 32: 1-14</i>
Sat, Oct. 28	<i>Heirs of God's Promise</i>	<i>Hebrews 11: 8-19</i>

OCTOBER 29, 2023

THEME:

FAITH TRIUMPHS, LAW FAILS

TOPIC: FREED TO BECOME AN HEIR

TEXT: GALATIANS 3: 23 – 4: 7

MEMORY VERSE: *So in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith. (Galatians 3: 26)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Explain the word 'heir' and how it relates to Christians.
2. Describe life before and after accepting Christ through faith.
3. Show appreciation to God for our adoption as children of God.

INTRODUCTION

The state of human race was terrible before the advent of faith because it was held captive by law. However, the law was adopted to guide us to Christ who will justify us by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the control of the law (vs. 23-25). This fact implies that we are all children of God by virtue of our faith in Jesus Christ. By this privilege, we have become seeds of Abraham and heirs according to the promise of God.

The dictionary defines 'heir' as 'the person who has the legal right to receive the property or title of an older member of the family'. The central truth of today's lesson is that God has adopted us, and now we have legal right to the kingdom of heaven as heirs. Paul used the understanding about adoption and being an heir to explain the believer's position in

Christ. So, no more division of any kind. The shedding of the blood of Jesus has broken the barriers. Therefore, as many that have faith in Christ Jesus, regardless of race, status or sex automatically become children of God according to the promise, and they have direct access to the Father.

QUESTIONS

A. FAITH AND THE LAW COMPARED (*Galatians 3: 23-29*)

1. Discuss the importance of faith as a basis for receiving God's promises? *John 11:25-26; John 11:40; Ephesians 1: 13, Hebrews 11: 6.*
2. The law can diagnose sin, but it cannot give a remedy. Discuss? *Romans 4:15; Acts 13: 33*

B. ADOPTED AS GOD'S CHILDREN (*Galatians 4: 1-7*)

To redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to son-ship. (Vs. 5)

1. What does it mean to be adopted as God's children'? Differentiate between physical and spiritual adoption? *Romans 8:14-17; John 1:12-13; 2 Corinthians 6:18.*
2. Discuss the implication of this statement "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"? *Hebrews 1: 2; Genesis 17: 4-8, John 8: 33-36.*

CONCLUSION

An "heir" is one who INHERITS or is ENTITLED TO INHERIT. The idea is that of an only son being heir to his father who is wealthy. He falls heir to all that his father has. He is entitled to everything his father possesses. Specifically, an heir by English common law means one who by operation

of law inherits the real property of a deceased person. He is called a legal heir. A son does not come into the inheritance of his father's estate until his father is dead. Then he inherits the property of his father.

Thank God, our Heavenly Father never dies! We fall heir of His estate WHEN WE BELIEVE. And we ENTER INTO IT (not when God dies for He will never die) when we GO TO BE WITH the Lord, whether by death or by the Coming of the Lord. We enter into the inheritance of EVERYTHING GOD HAS. Isn't that wonderful?

PRACTICAL LESSONS

- 1. Those who belong to Christ Jesus are Abraham's seeds and heirs according to the promise.
- 2. God sent His Son to redeem those under the law, so that they might receive adoption to son-ship.
- 3. Our freedom in Christ is not a license to continue to sin because the works of the flesh cannot save anyone.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Oct. 29</i>	<i>Children of God</i>	<i>Galatians 3: 23–4: 7</i>
<i>Mon, Oct. 30</i>	<i>Welcoming God's New People</i>	<i>Acts 15: 1-11</i>
<i>Tue, Oct. 31</i>	<i>Salvation is from the Lord</i>	<i>Psalms 37: 27-40</i>
<i>Wed, Nov. 1</i>	<i>My Help Comes from the Lord</i>	<i>Psalms 121</i>
<i>Thu, Nov. 2</i>	<i>We are all One Body</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 12: 12-20</i>
<i>Fri, Nov. 3</i>	<i>God is Near to Anyone</i>	<i>Acts 17: 22-34</i>
<i>Sat, Nov. 4</i>	<i>Salvation for All People</i>	<i>Isaiah 56</i>

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

THEME:

CHRIST FREES, LAW ENSLAVES

TOPIC: REQUIREMENT FOR SALVATION

TEXT: ACTS 15: 1-11

MEMORY VERSE: *God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. (Acts 15: 8-9)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Explain the dispute that arose in Antioch over the issue of circumcision as a requirement for salvation.
2. Discuss what is actually needed for salvation according to the reading passage.
3. Express their resolve to change some laws that are capable of causing discrimination in the Church and at home.

INTRODUCTION

Jewish legalism was a problem and a threat to the existence of the Church in Antioch. When Paul and Barnabas were teaching newly converted Gentiles in Antioch, some hard-line Jewish Christians confronted them and insisted that unless the Gentiles are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, they cannot be saved and accepted as real believers (Acts 15:1). These people forgot that God makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles because Christ has broken the barrier that once separated them. The argument became so strong that it led to dispute and debate until the matter was referred to the Jerusalem Council

for a peaceful resolution. After much deliberation, Paul affirmed that God has shown His approval of the Gentiles by giving them the gift of the Holy Spirit just as He has given to the Jewish Christians. Therefore, what is essential for salvation is faith alone and nothing else. As many as come to Jesus in faith irrespective of gender or tribe, He receives and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the focal point of today's lesson.

QUESTIONS

A. THE LAW OF CIRCUMCISION REJECTED (Acts 15: 1-5)

1. Discuss how best we can resolve conflicts or discriminations from doctrinal issues among believers today. *Proverbs 15:1, Matthew 18:15-17.*
2. Identify some church and societal traditions that affect our relationship with one another and suggest how to combat them. *Mark 7: 3-4.*

B. PETER'S EXHORTATION (Acts 15: 6-11)

1. Why is the cleansing of believers' hearts by faith and the infilling of the Holy Spirit the final sign of new birth and God's approval (vs. 8-9)? *Romans 1: 7, Ephesians 2: 8-9.*

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. (vs. 7).

2. Discuss ways the church/ Community should handle criticism/ misunderstanding arising from the misinterpretation of their doctrine/constitution. *Act 6:1, Mathew 22:29.*

CONCLUSION

"Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' ...Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them." A church is a voluntary community charged with holding the members responsible for moral, ethical and theological decisions. The manner in which we live and the truths we teach are never in isolation from other congregations.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Faith is needed for salvation and not circumcision.
2. Conflicts arising from the interpretation of doctrinal issues should be handled with God's wisdom.
3. Any traditions/customs against the word of God should be stopped.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Nov. 5</i>	<i>Saved Through Grace</i>	<i>Acts 15: 1-11</i>
<i>Mon, Nov. 6</i>	<i>Let us Love One Another</i>	<i>1 John 4: 7-13</i>
<i>Tue, Nov. 7</i>	<i>Perfect Love Casts Out Fear</i>	<i>1 John 4: 14-21</i>
<i>Wed, Nov. 8</i>	<i>Love and Serve the Lord</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 10: 12-22</i>
<i>Thu, Nov. 9</i>	<i>Faith Working Through Love</i>	<i>Galatians 5: 1-6</i>
<i>Fri, Nov. 10</i>	<i>The Greatest Commandment is Love</i>	<i>Matthew 22: 34-40</i>
<i>Sat, Nov. 11</i>	<i>Loving Deeds</i>	<i>Leviticus 19: 11-18</i>

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

THEME:

CHRIST FREES, LAW ENSLAVES

TOPIC: LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 13: 8-13, ROMANS 13: 8-10

MEMORY VERSE: *The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery”, “You shall not murder”, “You shall not steal”, “You shall not covet”, and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” (Romans 13: 9)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. List the characteristics of love according to the passage.
2. Discuss the different ways Christians should show love to their neighbours without relenting.
3. Articulate their resolve to make love an indispensable part of their Christian living.

INTRODUCTION

After a Sunday school lesson with the topic, "Love Your Neighbour as Yourself", Mrs. Ruth Samson narrated her experience with her neighbour who is also a Christian and one of the women leaders in her church. According to her, the woman is a difficult person and she is known to be hostile to her neighbours, every attempt made by Mrs. Samson to befriend her was to no avail. But she did not relent in showing her love, even though the woman did not reciprocate. Mrs. Samson was determined to love the woman based on the emphasis on "Love one another," which was the theme for the Sunday school Lessons

throughout the month. Then, she resolved to employ the system of constant greeting, showing little acts of kindness, regular visitation and prayer for the woman and members of her family. One day, the woman asked Mrs. Samson why she has been so concerned about her, showing her love despite her poor response. Cheerfully, Mrs. Samson said, "I love because of Christ who has commanded us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Great emphasis was repeatedly placed on the commandment to love one another in the Scriptures.

Jesus also emphasized it throughout His earthly ministry, and He demonstrated genuine love even to His enemies. The focus of today's lesson underscores God's love for us and also commands that we should love our neighbours as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18b) because love fulfils the law.

QUESTIONS

A. THE ENDURING NATURE OF LOVE (1 Corinthians 13: 8-13)

1. Explain what you understand by love.
2. Discuss what Apostle Paul Meant by "love never ends."
1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:8, Jeremiah 31:3.
3. How will love help us live correctly in a world already characterized by hatred and hostility? *Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:8.*

B. LOVE FULFILS THE LAW (Romans 13: 8-10)

1. Explain in your own words how love fulfils the law. *Romans 13:8-10, James 2:8.*
2. Can a Christian love everyone? If yes, discuss how Christians can show love to wicked people like the bandits and terrorists who are our neighbours? *Luke 23:34, Matthew 5: 46-47.*

CONCLUSION

Debt is burdensome and being obligated to another is a constant weight on one's shoulders. But there is one great exception, according to Apostle Paul. That exception is the debt of love. Paul calls the church to be perpetually obligated in their love for one another. Paul himself was likewise indebted to all: to the Greeks and Barbarians and both to the wise and the unwise. He had the medicine in the gospel that they needed and this meant he was under obligation to share it. Paul expects nothing less from the church. The church in Rome, as well as the church today, are in a constant state of debt to one another. But Dr. Lloyd-Jones warns that if one thinks love and law are at odds with one another, then they have misunderstood the Bible. It is an abuse of the law – by the Pharisees, moralists, and the legalistic – that is at odds with Paul's thoughts on law and love. The law begins with the negative, but God's commandments ultimately have a positive effect. In other words, "love is the fulfilling of the law."

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. The royal law is the law of love.
2. True love, love that comes from God, always benefits others and does good things.
3. Believers should show love to all men.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Nov. 12</i>	<i>Fulfil The Law Through Love</i>	<i>1 Cor. 13: 8-13; Rom. 13: 8-10</i>
<i>Mon, Nov. 13</i>	<i>The Lord's Spirit brings Freedom</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 3: 12-18</i>
<i>Tue, Nov. 14</i>	<i>Judged by the Law of Liberty</i>	<i>James 2: 8-13</i>
<i>Wed, Nov. 15</i>	<i>Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land</i>	<i>Leviticus 25: 8-17</i>
<i>Thu, Nov. 16</i>	<i>Jesus Announces Freedom and Release</i>	<i>Luke 4: 14-22</i>
<i>Fri, Nov. 17</i>	<i>God Provides and Comforts</i>	<i>Psalms 23</i>
<i>Sat, Nov. 18</i>	<i>Rooted and Built Up in Christ</i>	<i>Colossians 2: 6-15</i>

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

THEME:

CHRIST FREES, LAW ENSLAVES

TOPIC: LIVE AS YOU WERE TAUGHT

TEXT: COLOSSIANS 2: 16-23

MEMORY VERSE: *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (Colossians 2: 6-7a)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify some human traditions in the church that can contend with a believer's faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Identify the attributes of human traditions according to the passage.
3. Make a commitment not to be entangled by human rules that profit nothing.

INTRODUCTION

The church in Colossae was not established by Apostle Paul (*Colossians 1:7-8*) but he showed concern for the spiritual health of the church. Paul heard that false teachers had invaded the church and were teaching the people that they must worship certain "spiritual rulers and authorities" in order to know God and have full salvation (*Colossians 1:16*); they were also taught that they must submit to the rite of circumcision, and observe strict rules about foods and other matters. In order to correct the heresy, Paul wrote and opposed the teachings which were based on human traditions and capable of leading the people astray. He emphasized that it is faith in Jesus Christ alone that can give salvation.

In fact, the heart of his reply was an admonition for the people to live by what they have been taught. This is the focus of today's lesson.

QUESTIONS

A. FREEDOM FROM HUMAN RULES (*Colossians 2: 16-19*)

1. Discuss the danger of holding on to some human traditions in the church. *Hebrews 4: 2, Mark 7: 5-9, 13.*
2. How does freedom in Christ allow people to break free from worldly temptations? *2 Corinthians 5:17, Hebrews 4: 15, Deuteronomy 30: 19.*

B. DO NOT SUBMIT TO WORLDLY RULES (*Colossians 2: 20-23*)

1. Identify some human regulations that are prevalent these days and the possible ways to curb them biblically. *Leviticus 11:1–2.*
2. Name some worldly norms, teachings or practices that challenge faithfulness to Christ and the things that easily draw people to these norms and practices.
3. Mention the way we can deal with these worldly practices, norms or teachings biblically. *Colossians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 5:9.*

CONCLUSION

Tradition is a comfortable thing for many of us because it's familiar and holds no unwelcome surprises. In the physical realm, we find reassurance in doing things the way we have become accustomed to doing them, but in the spiritual realm, we must be careful that traditional thoughts and ideas do not pull us away from the truth found in the Scriptures. Worldly philosophies often do not agree with the Word of God.

The “we've always done it this way” mind-set is resistant to change, and individuals succumbing to this type of thinking run the risk of becoming stagnant. Some people are proud of this mind-set, and there are even churches that boast about their own traditions. The Bible warns us about this danger. *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).*

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Christians should be wary of false doctrines.
2. Christians have the freedom in Christ to live the life of God.
3. The liberty the Gospel brings should not be abused.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Nov. 19</i>	<i>Hold Fast to Christ</i>	<i>Colossians 2: 16-23</i>
<i>Mon, Nov. 20</i>	<i>Remember God's Goodness</i>	<i>Joshua 24: 1-14</i>
<i>Tue, Nov. 21</i>	<i>Choose Whom You Will Serve</i>	<i>Joshua 24:15-24</i>
<i>Wed, Nov. 22</i>	<i>Obey God Only</i>	<i>Acts 5: 27-32</i>
<i>Thu, Nov. 23</i>	<i>The Perfect Law of Liberty</i>	<i>James 1: 19-27</i>
<i>Fri, Nov. 24</i>	<i>Walk at Liberty Under God's Precepts</i>	<i>Psalms 119: 41-56</i>
<i>Sat, Nov. 25</i>	<i>Seek God's Love above Knowledge</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 8</i>

NOVEMBER 26, 2023

THEME:

CHRIST FREES, LAW ENSLAVES

TOPIC: DO WHAT IS HELPFUL

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 10: 23 – 11: 1

MEMORY VERSE: *“I have the right to do anything,” you say – but not everything is beneficial. (1 Corinthians 10: 23a)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Explain some of the ways believers care for their freedom according to the passage.
2. Discuss the consequences of abuse of freedom by believers.
3. Renew our commitment to do what is helpful always, especially to those whose faith is weak..

INTRODUCTION

Laws about food and drinks are common in many communities around the world. Eating of certain meat or food are forbidden in some communities, not because of their poor dietary content but largely due to the custom and belief of the natives. The controversy about eating meat from pagan temples affected the Church in Corinth so much that the local assembly was about to split. Paul's teachings were an intervention to address the issue.

The conflict started when Gentile converts joined the Jewish believers in fellowship. Based on their culture, Jews have nothing to do with such meat offered to idols(v.25), but the newly converted Gentiles have no

problem eating such meat. Meanwhile, much of the meat sold in the Gentile market had been previously offered to pagan gods in the temples, and the Jewish Christians believed that they would be guilty of idolatry if they ate such meat. The Jerusalem Council had already made the decision on this when they requested that the converted Gentiles should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols (*Acts 15:29*). The focus of today's lesson is Paul's encouragement to the Christians in Corinth to do what is right as far as eating food sacrificed to idol is concerned for their conscience's sake (v.25)

QUESTIONS

A. THE BELIEVER'S FREEDOM (1 Corinthians 10: 23-30)

1. What are some social practices that are controversial among Christians today and the possible ways to maintain balance?
2. Give examples of some things that are "lawful" but not "helpful" *Malachi 2:16, Matthew 7:1.*

B. ENCOURAGEMENT TO PLEASE GOD (1 Corinthians 10: 31-33; 11: 1)

1. Discuss ways through which "stronger" Christians can seek the good of "weaker" Christians so that they will not backslide. *Galatians 6: 1-3.*
2. What should be the attitude of Christians who eat meat offered to them by Muslims during their religious festival? *Romans 14:21, 1 Corinthians 8:8-10, Colossians 2:16.*

CONCLUSION

Paul again says "No." While it is true that many things are not sinful in and of themselves (*1 Timothy 4:4*), that is not the end of the thought process

for believers. Christians should apply a different standard for the best use of their freedom. "Is this lawful?" is the wrong place to stop. Instead, we should continue by asking "*Is this helpful? Does this build myself and others up?*"

Paul is again addressing the issue of whether it is okay to knowingly eat meat that has been offered to idols. He has agreed that such meat has no power in and of itself (*1 Corinthians 8:4-7*). He would probably have agreed that it was okay to eat such meat in most instances, but for how doing this otherwise "lawful" thing might harm others instead of building them up (*1 Corinthians 8:8-13*).

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Not everything permitted is beneficial.
2. Let God be glorified in all you do.
3. Use your freedom in Christ to help others.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Nov. 26</i>	<i>Strength in The Lord</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 10:23 - 11:1</i>
<i>Mon, Nov. 27</i>	<i>Faith-Based Friendship</i>	<i>Proverbs 17: 17-22</i>
<i>Tue, Nov. 28</i>	<i>Peter's Test of Faith</i>	<i>Matthew 26: 31-35</i>
<i>Wed, Nov. 29</i>	<i>Hear and Obey God's Voice</i>	<i>Hebrews 3: 7-19</i>
<i>Thu, Nov. 30</i>	<i>Faith In Action</i>	<i>Leviticus 19: 30-37</i>
<i>Fri, Dec. 1</i>	<i>God Honours Genuine Faith</i>	<i>Acts 10: 34-48</i>
<i>Sat, Dec. 2</i>	<i>Naomi Becomes a Grandmother</i>	<i>Ruth 4: 13-22</i>

DECEMBER 3, 2023

THEME:
PROFILE OF FAITH

TOPIC: CHANGING IDENTITY

TEXT: RUTH 1: 6-18, 22

MEMORY VERSE: *But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. (Ruth 1: 16)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Explain why Naomi did not want her daughters-in-law to go with her to Bethlehem.
2. Discuss the effects of bereavement on the family members especially if the deceased was the bread-winner.
3. Emulate Ruth's model of courage and faithfulness when facing hardships in life.

INTRODUCTION

As believers in Christ, our faith sometimes can be challenged by some misfortunes, which may be by natural occurrence, accidental or as a result of one's own wrong choices in life. There are also circumstances or situations that God sometimes deliberately allow in our lives to teach us some lessons and to glorify His name. When we go through such, as Christians, we must remember that the purpose is not to destroy us, but to prove whether our confession of faith in Him is based on conviction or convenience. Today's lesson is a study-case of Ruth, the Moabitess who

demonstrated faith in the God of Naomi, her mother-in-law, that God would provide for them in Bethlehem of Judah. The most striking feature of this simple, but beautiful story is God's concern in human affairs. The story which started as a tragedy ended in a new and better identity that ultimately led to the fulfilment of God's eternal plan of salvation.

QUESTIONS

A. NAOMI'S MISFORTUNE (*Ruth 1: 1-7*)

1. What are some negative changes the loss of a loved one can bring on the family members? *Isaiah 41: 10, Joshua 1: 9, Philippians 4: 6-7.*
2. Discuss the different ways churches can assist members who have experienced the loss of a loved one to make necessary adjustment? *Proverbs 19: 17; 22: 9, 2 Corinthians 9: 11.*

B. TEST OF LOVE AND COMMITMENT (*Ruth 1: 9-14*)

1. What lessons can Christian mothers and daughters-in-law learn from the story of Naomi and Ruth as seen in the passage? *Galatians 6: 9, Psalm 37: 4-6, Romans 8: 28.*

C. RUTH'S DETERMINATION (*Ruth 1: 15-18, 22*)

1. What was Ruth's source of determination to cling to her mother-in-law despite her background and culture? *Proverbs 3: 5-6, Psalm 56: 3, 2 Corinthians 5: 7.*
2. Being in Christ is the most lasting and fulfilling identity in life. Discuss. *John 1: 12, Romans 8: 1, Galatians 2: 20, John 15: 5.*

3. Individually and collectively, how can we identify with widows and the bereaved to pray with and support them? *James 1: 27, Exodus 22: 22-24, Isaiah 1: 17*

CONCLUSION

The story of Ruth is an example of some circumstances or situations that God deliberately allow in our lives to teach us to exercise trust/faith in Him. We must remember that the purpose is not to destroy us but to mould us and prove whether our confession of faith is based on conviction or convenience.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Christians should be compassionate towards the bereaved.
2. Our confession should be based on conviction, not convenience.
3. It pays to keep good relationship with in-laws; you will become one someday.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Dec. 3</i>	<i>Ruth's Compassionate Faith</i>	<i>Ruth 1: 16-18, 22</i>
<i>Mon, Dec. 4</i>	<i>Faith Expressed Through Courage</i>	<i>Joshua 1: 1-9</i>
<i>Tue, Dec. 5</i>	<i>David's Son came to Serve</i>	<i>Matthew 20: 25-34</i>
<i>Wed, Dec. 6</i>	<i>Ask In Prayer with Faith</i>	<i>Matthew 21: 18-22</i>
<i>Thu, Dec. 7</i>	<i>David Speaks God's Word</i>	<i>Psalms 27</i>
<i>Fri, Dec. 8</i>	<i>Rekindle God's Gift and Stand Firm</i>	<i>2 Timothy 1: 3-4</i>
<i>Sat, Dec. 9</i>	<i>Israel's Wavering Faith</i>	<i>1 Samuel 17: 1, 3-4, 8, 20-30</i>

DECEMBER 10, 2023

THEME:
PROFILE OF FAITH

TOPIC: THE FAITH OF DAVID

TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 17: 31-37, 45, 48-50

MEMORY VERSE: *The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of the Philistines.*" (1 Samuel 17: 37a)

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Discuss David's courageous trust in God against Goliath who trusted in His power.
2. Compare and contrast the act of expressing one's faith in God and the display of arrogance.
3. Demonstrate their faith in God by facing life's challenges with confidence like David.

INTRODUCTION

The Philistines had been in constant opposition to the Israelites. They were neighbouring nations, yet, they longed for offences against Israel probably because of their expertise in fighting and winning battles. This was the reason Goliath was breathing threats to King Saul and the Israelites. Unfortunately, no one could match Goliath's intimidation and threat except David even though he was discouraged by King Saul because of the age difference, body size and Goliath's expertise. Although Goliath's terror demoralized the Israelites army, David was resolute to engage him in a battle. Today's lesson focuses on the faith of David and his confidence in God that he will defeat Goliath in battle.

QUESTIONS

A. DAVID VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT (1 SAMUEL 17: 31-33)

1. How can Christians build their faith and courage in order to gain victory in times of difficulty like David in the passage? *Psalm 46: 1-3, Proverbs 18: 10, Exodus 33: 14.*
2. What exactly was David's source of courage to fight Goliath in verse 3? *James 1: 17, Philippians 4: 13.*

B. DAVID'S TESTIMONY AND FAITH (1 SAMUEL 17: 34-37, 45)

1. Discuss the benefits of sharing testimony of God's faithfulness among brethren. *Revelation 12: 11, Mark 5: 19, Acts 1: 8, Psalm 107: 2.*
2. Differentiate between boasting in our physical strength and having genuine trust in God to overcome challenges. *Jeremiah 9: 23, 1 Corinthians 1: 31, Psalm 20: 7.*

C. DAVID DEFEATS GOLIATH (1 SAMUEL 17: 48-50)

1. Discuss what the stones of David can be equated with today. *Hebrews 4: 12, Revelation 12: 11, Hebrews 11: 1.*
2. Share with the class how you demonstrated faith concerning a particular situation.

CONCLUSION

David's courage and faith in God with the prayer of king Saul were key instruments for winning the battle against Goliath. David's triumph over the Philistines was by divine power; His victory pleased the nation of

Israel and it was a public proof of God's power on behalf of those who put their confidence in Him (vs. 47)

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Our victory over challenges is sure in Christ Jesus.
2. We need to be strong in our faith in God every day.
3. Believers should be willing to always testify of God's faithfulness.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Dec. 10</i>	<i>Faith that God Will Act</i>	<i>1 Samuel 17: 31-37, 45, 48-50</i>
<i>Mon, Dec. 11</i>	<i>Returning to Faith</i>	<i>2 Chronicles 33: 1-13, 15-16</i>
<i>Tue, Dec. 12</i>	<i>Rahab's Faith</i>	<i>Joshua 2: 1-6, 8-16</i>
<i>Wed, Dec. 13</i>	<i>Patient Faith</i>	<i>James 5: 1-11</i>
<i>Thu, Dec. 14</i>	<i>God's Overflowing Grace</i>	<i>1 Timothy 1: 12-17</i>
<i>Fri, Dec. 15</i>	<i>Beauty for Ashes</i>	<i>2 Samuel 11: 1-5, 26-12:1, 4-7a, 15-16, 24</i>
<i>Sat, Dec. 16</i>	<i>God, The Stronghold for the Oppressed</i>	<i>Psalms 9: 1-14</i>

DECEMBER 17, 2023

THEME:

PROFILE OF FAITH

TOPIC: THE FAMILY OF FAITH

TEXT: MATTHEW 1: 1-17

MEMORY VERSE: *This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: (Matthew 1: 1)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Enumerate how the biblical genealogy of Jesus helps us to understand God's plan of salvation to mankind.
2. Identify our parental roles over every child in bringing them up in the way of the Lord.
3. Trace our family backgrounds based on the information available to us.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of tracing one's genealogy is no longer cherished in modern times. It has become insignificant as if it is no longer an essential part of who we are. In Bible times, knowing one's historical antecedents was crucial for identification, authentication and the opportunity to claim one's inheritance. The coming of Jesus Christ into the world had been anticipated from the beginning. The genealogy of Jesus is important to Matthew because if indeed Jesus is the Messiah, His ancestors had to match up to that. The comprehensive nature of Jesus genealogy is a proof to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Jewish king through whom God's divine purpose of Salvation for humankind would be accomplished

(*Matthew 1: 21*). Today's lesson is about the family of faith. By implication, Christian parents should enlighten their children about their ancestral history (family tree) as much as they know and possibly connect them with one another as part of God's family.

QUESTIONS

A. JESUS' GENEALOGY EXPLAINED (MATTHEW 1: 1-16)

1. Discuss the benefits of knowing one's genealogy as believers in Christ. *Ephesians 1: 4-6, Hebrews 2: 11.*
2. Do we need to trace our family tree today like Jesus' origin was traced to Abraham and David as his ancestors? Why? Give reasons. *Acts 13: 22-23.*
3. What is our role as Christian parents in bringing up our children? *Proverbs 22: 6, Ephesians 6: 4, Deuteronomy 11: 19, 1 Timothy 3: 4, Proverbs 29: 17*

B. JESUS' RICH HERITAGE (MATTHEW 1: 17)

1. Discuss how Christians can enjoy the benefits of Jesus' glorious riches. *Philippians 4: 19, Romans 9: 23-24; 2: 4, Colossians 2: 2-3.*
2. Explain how believers can present Jesus to others as one who is rich in inheritance. *Matthew 28: 18-20, Luke 14: 23, Philippians 2: 3-4, John 4: 13-14.*

CONCLUSION

Tracing one's historical antecedents is very important, as it is perceived to be associated with generational favour from God. The Jews believed that Jesus' coming would change the entire history. Matthew wrote this gospel to the Jewish audience who placed high value on being a

descendant of Abraham and coming from the lineage of David. This genealogy presented was intended to present Christ as a person of great importance. By implication, parents in contemporary times are admonished to deliberately teach the history of the family to their children. *Matthew 1: 1-17, Luke 3: 33-39*

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Seek for knowledge about your family and national origin/roots.
2. Believers should take cover in the blood of Jesus against evil foundations.
3. We should daily learn about our new family of faith.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Dec. 17</i>	<i>Jesus' Family Tree</i>	<i>Matthew 1:1-17</i>
<i>Mon, Dec. 18</i>	<i>Contentment In Every Situation</i>	<i>Philippians 4: 10-19</i>
<i>Tue, Dec. 19</i>	<i>God is My Refuge</i>	<i>Psalms 91: 1-16</i>
<i>Wed, Dec. 20</i>	<i>The Lord has done Great Things</i>	<i>Joel 2: 18-27</i>
<i>Thu, Dec. 21</i>	<i>The Annunciation to Zechariah</i>	<i>Luke 1: 5-17</i>
<i>Fri, Dec. 22</i>	<i>Have Faith, Not Doubt</i>	<i>Luke 1: 18-25</i>
<i>Sat, Dec. 23</i>	<i>Believe</i>	<i>John 20: 19,24-29</i>

DECEMBER 24, 2023

THEME:

PROFILE OF FAITH

TOPIC: THE FAITH OF ELIZABETH AND MARY

TEXT: LUKE 1: 36-45, 56

MEMORY VERSE: *When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women ... (Luke 1: 41-42a)*

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Identify Elizabeth's and Mary's peculiar circumstances that indicated their faith in God.
2. Identify the uniqueness of Christ as Mary was informed by the Angel by Mary and as proclaimed by the prophets.
3. Express belief in God's ability to fulfil his promises in our lives in his time.

INTRODUCTION

The news of the conception of a child brings great joy from desirous families and their loved ones and so much is done for the preparation of the arrival of the child. Having surrendered to the will of God, Mary decided to affirm the promise of God by visiting her cousin Elizabeth who was already six months pregnant as announced by the Angel. The meeting of the two women was of special significance because they had much to share in common about the faithfulness of God. The focus of today's lesson is the faith of Elizabeth and Mary. It confirms the reality of God's power and his enduring promises irrespective of timing and natural limitations. Just as Mary found a kindred spirit in her relationship with

Elizabeth, so also we can find spiritual encouragement, comfort and support from those who share the same faith with us in God.

QUESTIONS

A. MARY ACCEPTS DIVINE ASSIGNMENT (LUKE 1: 36-38)

1. Discuss Mary's response to the angel's messages and its implication for believers in Christ (vs. 34,38). *John 5: 24-25, Romans 12: 1-2, 2 Corinthians 5: 7.*
2. Recall and discuss an instance when you yielded to God's call regardless of other people's negative opinions. *Luke 9: 23, Philipians 2: 13, Acts 9: 3-5.*

B. AFFIRMATION OF THE PROMISE (LUKE 1: 39-45, 56)

1. Explain the significance of the baby in Elizabeth's womb that leaped for joy at the sound of Mary's voice (vs. 41). *Matthew 3: 11-15.*
2. Identify and Discuss the three unique high points about the person of Christ from the angel's message and Elizabeth's words to Mary. (vs. 29-33). *Isaiah 9: 6-7.*
3. Encourage members of the class to witness to the uniqueness of Christ to those who are yet to accept Christ during this Christmas season. *Luke 4: 18, Romans 1: 16; 10: 14-15, 2 Corinthians 3: 2-3.*

CONCLUSION

This lesson discusses the faith of Elizabeth and Mary. Both of them found a kindred spirit in their relationship with each other which led to spiritual affirmation, encouragement, comfort and support. The lesson further teaches us to accept divine assignment and to always affirm God's

promises in our lives. Based on today's lesson, we must resolve to make personal commitments to trust God to fulfil His promises in our lives and to others God will keep leading us to win their souls into His eternal kingdom through the Gospel of Christ.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. Desire the ability to discern the will of God.
2. Family ties should not be taken for granted.
3. Share the love of God with someone this Christmas.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

<i>Sun, Dec. 24</i>	<i>Mary and Elizabeth Express Faith</i>	<i>Luke 1: 36-45, 56</i>
<i>Mon, Dec. 25</i>	<i>Christ the Saviour is Born</i>	<i>Matthew 1: 18-25</i>
<i>Tue, Dec. 26</i>	<i>Mary's Exultant Faith</i>	<i>Luke 1: 46-55</i>
<i>Wed, Dec. 27</i>	<i>Reject Abhorrent Imitation of Faith</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 18: 9-14</i>
<i>Thu, Dec. 28</i>	<i>Make Disciples In Faith</i>	<i>Matthew 28: 16-20</i>
<i>Fri, Dec. 29</i>	<i>God's Salvation For All The Earth</i>	<i>Isaiah 49: 1-6</i>
<i>Sat, Dec. 30</i>	<i>Arise, Shine; Your Light Has Come</i>	<i>Isaiah 60: 1-6</i>

DECEMBER 31, 2023

THEME:

PROFILE OF FAITH

TOPIC: THE FAITH OF THE WISE MEN

TEXT: MATTHEW 2: 1-12

MEMORY VERSE: and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2: 2)

LESSON AIMS

To enable us:

1. Diagnose what was responsible for Herod's secret inquiry about baby Jesus from the Magi.
2. Discuss the significance of the gifts the magi gave to baby Jesus.
3. List practical ways we should celebrate and spread the good news of the birth of Jesus this Christmas season.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod. The birth was widespread that even the magi (the wise men) from the east came from Jerusalem just to worship Him. They were intellectuals who studied the stars, thus they inquired from them where the Messiah was to be born. The magi were invited by king Herod who secretly inquired from them the exact time the star appeared to them. The purpose of the visit of the Magi was to worship the new born king. Their first point of call was King Herod's palace because it was expected that the king would be aware of the birth of the Messiah, but unfortunately he was not. Therefore, he had to make inquiry from the magi, the exact time Jesus was born, so that he might go and worship him. Today's lesson centers on

the faith of the wise men – the visit was one of worship, reverence and homage.

QUESTIONS

A. HEROD'S SECRET INQUIRY (MATTHEW 2: 1-7)

1. What was the significance of the star that led the magi to the birthplace of Jesus Christ? *Matthew 2: 2.*
2. Discuss other means God would have used to reveal Jesus' birth in those days without the use of social media.
3. What was really responsible for Herod's secret inquiry about baby Jesus from the magi? *Matthew 2: 7, 16-17, Jeremiah 17: 9-10.*

B. THE MAGI'S MISSION ACCOMPLISHED (MATTHEW 2: 8-12)

1. Discuss what would have motivated the magi to embark on a search for Jesus and the lesson it teaches Christians. *Joshua 1: 9, Psalm 30: 5, John 11: 40.*
2. Explain the significance of the gifts given by the magi to Jesus. *Matthew 2: 11.*
3. What are the various ways we can honour God with our substances like the magi? *Proverbs 3: 9, Malachi 3: 8-10, 2 Corinthians 8: 3-5.*

CONCLUSION

This study is the last of the series of topics under the theme “Profile of Faith”. In this lesson, we examined how the wise men (the magi) trusted that God is sending the Christ child to be king of the Jews and the Messiah

for all nations. In spite of the challenges and risks involved in search of the baby Jesus and the fear of Herod the King, they chose to obey God to truly honour the Messiah with gifts. Believers can celebrate the birth of Jesus in various ways. We can give gifts of time, material things, prayers, witnessing to others the good news of Jesus birth.

PRACTICAL LESSON

1. The best offering you can give to God is your life.
2. Plan to give someone a special gift this season.
3. Witness to more people about the precious Gift of God to humankind, Jesus Christ.

DAILY ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Sun, Dec. 31 Worship The King of the Jews

Matthew 2: 1-12

