

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

As you gather for the teaching of our Annual Thanksgiving Lesson, engage in “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Ephesians 5:19-21

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:6-8

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, we have so much to give thanks God for His daily benefits. Man looks on the outside, but God looks on the heart. “Give thanks unto the LORD, for he *is* good: for his mercy endures forever.” Psalm 107:1 “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places, be thankful for the end is not yet. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:15

We must give thanks unto the LORD for His righteousness and magnify His holy name with thanksgiving. “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endures to all generations.” Psalm 100:1-5

THOUGHT FOR TODAY: Offer to God a sacrifice of Thanksgiving. Someone called your name this morning, and you were able to answer. God delivered you from danger seen and unseen. Is there anything too hard for God? We thank God because He has been so good to us. Let us thank God today for “...the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance....” Galatians 5:22-23. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, continue steadfast in prayer and be thankful, “and whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Colossians 3:17

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. Do you have anything to be thankful for (answer individually)?
2. The question was asked in today’s lesson, “is there anything too hard for God?” What are some things that seem impossible to man but are possible for God?
3. 1 Thes. 5:18 says, In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” How can a person give thanks “in everything” (answer individually)?
4. Describe a time you expressed gratitude and were pleasantly surprised at the response.

ACTIVITY:

Gratitude Conversation

If your group desires to organize a way to show gratitude, consider asking each person to develop a list of 5 or 6 people they are willing to call (or text, email, etc.) in order to say, “thank you” for something they have done but have yet to be appreciated. This is called a “gratitude conversation.” When you meet again as a group, allow each person that participated in the activity a minute to share a highlight or two from their “gratitude conversation.”

GOD IS WITH US

LESSON TEXT: Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Jesus Christ is the promised seed that came to deliver mankind from the curse of sin and death. Jesus said, "...Lo, I come in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." (Hebrews 10:7). Today God is with us. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:11-14)

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6.) Furthermore, it is written in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

God is with us. He has not abandoned us for it is written Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). David said in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

As we celebrate Christmas, we have so much to be thankful for daily. Just knowing that God is with us is comforting. Jesus promised not to leave us without a comforter. It is recorded in John 14:18-19, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world see me no more." John 14:16-17 states, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." We are given more assurance in John 14:26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

THOUGHT FOR TODAY: God is with us. Jesus is here right now. God is with us even in our prayer meetings. And when he was ready to leave us, Jesus said, "...I go and prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also. I am the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:2-3,6). "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. List 5 things you can do to make God smile this Christmas (answer individually).
2. What is the "good news" of Jesus Christ?
3. In your own words, what is the overall message of Matthew 28:20?
4. Isaiah 9:6 states, "and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." If you were to give Jesus a positive attribute (like "wonderful" or

“counsellor”) based on what he has done in your life, what would you call Him (answer individually)?

ACTIVITY:

As the lesson illustrates, “God is with us” but often during the Christmas season people feel alone and depressed. It’s hard for some people to realize and appreciate the presence of God when facing the trials of life.

Unfortunately, some people did not receive a gift this Christmas but it’s not too late. Consider being the hands and feet of Jesus by organizing a small Christmas gift bag distribution for homeless people near you, incarcerated, widows, orphans or anyone experiencing severe economic difficulty. The small gift bag can be simple and include very modest items such as: a \$1 Bible, encouraging card, snack (such as a honey bun or twinkie), pencil, notepad, socks, hand sanitizer, etc. The bag does not have to include all of those items. If you participate in this activity, consider capping the total amount spent on each bag to \$5 or \$6. If your group organizes this on behalf of the church or a ministry at the church please be sure to let the pastor know before you begin your activity.

Watch Night Services in America and in many countries around the world is Saturday, December 31, 2022. Your worship service may include reading of the Watch Night Lesson, sermon(s), singing, rejoicing, appropriate scripture readings, praying, seeking God and fellowship.

WATCHNIGHT LESSON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2022

WATCH AND PRAY

LESSON TEXT: Matthew 26:38-42 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Ever since Freedom Eve, December 31, 1862, African Americans across America would gather in little churches and homes to wait, watch and pray. Watch night service in America was mainly celebrated in African American communities. They were waiting for the great news that the Emancipation Proclamation (signed by President Lincoln) had become law. Today many African American churches still gather on New Year’s Eve to thank God for another year. New Year’s Eve service is a cultural and spiritual experience in America and throughout the world.

There is something about midnight. It is the beginning and end of each day. “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:25-31)

“At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 25:6-13)

The Midnight Cry

1. **Exodus 11:4-6** “And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that *is* behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.” **Exodus 12:29** “And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.”
2. **Acts 20:7-9** “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his preaching until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.”

THOUGHT FOR TODAY: The most important midnight cry will be when Jesus returns. “Of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” (Mark 13:32). “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:40-42). “Jesus said behold, I come quickly and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” (Revelation 22:11-12)

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. What are potential consequences of watching without praying?
2. What are potential consequences of praying without watching?
3. Describe a time in your life where you experienced what these verses describe, where Jesus’ soul was exceeding sorrowful but he pressed on.
4. In your own words, what is the overall message of Matthew 28:20?
5. Isaiah 9:6 states, “and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” If you were to give Jesus a positive attribute (like “wonderful” or “counsellor”) based on what he has done in your life, what would you call Him (answer individually)?

SEVEN DAYS FAST LESSONS

FASTING DAY ONE

Stand Fast in the Lord

FASTING DAY TWO

Bring Back the Love

FASTING DAY THREE

There is Hope for Tomorrow

FASTING DAY FOUR

Believe the Word: Jesus is Real

FASTING DAY FIVE

Deliver Us From Evil

FASTING DAY SIX

Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God

FASTING DAY SEVEN

Stand



STEADFAST IN THE LORD

LESSON TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Steadfast-means to hold firm to your beliefs and teaching, not "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Ephesians 4:14). "But do not waver, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." (James 1:6)

1. **Galatians 5:1** "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."
2. **2 Thessalonians 2:15** "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
3. **Ephesians 6:13-14** "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."
4. **Colossians 2:6-7** "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."
5. **2 Peter 3:16-17** "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."
6. **Galatians 6:9** "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."
7. **Joshua 1:9** "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest."

BONUS SCRIPTURES

(a) **Romans 12:12** "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."

(b) **1 Corinthians 16:13** "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

(c) **Hebrews 10:23** "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised."

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:**(Discussion/Small Group Questions)**

1. What does it mean to be steadfast?
2. What does it mean to, "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering"?
3. What are obstacles to always abounding in the work of the Lord?
4. What are some ways to make certain your life is consistently covered with the "whole armor" of God?

BRING BACK THE LOVE

LESSON TEXT: Matthew 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Because wickedness is everywhere the love of many believers has grown cold. The love for the church, for holy living, and even for the Saints has turned cold. “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God. Everyone that loveth is born of God and knows God. He that loveth not knows not God; for God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8)

1. **Jesus instructing his disciples.** “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.” (John 15:16-22)
2. **Bring back the love.** “Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Revelation 2:4-5)
3. **Love shall cover the multitude of sins.** “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8). Jesus said, “...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)
4. **The greatest love of all.** “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “John 15:13”
5. **Don’t forget the Golden Rule.** “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12) “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)
6. **God’s mercy is renewed every morning.** “It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22-23)
7. **Put on mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.** “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*. And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” (Colossians 3:12-15)

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. What are 3 ways you can create or continue a consistent environment of love and positivity in your local church (answer individually)?
2. What does it mean for the "love of many to wax cold" (answer individually)?
3. How can we love God with all our heart, all our soul, and with all our mind (give an example)?
4. In your own words, what is the overall message of Matthew 22:37-40?

FAST DAY THREE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023

THERE IS HOPE FOR TOMORROW

LESSON TEXT: Romans 5:3-5 And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Our hope rest in Jesus. We are "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13). "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:13). There is hope for tomorrow. "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;" (Romans 12:12). "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans 8:24-25)

There is hope for tomorrow. But do not boast about tomorrow; for you do not know what a day may bring (Proverbs 27:1). "Therefore, take no thought for tomorrow: for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is its own troubles." (Matthew 6:34). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

1. **1 Thessalonians 4:13** "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."
2. **Psalms 71:5** "For you are my hope, O Lord GOD: you are my trust from my youth."
3. **Romans 15:4** "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
4. **1 Corinthians 15:19** "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."
5. **James 4:14** "Whereas you know not what shall be on tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away."
6. **Psalms 103:15-18** "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."
7. **2 Chronicles 20:17** "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you."

Conclusion: Tomorrow is not promised to anyone. Work while it is day. Jesus said, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:4-5)

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. What does the phrase “tomorrow is not promised” mean (answer individually)?
2. Describe a time you remember being hopeful as a child (examples may include Christmas Eve, family vacation, reunion, birthdays etc.)?
3. As adults how can we remain hopeful in the midst of troubling times, trials and despair?
4. What does it mean to “glory in tribulation” (give an example)?

ACTIVITY:

EXHIBITION OF HOPE

If your group desires to organize a way to exhibit hope, consider asking each person to develop a list of 3 people they are willing to call (or text, email, etc.) and encourage. Your encouraging words can be a hope-filled scripture, a pleasant short illustration of something that gave you hope or some kind words (such as a compliment or recognition of a past achievement). When you meet again as a group, allow each person that participated in the activity a minute to share a highlight or two from their “exhibition of hope.”

FAST DAY FOUR

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2023

BELIEVE THE WORD: JESUS IS REAL

LESSON TEXT: Matthew 16:13-16 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

1. **Believe on the Lord** - “Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:29-31)
2. **Whom having not seen, yet believing** - “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” (1 Peter 1:8)
3. **That believing ye might have life** - “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31)

4. **Be not faithless, Jesus is real.** “Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.” (John 20:27)
5. **Believe on the name of the Son of God.** “He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:12-13)
6. **Born of God** - “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (1 John 5:1)
7. **The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.** “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” (1 John 4:13-15)

BONUS SCRIPTURES

- (a) **Romans 10:14** “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”
- (b) **Acts 26:28-29** “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”
- (c) **John 1:14** “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
- (d) **Matthew 1:21** “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. Jesus used signs, miracles and wonders as one of the ways to prove his “realness” as the Son of God and savior of the world. Which miracle, sign or wonder performed in scripture inspires you the most to appreciate the reality of Jesus as savior of the world?
2. Describe something you previously thought were real and how it made you feel to find out they were not real (examples may include the tooth fairy, Santa Clause, etc.)?
3. Describe a time Jesus proved he was real to you (answer individually).
4. What does it mean to be faithless? What does it mean to be faithful?

FAST DAY FIVE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

LESSON TEXT: Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Do not give space for the devil to do evil. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. Let no corrupt communication

proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:28-32)

1. **James 4:11** “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.”

2. **Isaiah 41:10** “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

3. **Psalms 34:17** “The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”

4. **2 Timothy 4:18** “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

5. **John 17:15** “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.”

6. **2 Thessalonians 3:3** “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.”

7. **James 1:13** “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”

BONUS SCRIPTURES

- (a) **Revelation 3:10** “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”
- (b) **1 John 5:18** “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. Give an example of how you can do the following:
 - Be kind
 - Be tenderhearted
 - Overcome temptation
 - Release malice
 - Release bitterness
2. Explain what this verse means to you (answer individually): Isaiah 41:10 “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD

LESSON TEXT: Isaiah 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

- Perfecting-perfect, without fault.
 - Holiness-way of life, righteous, clean.
1. **Matthew 5:48** “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”
 2. **Hebrews 6:1** “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.”
 3. **Hebrews 12:14** “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”
 4. **2 Corinthians 7:1** “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
 5. **1 Thessalonians 4:7** “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”
 6. **Leviticus 19:2** “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.”
 7. **1 John 4:17** “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”

BONUS SCRIPTURES

- (a) **1 Peter 2:9** “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
- (b) **Romans 12:1** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT:

(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. What is the difference between a secular view of perfection and the view of perfection given in scripture?
2. Is it hard to change? Explain why or why not.
3. Is there a biblical character you identify with (or like most) (answer individually)? How perfect was he or she?

ACTIVITY

List 3 spiritual goals you have for the year that you can share publicly and pick a person from the group to hold you accountable, maintaining those goals. Pick check-in dates and give yourself permission to start again if you are unsuccessful the first time. Examples can be reading through a certain book of the Bible, joining a church, participating in a ministry, attending church more regularly, praying more consistently, etc.

FAST DAY SEVEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2023

STAND

LESSON TEXT: Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

God is holding the record of our steadfastness in the faith of Jesus Christ. As we "...have therefore received Christ, we must walk in him; rooted, and grounded, established in the faith and built up in him, abounding with thanksgiving." (Colossians 2:6-7). Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed: for the LORD *is* with you wherever you go. Stand fast in the Lord.

1. **Ephesians 6:11** "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
2. **1 John 4:1** "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
3. **Philippians 1:27** "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
4. **Matthew 24:13** "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
5. **James 1:6** "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."
6. **2 Timothy 2:3** "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."
7. **Psalms 46:10** "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

BONUS SCRIPTURES

- (a) **James 1:12** "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
- (b) **Exodus 14:13-14** "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:
(Discussion/Small Group Questions)

1. List 3 activities only children should do and 3 activities only adults should do.
2. What does it mean to “endure until the end”?
3. Ephesians 6:11 states, “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” List 3 “wiles of the devil” (answer individually).
4. List 3 ways you will overcome adversity and difficulty in 2023?