



Rooted

IN HIS WORD



August

SALVATION



Rooted In His Word: Salvation

John 3:1-21 - Jesus and Nicodemus

August 1, 2021

FOR THE LEADER

Today's lesson is about the familiar encounter that Jesus had with a man named Nicodemus. We need to know who Nicodemus was and why this secret meeting with Jesus was so important for our understanding of the Gospel and what it means to be "born again."

MAIN GOAL: To have a deeper understanding of what Jesus taught about how a sinful person may enter the kingdom of God

TODAY'S TRUTHS:

TRUTH #1: An intellectual acknowledgment of Jesus being a great teacher from God is not enough for you to get into the kingdom of God.

TRUTH #2: Entrance into the kingdom of God is limited to those who have been "born again of the spirit".

TRUTH #3: The mission of Jesus on earth was foretold by prophets in the old testament.

TRUTH #4: John 3:16 summarizes the gospel of Jesus Christ, and its truth for salvation rests upon what it means to "believe in Him".

I. INTRODUCTION

Most of us grew up having heard the term "born again" many times. Within the Church, we have understood that being born again was synonymous with "getting saved" or "becoming a Christian" or "joining God's forever family." Nicodemus and his culture had never heard the phrase, "you must be born again." We cannot imagine how strange the concept must have sounded to Nicodemus.

Do you think the term "born again" is still a valid term to use in evangelism today? Why or why not?

WHO WAS NICODEMUS?

Nicodemus was a devout religious leader among the Jewish people in Jerusalem. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin which was the Supreme Court and Legislature for the Jewish people. The Sanhedrin was comprised of both Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees, representing the commoner, were in the minority compared to the Sadducees who were the aristocratic elite. The Sadducees were strict adherents to the Torah of Moses while the Pharisees followed both the written Torah and the oral Torah including the rabbinical interpretations of the Torah. This is why the Pharisees were more responsible for the immense laws heaped upon the Torah of Moses that Jesus railed against as "straining a gnat and swallowing a camel." (Matthew 23:24)

However the Pharisees did believe in things of the supernatural including the resurrection of the dead in an afterlife and the Sadducees did not. Nicodemus was a man whose heart was conflicted because he was surrounded by man-made traditions and laws but loved God and was open to the more supernatural and spiritual aspects of what Jesus was teaching.

II. GET FOCUSED

Read John 3:1-8

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." ³Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

TRUTH #1: AN INTELLECTUAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF JESUS BEING A GREAT TEACHER FROM GOD IS NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU TO GET INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Read John 6:44

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Based on John 3 and John 6:44, why do you think Nicodemus wanted to come and talk with Jesus?

What could be the possible reasons why Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?

How would you describe Jesus' reply to the apparent compliment with which Nicodemus opened their conversation?

Contrasting the opening statement by Nicodemus and how Jesus replied, are there some principles that we should keep in mind when engaging the lost in a spiritual conversation?

We don't know if there was initially some greeting or small talk between Jesus and Nicodemus when they met that night. We only know that Nicodemus began by affirming a level of belief about who Jesus was. Jesus did not deny what Nicodemus said, but He went straight to the heart of what was troubling Nicodemus when he bluntly told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again. However, Jesus had total discernment of what was in someone's heart and mind, and we may not have that spiritual "gift of discernment" or a "word of knowledge" (See 1 Corinthians 12). Unless the Holy Spirit gives us a supernatural insight about a person or situation, we must carefully probe and seek to ascertain where a person is in their spiritual journey.

What are some good probing questions you can use when trying to have a spiritual conversation with someone?

There have been several probing questions used in the past in programs like Evangelism Explosion and CWT (Continued Witness Training) such as "If you were to die tonight, do you know for sure that you would go to heaven?" or "If you were to stand before God and He were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?', what would you say?" In today's culture a conversation-starting question may be, "Would you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?" One of the questions this writer has used to get more specific about the gospel is, "Would you say you know Jesus in a personal way or would you say you are still in the process of that?" This is a great question because either way the answer is given, it is a positive thing that will allow the conversation to continue.

Why is it easier to know about Jesus intellectually and focus on the intellectual side of faith instead of the relationship side of faith and knowing Jesus?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #2 ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIMITED TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN "BORN AGAIN OF THE SPIRIT".

Read John 3:4-8

Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

We are physical beings in a physical world headed toward death. We are also living in an unseen spiritual world in which there can be eternal life for those who become "born of the Spirit." Judging from his response to Jesus, the concept of someone having a second birth was foreign to Nicodemus.

What adjectives would you use to describe the vastly different perspectives from which Jesus and Nicodemus spoke to one another?

Jesus' perspective was:

Nicodemus' perspective was:

Nicodemus was a Jew who undoubtedly believed he would see the kingdom of God. However, Jesus told him that unless he were to be born both physically (of water) and spiritually (of the Spirit) he would not see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus' face must have reacted at this because Jesus then told him to not be shocked or marvel at His words. Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind, pointing out that you can't see it at all, yet you can hear it and see what it does because wind is very real. The Spirit of God is real and being born again is real. Interestingly, the Hebrew word for "spirit" is "ruach" which literally means "wind."

Based on this passage, what does "to be born again of the Spirit" mean to you?

Most people see themselves going to a 'good place' when they die. What are some of the answers you've heard from people about the reason they feel they will go to heaven?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #3: THE MISSION OF JESUS ON EARTH WAS FORETOLD BY PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Read John 3:9-15

Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Who is Jesus referring to when he says "we" and "our" in verse 11?

There are a number of thoughts as to why Jesus briefly and abruptly switches from 1st person singular to the plural:

- Jesus was referring to himself and John the Baptist.
- Jesus was referring to the teachings and testimonies of Himself and His disciples.
- Jesus was making reference to the Trinity.
- Jesus was referring to Moses and the prophets through the ages.

Whatever may be the deeper meaning of Jesus' use of the plural, Jesus was pointing out to Nicodemus that he was spiritually at a distance from understanding heavenly things as one who was a "teacher of Israel."

To what is Jesus referring to in verse 14 about Moses "lifting up the serpent"? (The answer is found in Numbers 21:9 - "So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.")

What is the obvious prophetic statement that Jesus made about Himself in verse 14?

Jesus points out just one of very many prophetic references to Himself from an event in the Torah that Nicodemus would have known well. This must have shocked Nicodemus immensely to hear Jesus explain in one sentence what the Jews had struggled to understand for centuries. They had never imagined that the coming Messiah would be comparable to the serpent Moses lifted up. Jesus explained that God told Moses to put a serpent on a pole that would counteract the deadly serpent bites upon the people when they looked upon the image of what was killing them.

Jesus would become like the image of what brings life (the bronze snake) to all mankind, bearing all our sin upon Himself. Jesus is foretelling of the day of His crucifixion when He would be lifted up on the cross. Jesus would become the atoning sacrifice to bring spiritual healing to all those who look to Him on the cross. He is telling Nicodemus that those who want to be saved must look to Him. This means that those who look to Him are those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that their sin can be forgiven because of His work on the cross. This must have really impacted Nicodemus later when he saw Jesus on the cross, becoming the sacrificial Lamb in our place.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #4: JOHN 3:16 SUMMARIZES THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, BUT ITS TRUTH FOR SALVATION RESTS UPON WHAT IT MEANS TO "BELIEVE IN HIM".

Read John 3:16-21

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

How would you describe what it means to believe in Jesus if you were talking with a non-believer?

You have probably heard it said that some people will miss heaven by 18 inches because that's about the distance from the brain to the heart. Knowing about Jesus in the mind is vastly different from **believing** upon Jesus for salvation.

In personal evangelism training, it has often been explained like this: I can see a chair that appears to be sturdy. I can **believe** it will support my weight if I were to sit in it. However, I haven't really **believed and trusted** in the effectiveness of that chair until I go and sit in it and commit my full weight to it. My belief will be demonstrated by my actions. In the same way, I can know about the historical accounts of Jesus in the Bible, I can go through similar motions of others who profess belief in Jesus, and I can hope that God will allow me into heaven after I die. However, if I do not commit the full weight of my faith and trust in Him, and act upon that trust in righteous living, I cannot say that I truly believe in Him.

Jesus warned in Matthew 7:22-23, *"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!'"* We can surmise that Jesus would be speaking to those who only had a head knowledge or used the Gospel for personal gain in the physical realm, having never truly died to self and been born-again in the spiritual realm.

Why do people love darkness rather than light as Jesus said in verse 19? (See verses 20 & 21)

Sin loves darkness because in our minds we think it can exist undetected. Have you ever walked into a dark room, turned the light on only to see cockroaches run and hide? The light of God in Christ Jesus will reveal the evil that is in the heart of man.

Ellicott's Pulpit Commentary: "The love of darkness was the consequence of their wicked ways. The judgment of eternal law has fallen upon their violation of it. The great penalty of sin is sinful desire. A bias towards evil is originated and confirmed by sinful compliance."

When we struggle with sin (anger, hate, lust, etc.) there is a conflict between the intellectual aspect of faith and the belief aspect of faith. We know the right thing to do but struggle to live it out. This is the point of conflict for Nicodemus.

How do you struggle with this conflict between the intellectual and belief aspect of faith?

Have you ever been like Nicodemus and known a lot about Jesus but didn't have the real belief in Him? Share about this time and the change that occurred when you believed in Jesus.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

III. CONCLUSION

MAIN GOAL: To have a deeper understanding of what Jesus taught about how a sinful person may enter the kingdom of God

TODAY'S TRUTHS:

TRUTH #1: An intellectual acknowledgment of Jesus being a great teacher from God is not enough for you to get into the kingdom of God.

TRUTH #2: Entrance into the kingdom of God is limited to those who have been "born again of the spirit".

TRUTH #3: The mission of Jesus on earth was foretold by prophets in the old testament.

TRUTH #4: John 3:16 summarizes the gospel of Jesus Christ, and its truth for salvation rests upon what it means to "believe in Him".

Jesus was getting to a specific spiritual point with Nicodemus. Jesus wants each of us to face the same reality Nicodemus did. We are doomed if we only live and die in the physical realm. We have no relationship with a Holy God if we remain in our sin. We cannot even enter into worship of a Holy God apart from being made clean and holy like He is, having our sins forgiven. He wants us to see His plan for salvation in **Four Words**:

1. GOD- God created all and desires a love relationship with every person.

2. MAN- Man is sinful and our sin separates us from God.

3. JESUS- Jesus is our only hope. He is the way, the truth and the life and no one can come to faith in God without believing that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sin and was raised from the dead so that we may know God through belief.

4. RESPONSE- Now that we know these first three, we must respond. Our two responses can only be:

A. Follow Jesus by believing in Him.

B. Choose to not believe and walk away from His truth.

If your decision, today, is to believe in Jesus then your next step is simple. I want to lead you in a prayer to express how you are feeling to God:

Dear Lord Jesus,

Today I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I confess that I have lived for things other than You. Thank you for dying on the cross to take the punishment for my sin. Thank you for your resurrection to give me life over death. Please, forgive me of my sin. I want to follow You only for the rest of my life. Lord, show me Your way. Amen

For those of you who believe in Jesus, the **Four Words** are an easy tool to use to share your faith. Ask God to show you opportunities that He is giving you to share the four words with others just like Jesus did with Nicodemus.

IV. EXTRA TIME

BORN ONCE, DIE TWICE. BORN TWICE, DIE ONCE.

What do you think the meaning of this saying is?

How would you explain this phrase to someone who is not a born-again believer?

V. PRAYER

Ask the class for the first names of those on their prayer list who are lost. The first names could simply be called out or written on the marker board. Pray for these people, calling out their names before the Father. The leader may lead in this prayer, call on someone who would be comfortable leading, or invite members to pray out loud as they feel led.

VI. MEMORY VERSE

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Rooted In His Word: Salvation

John 13:1-20 – The Lord's Supper

August 8, 2021

FOR THE LEADER

Today we will be taking part in the observance of The Lord's Supper in our morning worship services. To help prepare us for this holy ordinance, this lesson is about an event that took place during the final Passover that Jesus observed with his disciples just before his being betrayed, arrested and crucified. In the lesson passage, during the meal, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. We will explore the significance of this event and how it connects to our participation in The Lord's Supper in today's worship services.

MAIN GOAL: To lead the class into a deeper understanding of what took place at the Last Supper and what Jesus taught about how we are to be cleansed by God and then serve others

TODAY'S TRUTHS:

TRUTH #1: Jesus wants us to be clean, but we cannot cleanse ourselves.

TRUTH #2: Jesus set the example for us to imitate in serving one another.

TRUTH #3: We should come to the Lord's table to remember His sacrifice with reverence and humility toward one another.

I. INTRODUCTION

What we have come to know as Baptists as "The Lord's Supper" has a history of other names from other traditions. Some refer to it as "The Lord's Table", "The Last Supper", or "Breaking of the Bread". The more liturgical traditions call it "Communion" and the Catholic tradition calls it the "Eucharist" and incorporates it into the "Mass". The term Mass is from the Latin *missa* and means "dismissal". The Mass took on the meaning of being a service for "dismissal to a mission" and very early on became the primary weekly event of the Catholic Church.

The word "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving" and focuses on giving thanks to God for the sacrificial death of His son, Jesus. Catholicism believes that the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples was the first Mass, and that going to Mass is part of "keeping the Sabbath day holy" (Constantine in the 4th century moved the Sabbath day from the 7th day of the week to the 1st day). Catholics also hold to transubstantiation which is the belief that after the priest blesses the bread and wine it actually becomes, in some mystical way, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Lutheran position is that of consubstantiation in which the elements are indeed the body and blood of Jesus but only spiritually, not physically.

Baptists and virtually all other protestant denominations view the elements only as symbols to remind us of Christ's body and blood, which He sacrificially gave to atone for our sins, on the cross. The term "Communion" means "sharing" and came out of the more liturgical traditions, but the term has become widely accepted by most denominations in the 21st century to be synonymous with The Lord's Supper.

Just a few days after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus said in Luke 22:15, *"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."*

Understanding the Passover event is paramount to understanding the Lord's Supper. The night before the children of Israel gained their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, they survived a deadly plague sent by God upon the land. Their survival depended upon their obedience to God's instruction to sacrifice a lamb and place its blood upon the doorposts of their homes. That night, death would "pass over" the homes marked by the blood of the lamb. The prophetic understanding of this was revealed at the cross. God's command to keep the annual feast of Passover was observed for 1500 years by the time Jesus and his disciples met to keep the divine appointment. The symbolism of eating unleavened bread and drinking the fruit of the vine was explained by Jesus during His final Passover Seder.

Why did Jesus compare Himself to bread in the Lord's Supper?

The bread represents both the physical and spiritual being of Jesus. In Luke 22:19 we read, *"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"* This he said in reference to his physical death. In John 6:35 we read, *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."* This He said in reference to His spiritual life.

At the first Passover, the children of Israel were commanded to eat unleavened bread and not wait for their bread to rise as they would be leaving in haste. That seems like such a trivial detail to have been added in holy scripture. However, 1400 years later at the Last Supper Jesus gave the explanation for why it was important to God for the Hebrews to eat unleavened bread when coming out of Egypt. Leaven represents sin in the Bible and Jesus was without sin. If Jesus was going to compare himself to bread, it had to be unleavened. That is why the bread in any observance of the Lord's Supper should be unleavened in the form of a wafer or cracker to fully appreciate its symbolism.

Where was Jesus born and what is the meaning of the town's name?

In Hebrew, Bethlehem is made of two words: Beit (pronounced "bait") which means house, and lechem (pronounced le-kim') which means bread. The word Bethlehem means literally "the house of bread." So, the Bread of Life was born in the house of bread!

In what ways does the juice represent the blood of Christ?

The juice represents both the physical and spiritual life of Jesus. According to the Bible, blood is what allows us to be alive. Leviticus 17:11 says, *"For the life of the flesh (the physical body) is in the blood."* Without blood in your body, you would be a pale, lifeless shell. But spiritually, Hebrews 9:22 says, *"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."* His shed blood on the cross was the payment for our sin debt. His payment can only apply to our sins when we ask for His forgiveness and invite His Holy Spirit to come dwell within our hearts.

II. GET FOCUSED

Read John 13:1-4a

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴rose from supper.

If you knew that you were going to die in the next 24 hours, who would you most want to be with and what would you want to tell them?

Walking through the emotional upheaval of tragically losing a loved one is something our Lord understood. Jesus knew that for a brief time after his death, his followers would be like sheep without a shepherd. In the next portion of today's scripture, Jesus demonstrates his love and concern for his disciples by doing something they would never forget. He washed their feet. Washing one's feet was something that was a common thing to do in a dusty land when people primarily wore sandals. However, people usually washed their own feet, much like people today either wipe their feet on a mat or take their shoes off before coming indoors. Certainly, if one didn't wash his own feet, only a servant would be the one to do such a thing for someone else. This humble act spoke volumes of the Master's love for his disciples as well as set a great example for them, and for us, to follow.

Read John 13:4b-11

He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" ¹⁰Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

TRUTH #1: JESUS WANTS US TO BE CLEAN, BUT WE CANNOT CLEANSE OURSELVES.

In the Tabernacle of the O.T., the priests were the only ones allowed to perform priestly functions in the Holy Place or at the sacrificial altar. The law required them to be made ceremonially clean by washing their hands and feet at the Bronze Laver at the entrance to the Tabernacle.

Read Exodus 30:20-21

*Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister by presenting an offering made by fire to the LORD, they must wash with water so that they will not die. ²¹Thus they are to **wash their hands and feet** so that they will not die; this shall be a permanent statute for Aaron (the High Priest) and his descendants for the generations to come.*

In light of the Levitical command above, why do you think Jesus wanted to wash the feet of His disciples?

Jesus' desire to wash his disciples' feet was an example of true servanthood that He wanted His disciples to follow after His departure. However, this act was much more than just an act of love and kindness. We believe in the "priesthood of the Believer." Jesus, as our High Priest, was teaching by illustration that His followers are to think of themselves as priests unto the Lord. Just as "*Moses presented Aaron and his sons and washed them with water*" (Leviticus 8:6), we too are to be cleansed by the "washing of the Word." Speaking of the Church, Eph. 5:25-26 says that Jesus gave Himself for the church "*to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.*"

Why did Peter refuse at first to let Jesus wash his feet?

Peter was not realizing at first the symbolic example Jesus was putting forth. Jesus was commissioning or ordaining His disciples to a priestly role. Peter was only thinking that he was unworthy to let the Master demean Himself by such an act. Jesus told Peter that if he did not allow Jesus to perform this ceremonial deed, Peter would have no part of His priestly ministry.

What was Peter's reaction after Jesus said, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me?"

Jesus' response to Peter's initial refusal taught the difference between being clean on just the outside and being clean on the inside. The washing of feet was ceremonial and symbolic of the cleansing of the heart. Washing of the whole body does nothing to remove impurity from our hearts any more than baptizing by immersion in water is what washes away our sin.

Has there been a time in your life where you humbled yourself and asked Jesus to cleanse your heart? Explain.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #2: JESUS SET THE EXAMPLE FOR US TO IMITATE IN SERVING ONE ANOTHER.

Read John 13:12-20

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. ¹⁸"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.' ¹⁹"I am telling you now before it happens so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. ²⁰Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me, and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

What is the main character quality involved in foot washing?

It is good and necessary to give financial support to the work of the Church on earth or to intercede in prayer for others here and around the world. However, Jesus has set the example of "hands-on" ministry. Some may know better than others the great humility of caregiving for the infirmed or elderly. To bathe someone unable to bathe himself or herself requires great humility from the giver and the receiver. Washing the feet of another person is an act that demonstrates and produces great humility on the part of both the washer and the recipient. It is very humbling and more invasive than holding hands or hugging. By washing the disciples' feet Jesus commissioned them, and us, to go and do likewise as His servants in this world.

Give some examples of acts of servanthood that require humility:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can you incorporate these acts of servanthood into your life and/or the life of your family?

Author's suggestions:

1. Offer to do a job for someone which may require self-denial and humility: Volunteer to mow someone's lawn, wash their car or clean their house--including the toilets!
2. Befriend that person who may be viewed as low-class, dirty or poor.
3. Minister to the homeless personally.
4. Participate in prison ministry.
5. Set an example of humility for others by never being embarrassed by praying in public and speaking about Jesus openly even among strangers.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #3 WE MUST COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE TO REMEMBER HIS SACRIFICE WITH REVERENCE AND HUMILITY TOWARD ONE ANOTHER.

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul writes a rather harsh admonition to the church in Corinth because of the reports that came to his attention about how they were behaving when partaking the Lord's Supper. Here is the portion of his letter paraphrased in The Message Bible which might help us in the 21st century to understand what was happening:

Read 1 Cor. 11:17-28 from The Message

Regarding this next item, I'm not at all pleased. I am getting the picture that when you meet together it brings out your worst side instead of your best! First, I get this report on your divisiveness, competing with and criticizing each other. I'm reluctant to believe it, but there it is. The best that can be said for it is that the testing process will bring truth into the open and confirm it. And then I find that you bring your divisions to worship—you come together, and instead of eating the Lord's Supper, you bring in a lot of food from the outside and make pigs of yourselves. Some are left out and go home hungry. Others have to be carried out, too drunk to walk. I can't believe it! Don't you have your own homes to eat and drink in? Why would you stoop to desecrating God's church? Why would you actually shame God's poor? I never would have believed you would stoop to this.

Since our observances of the Lord's Supper do not include a full meal as described in Paul's letter, what would be modern-day examples of partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?

YOUR VIEWPOINT**III. CONCLUSION**

Think back over the many times you have taken the Lord's Supper. Like most of us, there have probably been times when you did it just out of habit or without a depth of understanding. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is a unifying ordinance given to the church. It is meant to be something done together with fellow believers and not just a private worship practice.

Keep these truths in mind when taking the Lord's Supper:

TRUTH #1: Jesus wants us to be clean, but we cannot cleanse ourselves.

TRUTH #2: Jesus set the example for us to imitate in serving one another.

TRUTH #3: We should come to the Lord's table to remember His sacrifice with reverence and humility toward one another.

IV. EXTRA TIME**Topics for sharing:**

- Put into words what you desire to happen in your heart and mind when you come to the Lord's Table.
 - What kind of prayer do you make to God whenever you take the Lord's Supper?
 - What should parents say to their young children who have not made a profession of faith when attending a Lord's Supper service?
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V. PRAYER

When closing out the class today, reflect on the seriousness of what The Lord's Supper depicts. This would be a good day to have the class spend a full minute in silent prayer before the teacher or class member offers an audible prayer to the Lord.

VI. MEMORY VERSE

John 13:35

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Rooted In His Word: Salvation

John 14:1-31: Jesus' Promises

August 15, 2021

FOR THE LEADER

This lesson is a continuation of last week's lesson. The book of John presents the events from the Last Supper to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection to be a continuous narrative. Today's discourse between Jesus and His disciples appears to have taken place in the same room where Jesus had just washed the disciples' feet during the Passover meal. This passage ends with Jesus saying, "Come now, let us leave." In John, we can only assume that they left the house where they just had the Passover meal and headed straight for the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26 and Luke 22 indicate that was the case). However, the next 3 chapters of John contain more final words of instruction to His disciples, and it is not until John 18 that we see that Jesus and the disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and entered the garden where He was arrested. Perhaps He taught as they walked from the upper room (where they were) to the small Essene Gate at the southwest wall all the way to the east side of the city to get to the Garden of Gethsemane (about ½ mile). Being the Passover in the middle of the month, there would have been a full moon to light their way.

MAIN GOAL: To receive the same instructions for living that Jesus gave His disciples before He ended His earthly walk

TODAY'S TRUTHS:

TRUTH #1: Jesus will return to gather us, His church after He has prepared a place for us in His father's house.

TRUTH #2: No one can come to the Father except thru Jesus Christ.

TRUTH #3: Jesus and the Father are one and the same. Jesus is God.

TRUTH #4: Jesus has promised that even though He will not be with us physically until He returns, we will be successful in the mission to which He has called us.

TRUTH #5: The Father gives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which he calls a "helper" and the "Spirit of Truth" to help us live in obedience to Him.

TRUTH #6: Jesus leaves us with His peace, unlike what the world can give, as a result of what the Holy Spirit will do in us.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, Jesus is giving some final words of instruction and encouragement to His disciples, minus Judas, as He prepares to face the cross.

Have you ever been in a situation where you have given some last words of wisdom, instruction or encouragement to a loved one? Perhaps as a father giving away his daughter or as a parent sending a child off to college or a child leaving the nest? Can you remember any final words that were given to you by your parents?

As we read this account, knowing the rest of the story, can you get a feel for the magnitude of what is taking place? Jesus, who is God in the flesh, wants to convey some things to His disciples that He knows they cannot fully comprehend in the moment. But His love and compassion are very evident. Notice how patient Jesus is with His men even though He also chides them a bit. His words are filled with reassurance. This passage begins and ends with Jesus' loving words, *"Let not your hearts be troubled."*

II. GET FOCUSED

Read John 14:1-6

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

TRUTH #1: JESUS WILL RETURN TO GATHER US, HIS CHURCH, AFTER HE HAS PREPARED A PLACE FOR US IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

These words, *"Let not your hearts be troubled"* have been quoted many times to offer comfort, particularly at funerals. Jesus knew that His disciples had been disturbed by His words that night (He had just told them that one of them would betray Him and that Peter would deny him 3 times, and that He was leaving them).

Do you believe that Jesus is physically coming back to rule as King on Earth one day? Why?

This passage supports the concept that Jesus is the Bridegroom and His Church is the Bride. In an ancient Jewish wedding, after a betrothal was made and the Bride and Groom have both entered into a written marriage covenant called a Ketubah, the Groom went and built living quarters for them in his father's house. When it was completed, the father gave the order for the Bridegroom to go get his Bride. His approach to the Bride's house is announced by trumpets and shouts of "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" One day, God's trumpet will sound, and Jesus will return to take us home to dwell with Him in His Father's house.

What are your thoughts about Jesus' 2nd coming? Do you believe you are ready for Jesus to come and claim His Bride? If not, why?

Do you long for His appearing? If not, why?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #2: NO ONE CAN COME TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

What are some of the various unbiblical beliefs in the world today about what happens to people after they die?

Possible answers:

1. Nothing happens, you just cease to exist.
2. You are reincarnated into another form of life on Earth.
3. God lets good people into heaven, bad people go to hell (but most people are good).

Many people believe there is a place called heaven where they hope to go when they die. What are some of the things people think they need to do to go to heaven?

Possible answers:

1. Live a moral life and do good deeds for others.
2. Join a church, be baptized either as an infant or adult or be faithful to church doctrines.

The Bible makes it clear that the only way to get into heaven is through Jesus. This means that we must believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin, rose from the tomb on the 3rd day and is coming back one day. It is faith in Jesus alone that saves us. When we stand before God, the only hope we have to enter heaven is based on Jesus' merits and our faith in Him.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 14:7-11

If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

TRUTH #3 JESUS AND THE FATHER ARE ONE AND THE SAME. JESUS IS GOD.

How do you explain to a non-Believer this truth, that Jesus is God?

Is there anything by comparison in which you can say that one thing is another thing at the same time? Do not try racking your brain too hard because you will come up short every time trying to explain the unexplainable. We try to compare the Trinity to water which can be liquid, frozen or steam and all still be a form of water. If it were that simple, why didn't Jesus explain it that way to His disciples? This, in its final analysis, is a universal fact that we must receive by faith. The person that will not come to Jesus until he can understand logically the God/Man, Jesus Christ, will not be able to come to Jesus for salvation. Ephesians 2:8 says, *“For by grace are you saved through faith.”* Jesus' own words reveal His understanding that the disciples had a hard time understanding this truth. In verse 11, after trying to explain His oneness with the Father, Jesus simply says, *“Believe me.”* Then He adds a merciful concession because of our humanity, *“At least believe on the evidence of what you have seen with your own physical eyes.”* Those disciples had seen miracles of healing and the dead being brought back to life—could they explain that?! They had been trained to accept things by faith. However, Jesus knew the greatest test of their faith was yet to come, when they would witness His own horrendous death and the apparent end to all their hopes and dreams, for a little while.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 14:12-14

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

TRUTH #4 JESUS HAS PROMISED THAT EVEN THOUGH HE WILL NOT BE WITH US PHYSICALLY UNTIL HE RETURNS, WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE MISSION TO WHICH HE HAS CALLED US.

How do you understand these two statements by Jesus?

1. John 14:12 *"Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, even greater."*

2. John 14:14 *"Ask me for anything in my name and I will do it."*

These are loaded questions because we do not often see miracles such as what Jesus did as recorded in the scriptures. We do not just literally ask for anything in Jesus' name and see it happen. Remember that God is in the process of changing us from mere physical beings into spiritual beings. Do not limit God to only moving in the physical. Many a soul has gone from death unto life in Jesus Christ. People in total bondage to sin, tormented by guilt, have been set free. Praying in Jesus' name means praying according to His will. Yes, there still are miraculous healings and physical manifestations, but our **faith** does not depend upon nor is limited to an earthly idea of what constitutes a miracle of God.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 14:15-24

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

In this passage Jesus speaks of two reasons for sending the Holy Spirit:

1. As an abiding helper so that we will not be orphaned
2. To help us walk in obedience to His commandments

TRUTH #5 THE FATHER GIVES THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH HE CALLS A "HELPER" AND THE "SPIRIT OF TRUTH" TO HELP US LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO HIM.

How do you know that the Holy Spirit is living in you?

This is possibly the first time the disciples have heard Jesus talk about the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Spirit of truth that the Father will leave with them. Notice that Jesus tells the disciples in verse 17 that the Spirit already lives with them and will be in them (further supporting the doctrine of a pre-existing Holy Spirit as part of the eternal Trinity).

What is the main admonition that Jesus wants His disciples to understand in verses 15 – 24? (Hint: He says it 4 times in this passage!)

Loving Jesus and obeying his commands and teachings go hand in hand and are inseparable.

THE BIG QUESTION: If we show our love for Jesus by obeying His commands, where do we find His commandments? Are they only found in what Jesus said in the four gospels? Are they found in Paul's letters? Are Jesus' commands found in the Old Testament?

Remember that when Jesus said, *"If you love me keep my commandments,"* nothing of the New Testament had been written. In Matthew 22:36-40 and Mark 12:28-31 when the Pharisees asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was, He quoted to them Deut. 6:4-5 *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."* Then He added a quote from Leviticus 19:18, *"And the second is love your neighbor as yourself."* In Matthew 22:40 Jesus is recorded as adding, *"On these two commandments hang all of the law and the prophets."* All of the law and prophets are in the Old Testament.

So, what are the commands and teachings of Jesus that we are to obey if we truly love Him? Many of the O.T. commandments pertain to the sacrificial system and the temple which are no longer in place. Still, the answer is that we are to seek to obey the 10 commandments and apply all of the scriptural teachings, principles and other commandments found in our Bibles. In doing this we demonstrate to Him our love and learn how to live pleasing lives unto the Father. *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work."* 2 Tim. 3:16-17. (When Paul wrote these words to Timothy, he was not referring to the New Testament because it didn't exist. Since his letters were canonized as being scripture, this verse also applies to what Paul wrote.)

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 14:25-31

"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, ³¹but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

TRUTH #6: JESUS LEAVES US WITH HIS PEACE, UNLIKE WHAT THE WORLD CAN GIVE, AS A RESULT OF WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES IN US.

If you were to have to leave your loved ones or even your pets for a while, what kind of person would you want to look out after them in your absence?

Jesus sent His personal representative, His Holy Spirit to dwell within our hearts and minds to teach and guide us and conform us into the image of Himself. The result of that is *"the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding"* according to Phil. 4:7. He also gave us His Holy Spirit to empower us as promised in Acts 1:8. *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you."* The Greek word used to describe the Holy Spirit is Paraklētōs. The English translations of this word in scripture are Helper, Advocate, Comforter and Counselor. We also know that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to Believers to equip them for the building up of the Body of Christ on earth until He comes back in person and establishes His Peaceable Kingdom.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

III. CONCLUSION

Jesus closes out this portion of scripture with words of great encouragement for the disciples. He reminds them that He has been preparing them for this very day for a long time. He explains that He has said all of these things before *"it happens"* (verse 29) so that they will remember His words and believe. He repeats the opening phrase of this chapter, *"Let not your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* What a kind, loving and good Shepherd Jesus is towards those who would follow Him.

Because of God's eternal nature, the promises Jesus made to His disciples in John 14 are just as real and fresh for us as they were when He first spoke these ancient words. So, let us receive the promises of Jesus and believe that they are recorded in our Bibles as Living Words written through men of old by the inspiration of God's eternal Holy Spirit. Remember, Jesus loves us just as much as He loved those first disciples. What He promised to do for them He will do for us!

IV. EXTRA TIME

Is your heart troubled today by anything? Are you worried about the times in which we live? Are you concerned about the future of your children? Share your concerns with the class and spend the closing time praying for one another, being reminded of the Promises of God.

V. PRAYER

Let us thank God for His precious promises given in His Word. As a closing to the prayer time sing the chorus of "Standing on the Promises."

VI. MEMORY VERSE

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Rooted In His Word: Salvation

John 19:17-37 - Crucified

August 22, 2021

FOR THE LEADER

The enormity of this topic cannot be adequately covered in one Sunday School class. Thousands of books and sermons have attempted to convey the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for humanity. Pray that God will use you to teach this lesson with a passion that comes from what Jesus' death on the cross means to you.

MAIN GOAL: To gain a deeper understanding of the crucifixion of Christ and its fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #1: Concerning His death between two thieves

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #2: Concerning the dividing of His clothes

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #3: Concerning the wine vinegar offered to Jesus

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #4: Concerning the unbroken legs of Jesus on the cross

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #5: Concerning the piercing of Jesus' side on the cross

I. INTRODUCTION

The scripture portion for this lesson is a continuation of the disciple John's narrative of events during the final earthly week of Jesus. From the triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the Last Supper to the garden arrest to a mock trial to Jesus being sentenced to die by Roman crucifixion. This lesson opens with Jesus carrying his own cross to the place of execution outside the city walls of Jerusalem. This lesson will bring out five Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled at the crucifixion.

Where did the crucifixion of Christ take place?

Bible historians and theologians have never been able to give conclusive evidence concerning the location of the crucifixion of Christ. But there are 3 schools of thought about the location of "Golgotha" which means "the place of a skull."

1. **The Church of the Holy Sepulcher** since the fourth century has been held by the Catholic Church as the site for both the crucifixion and the tomb of Christ. It is currently within the city of Jerusalem in the western section of the Old City but is believed to have been outside the walls at the time of Christ.

2. **Gordon's Calvary** – The first proposal that this was the site of the crucifixion was in 1842. The potential garden tomb was discovered in the same location in 1867. In 1883, a British general named Charles Gordon gave the two sites the prominence they needed to be considered legitimate. This site is outside the western Damascus Gate of Jerusalem. Today, the Garden tomb is owned and operated by British Catholics and the "Skull Hill" can be viewed from their property. It overlooks an Arab bus station. The rocky hill can appear to resemble a skull if the shadows are just right.

3. **Somewhere on the Mount of Olives** – Some of the reasons for this belief are: a) The tearing of the veil of the Temple could have been visible from that vantage point. b) The sacrifice of the red heifer, symbolic of the Messiah in Numbers 19 took place on the Mount of Olives out from the Eastern Gate leading to the Mount of Olives. This is believed to be the same gate referred to in Hebrews 13:12 *"And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate."* c) It is believed that the ascension took place on the Mount of Olives and the scriptures confirm that He will set foot on the Mount of Olives when He returns, so it could be likely that the crucifixion took place there. d) the Mount of Olives was and is a favored location for Jewish graves which are presumably the ones referred to in Matthew 27:52 where *"the tombs broke open"* and *"the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life."*

II. GET FOCUSED

Read John 19:17-18

...and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #1: Concerning His death between two thieves – Isaiah 53:12 *"He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors."*

What is the significance that Jesus was crucified between two thieves?

The fact that Jesus was crucified along with two other condemned criminals was prophesied in Isaiah's so-called "Suffering Servant" chapter 53. This chapter used to be read in the synagogue, and for 1,700 years after Isaiah wrote it, virtually all the rabbis believed it was speaking about the coming Messiah. But since it so perfectly describes how the Messiah Jesus suffered on our behalf, it is now considered to be a forbidden chapter to the Jewish people. Letting them read it for themselves is now a great tool for evangelizing the Jews.

Another prophecy fulfilled by Jesus' crucifixion with criminals is found in Psalm 22:16 which says, ***"Dogs surround me and the assembly of the evil have surrounded me; they have pierced my hands and my feet."*** Isaiah wrote his words 700 years before Christ, and the Psalmist David lived 800 years before Christ. Yet these words give a very accurate description of what actually happened to Jesus, the "Suffering Servant."

The image of Christ dying along with sinners is very powerful in its depiction of Christ as the Judge who will separate the sheep to His right from the goats to His left in the final judgment. We know that one of those two thieves said, as recorded in Luke 23:42, *"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

How did Jesus respond to the thief who asked Jesus to remember him, and what does it mean to 'remember me'?

Like the thief, we are guilty of sin and in need of a Savior. The thief cried out to Jesus for salvation.

Have you ever realized your guilt and need for a Savior and cried out to Him to save you?

Because of this one recorded event, hope is given to us that those we pray for who have rejected Christ, even in their final moments before death, might possibly *"call upon the name of the Lord and be saved"* (Romans 10:13).

Read John 19:19-22

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" ²²Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

Why did Pilate order "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews" to be written over the cross of Jesus?

It was common that the crime of a person executed would be posted as a warning to others. However, what Pilate ordered was a direct pay-back to the chief priests. He had found no reason to have Jesus crucified, and his own wife had told him that she had a dream confirming the innocence of Jesus. According to Jewish custom at Passover, Pilate offered to release a prisoner. He gave them the choice of the convicted murderer Barabbas or Jesus who had not been convicted of any crime worthy of death. He knew that the only charge the chief priests held over Jesus was His claim to be the promised Messiah and thereby their King. Perhaps Pilate felt used and manipulated by the Jews, but he declared that Jesus was crucified simply for being who He claimed to be—the King of the Jews, and he upheld his writing.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 19:23-24

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, ²⁴so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things.

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #2: Concerning the dividing of His clothes – Psalm 22:18 *"They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."*

In what way does the soldiers' handling of Jesus' garment reflect the world's attitude toward the death of Jesus today?

The four soldiers put their attention on something of temporary value while turning their backs to the One who could save them for eternity. The world today acts likewise in its rejection of the cross of Christ while focusing on the materialism of this world.

Psalm 22 is filled with prophetic ties to Jesus on the cross. Psalm 22:1 is what Jesus quoted in agony from the cross, *"My God, my God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?"* It is not just a coincidence that David wrote this Psalm of someone suffering, his clothes being divided and lots being cast when that is exactly what happened during Jesus' crucifixion.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 19:25-27

...but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

What thoughts or feelings rise up in you from reading this account about Jesus and His mother?

It has been attested that even courageous soldiers on the battlefield in their dying moments have called out to their mothers as a final desperate cry for help. When Jesus sees his mother in the crowd, even in His own agony He demonstrates that He is not afraid nor desperate. He teaches us a lesson about taking care of our family and loved ones. Several times in John's writings, he refers to himself in the 3rd person and as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." So, it is generally accepted that Jesus instructed John to take care of Mary as his own mother and for Mary to look upon John as her own son. These two verses are very helpful to us in understanding Luke 14:26 which says, *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."* Obviously, the meaning of the Greek comparison-by-exaggeration does not uphold any sense of hating our mothers in light of Jesus' words from the cross about his own mother.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 19:28-30

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." ²⁹A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #3: Concerning the wine vinegar offered to Jesus – Psalm 69:21
"They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

Why was there a jar of wine vinegar at the crucifixion site?

When Jesus said, *"I thirst"* in Matthew, He was offered vinegar mingled with gall, and in Luke, it says it was vinegar mingled with myrrh, and here in John it says, "wine vinegar." This was definitely not a common beverage that just happened to be there that was given to Jesus to quench His thirst. This was something that could be given to dull the senses like a drug. So, Jesus' refusal to drink it as recorded in Matthew and Luke tells us that Jesus chose to endure the pain, drinking fully of the cup that the Father would not pass from Him. In John, it seems to indicate that He took just enough of a sip to be able to voice clearly the epic words, *"It is finished."*

Can you put into your own words what Jesus meant by *"It is finished"*?

Found only in the Gospel of John, the Greek word translated "it is finished" is "tetelestai," an accounting term that means "paid in full." When Jesus uttered that word, He was declaring the debt owed to His Father was wiped away completely and forever. Not that Jesus wiped away any debt that He owed to the Father; rather, Jesus paid in full the debt owed by mankind—the debt of sin. His mission on earth for His first coming was accomplished. We now await the accomplishments of His second Coming!

How does it make you feel that Jesus paid our debt in full on the cross?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

Read John 19:31-37

Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." ³⁷And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #4: Concerning the unbroken legs of Jesus on the cross – Psalm 34:19–20 *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken."*

One cannot imagine a worse public execution than Roman crucifixion. The length of time someone could stay alive after being nailed to a cross ranged from a few hours to a few days. The condemned usually died of asphyxiation because, in order to breathe, one had to "stand" on the nail in the feet to let the chest muscles breathe. But then the pain would be too great and the person would slump back down forcing the arms to bear the weight of the body causing the victim to not be able to breathe. The up-and-down cycle would continue until death came. In order to accelerate death, the legs could be broken, sending the body into further shock which alone could cause unconsciousness, but would not allow the victim to put pressure on the feet causing the person to no longer be able to breathe. When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw no need to break his legs as it appeared to them that Jesus had already died.

Prayer of Thanks (This special prayer focus could be saved for the end of the lesson if desired)

Let us pause briefly from the lesson at this point and offer up prayers to Jesus right now. Let's tell Him again how sorry we are that our sins caused Him such suffering and death in such a humiliating and dreadful way. And let's thank Him for choosing to endure what He did on the cross in our place. And then let's praise Him that He rose from the dead and is alive today!

These prayers could be guided by the teacher, voiced by the teacher or invite class members to pray as they feel led.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

PROPHETIC FULFILMENT #5: Concerning the piercing of Jesus' side on the cross –

Read Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

Read Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

What does it mean that He was "*pierced for our transgressions*" and on Him was laid "*the iniquity of us all*"?

What does it mean that we are healed with His wounds?

Why were the Jews so insistent about expediting the deaths of Jesus and the two others?

Though His legs were not broken, the scripture records that a soldier pierced His side to make sure that He was indeed dead so that His body could be removed and buried before sundown as the Jews had requested.

Ironically, the Jews who wanted the crucifixion of Jesus were the very ones who wanted to make sure that they kept strict obedience to the Torah. In Deuteronomy 21:22-23 it says, *"And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."* With this, the practical nature of the Pharisees wanting to keep the Law, they would have wanted to remove Jesus from the cross and bury Him prior to sundown because that would be the beginning of the Sabbath. The Pharisees in all their pride in keeping the letter of God's laws had missed the purpose and the intent of God's Word.

YOUR VIEWPOINT

III. CONCLUSION

What Jesus did for us on the cross was God's plan from the beginning of time. Revelation 13:8 says *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* Long before Adam was created and placed on the Earth, long before he sinned in the Garden of Eden, long before the atoning work of Calvary, Jesus Christ's destiny was predetermined by God the Father. But the cross without the resurrection is incomplete. Next week we will look at the rest of the story!

The Bottom Line:

If Jesus had not gone to the cross voluntarily as a lamb to slaughter, we would be hopelessly lost in our sins. He paid a debt He did not owe, we owed a debt we could not pay!

IV. PRAYER

***The prayer time included in this lesson could be moved to this point of the lesson if so desired.** This would be a good time for the teacher to lead in an opportunity for anyone who has come under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to "take up their cross" and become a follower of Jesus Christ. Invite the class to pray the following prayer and then offer instruction for those that prayed this prayer in their heart:

"Dear Jesus, I know that I am a guilty sinner, I have broken your commandments, and I am unworthy to receive any of your blessings or to enter heaven when I die. I now understand what you endured to take the punishment for my sins on the cross. Thank you for dying in my place. I ask you to please forgive me of my sins. May your blood that was shed also be applied to cover the debt of my sins. Come into my heart and change me to make me more like you for the rest of my life and for eternity. I want to give you my life and use it only for your glory. Thank you for saving my soul. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

If anyone prayed this prayer, urge them to let it be known. They could tell the class, the teacher, a family member or friend, or any of the staff ministers of LBC. Follow-up is vital for a new Believer to begin to grow.

V. EXTRA TIME

1. This is a good time to deal with any sin that has not been dealt with. Have everyone take a sheet of paper and write down all the ways that they have gone astray. Then have them pray for forgiveness and symbolically tear up the paper and throw it away. This is symbolic of the Lord casting our sin as far as the east is from the west.
2. Ask class members to discuss these questions:
 - Is it important for non-believers to understand the cross and what Jesus went through before they decide to become a Christian?
 - Are we, as a society, desensitized to the cruelty of the kind of death Jesus suffered due to Hollywood, video games, social media?

VI. MEMORY VERSE

John 19:35

*The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true.
He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.*

Rooted In His Word: Salvation

John 20:1-18 - Resurrection

August 29, 2021

FOR THE LEADER

This lesson is primarily about the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will explore the evidence that supports this extraordinary claim and explain why the resurrection of Christ is so foundational to the Christian faith. Pray for those class members who will hear this lesson. Many may indeed believe that Jesus of Nazareth was a real person who was a great teacher and died a horrible death. However, until every class member knows that they too have received the gift of eternal life after death, the work of evangelism must continue in our classrooms at LBC. Without the resurrection, we are nothing more than a social organization with political interests.

MAIN GOAL: To help the class gain a deeper and more personal understanding of and appreciation for the fact that Jesus rose from the dead

TRUTH #1: Just as Christ's birth and death were prophesied in the Old Testament, so was His resurrection.

TRUTH #2: The risen Lord Jesus has been seen by thousands of people.

TRUTH #3: Because Jesus rose from the dead, we will also be resurrected from the dead.

I. INTRODUCTION

Simply put, if Jesus did not rise from the dead and is not alive today, we have no hope for any reconciliation with the Father nor any hope of heaven after we die. Without the resurrection, we would remain forever dead in our trespasses and sins.

Many people may think of the resurrection of Jesus as an event that happened 2,000 years ago and is celebrated every Spring. However, until a person comes to a firm belief they too will have a bodily resurrection after they die, they will not understand the full message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What would you say to a person who may even consider himself to be a Christian, wants to be a part of the church and follow the teachings of Jesus, but doubts that Jesus actually rose from the grave and is alive today?

What are some of the feeble explanations that unbelievers use to account for the empty tomb of Jesus?

- **The disciples stole the body of Jesus**

To steal a dead body is one thing, but to then make it appear to be alive? There were too many eye-witnesses to the resurrected Jesus. Besides, right after Jesus' death, the disciples were in hiding.

- **The "Swoon Theory"**

This is the ludicrous theory that Jesus somehow survived the crucifixion and was just unconscious, later coming to in the cool of the tomb. Of course, this can't explain Him rolling the stone away and overpowering two Roman soldiers and then running away.

- **Mass hallucinations**

Over 500 people so desperately wanted Jesus to be alive that they all hallucinated seeing Him. As one author put it: The mass hallucination argument "is not really a naturalistic explanation of the empty tomb at all. It's just swapping one miraculous event for another".

- **The Romans stole the body**

The Romans are perhaps the only ones who could have stolen the body. If they wanted to fabricate a resurrection, they could have stolen the body and claimed Jesus rose from the dead. However, that is the last thing in the world the enemies of Christianity wanted to happen. On the other hand, the Romans could have stolen the body to put it on display to squelch claims of a resurrection. They never did that.

Read John 20:1-18

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus'[a] head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

II. GET FOCUSED

TRUTH #1 JUST AS CHRIST'S BIRTH AND DEATH WERE PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, SO WAS HIS RESURRECTION.

We are familiar with the uncanny prophecies about Jesus' death in the O.T., especially in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 as we saw last week. But there are a number of scriptures in the Old Testament which foretold the Messiah would suffer death yet conquer sin and the grave.

(Ask 6 people to be ready to read these verses)

- **Genesis 3:15** (God speaking to the serpent/Satan) *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*
- **Isaiah 53:10** *Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*
- **Psalm 22:27** *All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.*
- **Psalm 16:10** *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.*
- **Job 19:25** *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.*
- **Matthew 12:40** *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*
(Even from Jesus' own words, He prophesied his resurrection)

YOUR VIEWPOINT

TRUTH #2: THE RISEN LORD JESUS HAS BEEN SEEN BY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Savior. It is generally accepted that Mary Magdalene was "Mary of Magdala" which was a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. This is the same Mary from whom seven demons were cast out by Jesus in Luke 8:1-3.

In what ways is it significant that the first person to see Jesus alive was the woman, Mary Magdalene?

In Jewish society, women were regarded as unreliable witnesses and were forbidden from giving testimony in court, so it seems very unlikely that the gospel writers would have chosen to make up a story about a woman being the first eye-witness to the resurrected Christ.

Other accounts of eyewitnesses to the risen Savior:

- Luke 24:13-25 Two men on the road to Emmaus
- John 20:24-30 Jesus appears to the disciples and "doubting Thomas"
- 1 Corinthians 15:6 *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*
- Google: people who have seen visions of Jesus (If you are able, download a clip of a testimony of one who has seen Jesus and show to the class)
- Dreams and Visions: Is Jesus Awakening the Muslim World? by Tom Doyle
Tom Doyle has spent eleven years as a full-time missionary in the Middle East and Central Asia, spreading the word of Jesus Christ. Throughout his journey, he has encountered a staggering number of Muslims who were first introduced to Jesus through a vision or dream so powerful that they eventually turned from their lifelong religion of Islam and embraced Christ as their Savior. Jesus is reaching out to the Muslims and they are responding. Did you know that Iran has the fastest growing church in the world?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

**TRUTH #3: BECAUSE JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD,
WE WILL ALSO BE RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD.**

Read 1 Corinthians 15:14-23

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. ¹⁵Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. ²⁰But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Our hope for a bodily resurrection after we die is based on the belief that Jesus had a bodily resurrection from the dead. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 says, *"For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep."*

What will our resurrected bodies be like?

Describe what you hope your resurrected body will be like:

Compared to what grows from a seed, our resurrected bodies will be different yet the same entity: 1 Corinthians 15:35-37 *But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.*

Our resurrected bodies will be better: 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 *The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

Our resurrected bodies will be like Jesus' resurrected body: 1 John 3:2 *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

Our resurrected bodies will be recognizable as who we are: Luke 24:31 *And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.*

Are any of these statements about our heavenly body surprising to you?

What do you most look forward to about your heavenly body?

YOUR VIEWPOINT

III. CONCLUSION

TRUTH #1: Just as Christ's birth and death were prophesied in the Old Testament, so was His resurrection.

TRUTH #2: The risen Lord Jesus has been seen by thousands of people.

TRUTH #3: Because Jesus rose from the dead, we will also be resurrected from the dead.

Christians understand after death, there is a spiritual place of conscious existence we call heaven which becomes our eternal destiny. What about our bodily resurrection? The Bible is clear at Jesus' second coming "at the last trumpet" the dead in Christ will be raised and will immediately receive a new body. It is generally believed those alive at Jesus' second coming will be "caught up together with them in the clouds" and will also be given a glorified new body at that time. (1 Thess. 4:7)

Read 1 Cor. 15:13-19

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ with the promise that we will also be raised to be like Him is what sets Christianity apart from every other religion.

Which do you long for most: to receive your resurrected and glorified body or to see the resurrected and glorified body of Jesus? Explain your answer.

IV. PRAYER

Revelation 22:20 says, *"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"* Use this prayer time to tell Jesus how much we long for His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8 *"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."* Pray that Jesus will prepare us, His Bride for His soon return that we will not be found with any spot or wrinkle. Ephesians 5:27 *"So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."*

V. EXTRA TIME

Many false religions teach some kind of spiritual existence after death such as reincarnation or a state of "oneness with the universe" or Nirvana. Only Judaism, Christianity and Islam hold beliefs of some type of physical resurrection as people. Since Christianity has its roots in the history and beliefs of the Jewish people, we can place their beliefs about resurrection in opposition to the Muslim belief. In Islam, the belief is that Muslim men have a bodily resurrection with unlimited sexual fulfillment and marriage relationships with many virgins.

Between Judaism and Christianity, even though the Jewish hope is for an afterlife, that hope is mainly based on the qualification of simply being Jewish and in keeping the law. Ask the class to discuss ways we can talk about or share what we believe about the afterlife with people of different faiths—or of no faith.

VI. MEMORY VERSE

John 20:23

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.

[illegible]

[illegible]

