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**THE DOCTRINES
OF
JESUS CHRIST,
THE HOLY SPIRIT &
THE
APPLICATION OF
REDEMPTION**

This book is not for sale to the public

**- PASTOR MIKE ILELADEWA -
(FOUNDER & GENERAL OVERSEER)**

**THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AND
THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION**

**THE OVERCOMERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL
PLYMOUTH HEADQUATERS
UNITED KINGDOM**

**PASTOR MIKE ILELADEWA
FOUNDER / GENERAL OVERSEER**

Dr. Wayne Grudem's book - "Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine" was a key resource in the compilation of this Bible study guide

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REDEMPTION

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Glory and majesty be to our Great God for the opportunity to put this book together for sole use in the vineyard of God.

The doctrines of the application of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and redemption consist of vital questions for the modern day Pentecostal Churches to unravel. The contents in this booklet will address how the Scriptures support Jesus' humanity and His deity. His atonement, resurrection and ascension; as well as His office are clearly presented in this booklet; while the work of the Holy Spirit also highlighted.

The doctrine of the application of redemption runs through the common grace to what happens after death and finally with our union with Jesus Christ.

The Sunday school Bible study is not optional in the Christian life. It is both the obligation and the privilege of all believers. If you are not involved in regular, systematic Bible study, you are missing one of the primary means God uses to bring us to maturity (1 Pet. 2:2). Sunday school teaches us basic gospel principles and proper concepts; and thus building faith in our hearts.

Bible study during Sunday school is not complete until we ask ourselves, "What does it mean for my life and how can I practically apply it?" We must take the knowledge we've gained from our reading and interpretation and draw out the practical principles that apply to our personal lives to enable us grow spiritually. This is the ultimate goal of this book!.

If there is a command to be obeyed, we obey it. If there is a promise to be embraced, we claim it. If there is a warning to be followed, we heed it. This is the ultimate step we submit to Scripture to let it influence and transform our lives, as an individual and as a family. It is worthwhile to appreciate Jesus in the lives of the ministers of God, my co – labourers and co – soldiers that put this book together for the glory of God. The Pastorate and the Church of the living God appreciate the commitments and steadfastness of the Sunday School Co-ordinator- Bro. Ayodeji Adeoye with his team of dedicated and trustworthy teachers – Bro. Israel Oboh, Bro. Alex Asiamah, and Pastor (Mrs.) Christianah Ileladewa.

We shall all, including every member of “more than conquerors family” be rapturable with our Lord Jesus when He shall appear very soon, in Jesus name!

INTRODUCTION

My dear brethren in the Lord, you are welcome to the reading of the explosive exposition of the Word of God that will complete your divine fruitfulness and multiplication in this year 2016 and beyond, in Jesus name.

PASTOR MIKE ILELADEWA

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

THEME 1

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

LESSON 1: THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

MEMORY VERSE:

Colossians 2:9. “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”.

TEXT: Philippians 2:6-11.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus is fully God and fully man, yet one person. Jesus did not give up His human nature after His death and resurrection. The scriptures support His humanity and His Deity.

1. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

(a) Virgin birth-The virgin birth of Christ is an important consideration when we talk about the humanity of Christ. Matt 1:18-20 and verses 24-25 states ‘‘ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit. Shortly after that an angel of the Lord said to Joseph, who was engaged to Mary. Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit’’. Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His name Jesus.

(b) Human weaknesses and limitations

(i) Jesus had a human body as shown in the scriptures: He was born like all human babies (Luke 2:7) and grew through childhood to adulthood just like other children. He exhibited tiredness (John 4:6), He was thirsty (John 19:28) and hungry (Matt, 4:2), He was physically weak after being tempted in the wilderness (Matt 4:11). The culmination of Jesus’ limitation in terms of His human nature was His death on the cross (Luke 23:26). His human body ceased to have life in it and ceased to function, just as ours when we die.

(ii) Jesus had a human mind: Jesus went through a learning process like most humans. He learned how to eat, how to talk, how to read and write and how to be obedient to His parents (Heb.5; 8) and He increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52).

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: Lesson 1

(iii) Jesus had a human soul and human emotions: When Jesus realised the suffering He would face, He said ‘ ‘ My soul is very sorrowful, even to death’ ’ (Matt 26:38). Jesus also ‘ marvelled’ ’ at the faith of the centurion (Matt.8:10). He wept with sorrow at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35).

2. THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Not only was Jesus fully man, but also He was fully divine. Jesus was God in human flesh. There are various scriptural verses that express Jesus’s deity:

Quoting from Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 says, "*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.*" According to both of these verses, Jesus was "God with us" when He walked upon this earth. He wasn't merely "God's chosen one with us" or "God's Son with us." As 1 Timothy 3:16 states, "God was manifest in the flesh." John 1:14 tells us that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." In Zechariah 12:10, GOD said that HE (God) would be "pierced" by sinners, and Revelation 1:7 states that Jesus Christ Himself fulfilled this prophecy! Friend, the Bible presents Jesus Christ as much more than a great prophet and teacher. God's word presents Jesus Christ as *God incarnate*.

In John 8:58, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." The term "I am" is the exact term that God used in Exodus 3:14 in reference to Himself! Jesus professed to be the eternal God of the Bible.

In Matthew 22:42-45, Jesus claims to be the "Lord" of Psalm 110:1. He allows Thomas to address Him as "My Lord and my God" in John 20:28. He is the "everlasting Father" and "The mighty God" of Isaiah 9:6.

When Mary visited Elizabeth months before the birth of Christ, Elizabeth said ‘ ‘ Why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me’ ’ (Luke 1:43). John the Baptist cried out in the wilderness ‘ ‘ Prepare the way of the Lord, make His path straight’ ’ (Matt;3:3) ; by doing this John is quoting Isaiah 40:3, which speaks about the Lord God Himself coming among the peoples.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion ,the fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become man and join himself to human nature forever, so that the infinite God become one person with the finite man, will remain for eternity the most profound mystery in all the universe.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Are there specific ways in which you now think of Jesus as being more like you than you did before? What are these ways? How can a clearer understanding of Jesus' humanity help us to face temptation?
2. Is there anything you understand more fully about the deity of Jesus?
3. Who is Jesus Christ to you?- John 14:6.

PRAYER POINT

O Lord my Father, give me the grace to follow Jesus Christ obediently till the end of my life, in Jesus name.

LESSON 2: THE ATONEMENT

MEMORY VERSE:

1 John 4:10: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins”.

TEXTS: 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:25

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was perfectly holy. He hated sin with His entire being. The thought of sin, contradicted everything in His character. Yet in obedience to the Father, and out of love for us, Jesus took on Himself all the sins of those who would someday be saved. All that He hated most was poured out fully upon Him in order to save mankind from their sins.

Definition

Atonement is simply the work Christ did in His life and death to earn our salvation. Jesus Christ had to sacrifice His life to save mankind from the bondage of sin. He therefore took the penalty of our sins, allowing us to be reconciled to God.

THE PURPOSE FOR ATONEMENT

The love of God can be considered as the reason behind atonement as seen in **John 3:16**. However, the justice also required that God finds a way that the penalty due us for our sins would be paid since He could not accept us into fellowship with Himself unless the penalty was paid. This was why it was necessary for God to send Christ to be propitiation for our sins (**Romans 3:25**).

According to **Hebrews 10:4**, it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, a better sacrifice was required. It is only the blood of Jesus that would be able to take away sins (Hebrews 9:23-26). There was therefore no way for Christ to save us than for Him to die in our place.

THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

The natures of atonement are classified into two works of Christ:

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: Lesson 2

1. Christ's obedience for us, in which He obeyed the requirements of the law in our place and was perfectly obedient to the will of God the Father as our representative.
2. Christ's sufferings for us, in which He took the penalty due for our sins and as a result died for our sins.

1. Christ's obedience for us:

Christ had to live a life of perfect obedience to God in order to earn righteousness for us. He had to obey the law for His whole life on our behalf so that the positive merits of His perfect obedience would be counted for us. As specified in **Romans 5:19** "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience, many will be made righteous.

2. Christ's suffering for us:

In addition to obeying the law perfectly for his whole life on our behalf, Christ also took on Himself the sufferings necessary to pay the penalty for our sins.

The penalty Christ bore in paying for our sins were suffering in both His body and soul throughout His life. The suffering of Jesus was intensified as He drew near to the cross. He expressed the agony He was going through to His disciples when He said, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (**Matt 26:38**). It was especially on the cross that Jesus' suffering for us reached the climax. It was on the cross that He bore the penalty for our sin and died in our place. According to **2 Corinthians 5:21**, for our sake He was made to be sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

THE ESSENCE OF THE ATONEMENT

As sinners we deserved to die and face God's wrath for our sins. Our sins also separated us from God and we were in bondage of sin. However, we escaped the punishment of our sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The importance of Christ's atonement for our sins has been highlighted below.

1. Sacrifice: To pay the penalty of death that we deserved because of our sins, Christ died as a sacrifice for us. "He appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (**Hebrews 9:26**).

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: Lesson 2

2. Propitiation: To remove us from the wrath of God that we deserved, Christ died as a propitiation for our sins. “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins (**1 John 4:10**).

3. Reconciliation: To overcome our separation from God, we needed someone to provide reconciliation and thereby bring us back into fellowship with God. Paul says that God “through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself” (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**).

4. Redemption: Because we as sinners were in bondage to sin and to Satan, we needed someone to redeem us out of that bondage. When we speak of redemption, the idea of a “ransom” comes into view. A ransom is the price paid to redeem someone from bondage or captivity. Jesus said of Himself in **Mark 10:45**, “For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”. We have been delivered from the bondage to the guilt of sin and from bondage to its ruling power in our lives through the redemption that comes from Christ Jesus (**Romans 6:14**).

CONCLUSION

When Jesus knew that He had paid the full penalty of our sin, He said on the cross “It is finished”(John 19:30). If Christ had not paid the full penalty, there would still be condemnation left for us. But since He has paid the full penalty that is due us, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:1**).

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Even though Christ has redeemed us from the bondage of sin, why do we still succumb to sin and the deceits of the devil?
2. Does your life reflect your appreciation of Christ’s sacrifice for your sins?

PRAYER POINT

Lord, give me the grace to walk in the newness of life that you have given me through your son Jesus Christ.

LESSON 3: CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 16:6: And he saith unto them, be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him”.

TEXTS: Luke 24:36-43; 1 Corinthians 15:6 and Acts 1:9-11.

(1) RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Christ repeatedly shows the risen Christ reigning in heaven and predicts His return in glory. Christ's resurrection was not simply a coming back from the dead, as had experienced by others before; rather He rose from the dead was the first fruits of them that slept (**1Cor 15:20**). This is a new kind of human life, a life in which His body was made perfect, no longer subject to weakness, ageing, or death but to live eternally. The resurrection body is raised imperishable in glory (**1Cor 15: 42**).

Both the Father and the Son participated in the resurrection. God specifically raised Christ from the dead (**Rom 6:4**). Jesus also participated in His own resurrection. It is both the Father and the Son that were involved in the resurrection (**Gal 1:1 & John 10:17**).

Doctrinal significance of the resurrection

- a. *It Ensures Our Regeneration:* Jesus resurrection is connected with our regeneration or new birth. (**1 Peter 1:3**). In His resurrection He earned for us a new life just like His when we are born again (**Eph.2: 5 - 6**). When God raised Christ from the dead He thought of us as somehow being raised with Christ and therefore deserving of the merits of Christ's resurrection (**Phil 3:10**). The resurrection of Christ gave us power to gain more and more victory over remaining sin in our lives (**1Cor 15:17**). This resurrection power includes power for Christian ministry in the work of the kingdom and obedience to God (**Phil 3:10**). This intensified power for proclaiming the gospel and working miracles was given to the disciples after Christ's resurrection characterized their Christian lives (**Acts 1:8**).
- b. *It Ensures Our Justification:* When Christ was raised from the dead, it was God's declaration of approval of Christ's work of redemption, God the Father was in effect

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saying that He approved Christ's work of suffering and dying for our sins and that His work was completed and there was no penalty left to pay for sin; no more wrath of God to bear, no more guilt or liability to punishment. All had been completely paid for in the resurrection (**Rom 4:25**). He was raised for our justification and by virtue of our union with Christ God's declaration of approval of Christ is also His declaration of approval of us. (**Eph2:6**). Once we trusted in Christ for salvation, Christ's resurrection had earned our justification.

- c. *It Ensures That We Will Receive Perfect Resurrection Bodies As Well:* Jesus's resurrection is connected with our final bodily resurrection. "And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power"(**1Cor. 6:14, 2 Cor. 4:14**). The scars from Jesus crucifixion are unique, because they are eternal reminder of His sufferings and death for us (**John 20:27**). This does not indicate that the scars of serious injuries that we received in this life will remain on our body, rather all will be healed and all will be made perfect and whole.

Ethical significance of the resurrection

- a. The resurrection has application to our obedience, to God in life. Paul encouraged believers to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (**1Cor 15:58**). It is because Christ was raised from the dead, and we too shall be raised from the dead that we should continue steadfastly in the Lord's work. Everything we do to bring people into the kingdom and build them up will indeed have eternal significance.
- b. The resurrection helps to focus on our future heavenly reward as our goal. We should see resurrection as a time when all the struggles of this life will be repaid. But if Christ has not been raised and if there is no resurrection, then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished and your faith is futile.(**1Cor 15:17-19; 32**). Therefore set your minds on the things that are above, that you also will appear with Him in glory (**Col.3:1-4**).
- c. The resurrection obliged us to stop yielding to sin in our lives. By the virtue of the resurrection of Christ and His power within us, we have new power over the dominion of sin in our lives (**Rom 6:11-13**). We are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

(2) ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

After Jesus' resurrection, he was on earth for forty days (**Acts 1:3**), then He led them out to Bethany, just outside Jerusalem, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them. While He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. (**Luke 24: 50 - 51**).

The ascension of Jesus into heaven is to teach us that heaven does exist.

Specific aspect of Christ's ascension into heaven

- a. *Christ received glory and honour that had not been His before as the God-man:* When Jesus ascended into heaven He received glory, honour and authority that had never been His before as one who was both God and man. Before Jesus died, he prayed Father to glorify Him (**John 17:5**). God has highly exalted Him and Jesus was taken up in glory (**1Tim 3:16**). Christ is now in heaven with the angelic choirs singing praise to Him (**Rev 5:12**).
- b. *Christ was seated at God's right hand:* When Christ Ascension back into heaven He received the fulfilment of that promise in **Ps.110:1**. Sitting at God's right hand is a dramatic indication of the completion of Christ's work of redemption. In addition to this, the act of sitting at God's right hand is an evidence that He received authority over the universe (**Eph.1:20-21**). Another authority that Christ received from the Father was the authority to pour out the Holy Spirit on the Church (**Acts 2:33**). He is also seen as standing at God's right hand and walking among the seven golden lamp stands in heaven (**Rev. 2:1**), and engaged in many other activities in heaven. There are amazing promises of our future sharing in Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, promises that we will not fully understand until the age to come.
- c. *Christ's Ascension Has Doctrinal Significance for Our Lives:* Christ's ascension has significant implication for believers, since we are united with Him in every aspect of His work of redemption, it foreshadows our future ascension into heaven with Him (**1Thess 4:17**). Jesus' ascension gives us assurance that our final home will be in heaven with Him (**John 14:2-3**). Our union with Christ in His ascension enable us to share with Christ in His authority over the creation that God has made (**Hebrew 2:5-8**).

CONCLUSION

The two fold state of Christ: First the state of humiliation which is His incarnation, suffering, death and burial. The second state which is the exaltation of Christ are His resurrection, ascension into heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and will soon return in glory and power.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

(a) The resurrection of Christ should cause believers to focus more on things that will have eternal significance and be assured of reigning with Jesus in heaven.

-How does this new spiritual life as part of the resurrection power of Christ within you encourage you in living Christian life and in ministering to other people's need?

(b) Paul said I have finished the race, kept the faith, and faithfully now awaiting the prize of righteousness (**2 Tim. 4: 7 - 8**). Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith (**Heb. 12:1-2**). From the above two stated verses in the Bible:

- Thinking of Christ now in heaven does it cause you to focus more attention on things that will have eternal significance?
- Does it increase your assurance that you will someday be with Him in heaven.
- How do you feel about the prospect of reigning with Christ and over the nations and angels as well?

PRAYER POINT

Let the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ fall upon my life today and move me forward in all areas of my life, in Jesus name.

LESSON 4: THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Pet. 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 “.

TEXTS: Heb.1: 1-2; 4: 14-16; Eph. 1: 20-22.

INTRODUCTION

In ancient Israel, three distinct and major offices exist; the prophet, the priest and the king. The prophet spoke God’s words to the people; the priest offered sacrifices, prayers and praises to God; and the king ruled over the people as God’s representative. The three offices foreshadowed Christ’s work in different ways as Christ fulfils the three offices.

AREAS OF FOCUS

(a) As *prophet*, Christ reveals God to us and speaks God’s words to us. Prophets in the Old Testament spoke and wrote God’s words. Moses, the first major prophet wrote the first five books of the Old Testament as well as other prophets like Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, etc. However, Moses prophesied that sometime another prophet like himself would come (**Deut. 18: 15 & 18**). Even though Peter and few people recognised Jesus Christ as great prophet (**Acts 3: 22–24**), He was not primarily viewed as greatest of the prophets (**Matt 16:14**). However, Jesus Christ is the greatest of the prophets because:

1. He is the one about whom the prophecies in the Old testament were made (**Luke 24: 25 – 27**),
2. Jesus Christ was not merely a messenger of revelation from God (like all other prophets), but was Himself the source of revelation from God (**Jn.1:1, Heb. 1: 1 - 2**).

(b) As *priest*, Christ both offers a sacrifice to God on our behalf and is Himself the sacrifice that is offered (**Heb.4:14**). In the Old Testament, the priests were appointed by God to offer sacrifices, prayers and praises to God on behalf of the people. By

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: Lesson 4

doing these, the priests sanctified the people and made them acceptable to approach God's presence (temporarily in the Old Testament). However, in the New Testament, Jesus becomes our Great High Priest because:

1. He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins which was a completed and final sacrifice that ended for all time the need for any other further sacrifices (**Heb. 7: 27**).
2. Jesus continuously brings us to God's presence (as our perfect High Priest) so that we no longer have need of a Jerusalem temple or of a special priesthood to stand between us and God (**Heb. 6: 19 - 20; Luke 23: 45**).
3. Jesus as priest continually lives in the presence of God and prays for us (**Heb. 7: 25; Rom. 8:34**).

(c) *As king*, Christ rules over the church and over the universe. Although, Jesus was born to be King of the Jews (**Matt. 2:2**); nonetheless He did have a kingdom whose arrival He announced in **Matt. 4:17, 23; 12:28**. He is the true king of the new people of God. After His resurrection, Jesus was given greater authority over the church and the universe (**Eph. 1:20 - 22; Matt. 28:18**). The authority over the church and the universe will be more recognised by people when Jesus returns to earth in power and great glory to reign. Then He will be acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords (**Rev. 19: 16**) and every knee shall bow to Him (**Phil. 2: 10**).

CONCLUSION

As Christians bearing the image of Christ, we imitate Christ in each of these roles as prophet, priest and king though in a subordinate way. We have a prophetic role as we proclaim the gospel to the world. We are also priests (**1Pet. 2:5,9**). At the moment, we share (in part) in the kingly reign of Christ since we have been raised to sit with Him in the heavenly places (**Eph. 2:6**) thus sharing to some degree in His authority over evil spiritual forces (**Eph. 6: 10 – 18; 1 Jn. 4:4**). Also, for all eternity we shall forever function as subordinate prophets, priests and kings, yet always subject to the Lord Jesus, the supreme prophet, priest and king.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Does your understanding of Christ's role as prophet, priest and king help you understand more fully the functions of prophets, priests and kings in the Old Testament?
2. Do you think you have greater or less privileges living now as a member of the church in the new age?
3. Can you see any fulfilment of the role of prophet, priest and / or king in your life?
4. How could each of these roles be developed in your life?

PRAYER POINT

Oh LORD my father, help me to fulfil my role as a prophet, priest and king, in Jesus name.

LESSON 5: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

MEMORY VERSE:

Acts 2: 17-18: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh: Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions.

Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservant I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy”.

TEXTS: 2 Cor. 1:22; Acts 10:38.

(1) INTRODUCTION

We have an indication that the Holy Spirit's work is to complete and sustain what God the Father has planned and what God the Son has begun, for in Genesis 1:2 " The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the water". And at Pentecost, with the beginning of the new creation in Christ, it is the Holy Spirit who comes to grant power to the Church, (**Acts 1:8**) since Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity through whom God particularly manifests His presence in the covenant age.

Definition: We can define the work of the Holy Spirit as “the manifestation of the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church”. The Holy Spirit is now the primary manifestation of the Trinity among us. He is the one who is most prominently present with us now.

(II) SPECIFIC WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The specific work of the Holy Spirit that brings evidence of God's presence and blessing are as follows:

1. The Holy Spirit Empowers

(a) **He Gives Life:** In the realm of nature, it is the role of the Holy Spirit to give life to all animate creatures, whether on the ground or in the sky and sea. "When you send forth Your spirit they are created" (**Ps. 104:30**). Conversely, If God "Should take back His Spirit to Himself, and gather to Himself His breath, all flesh would perish together and man would return to dust" (**Job 34:14-15**).

Practical application: It is the role of the Holy Spirit to give us new life in regeneration. Jesus told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again" (**John 3:6-7**) **KJV**.

He also said the Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human efforts accomplish nothing (**John 6:63**) **NLT**. This life giving function of the Holy Spirit is the fact that it was the Holy Spirit who conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary His mother (**Matt1:18, Luke 1: 35**).

And on the day when Christ returns it is the same Holy Spirit who will complete this life-giving work by given new resurrection life to our mortal bodies (**Rom: 8: 11**).

(b) He Gives Power for service

- i. Old Testament (OT):** In the OT, the Holy Spirit always empowered people for special service. He empowered Joshua with leadership skills and wisdom (**Deut. 34:9**), and empowered the judges to deliver the Israelites from their oppressors. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon in **Judges 6: 34** and Jephthah in **Judges 11: 29**.

Practical application: In a slightly different kind of empowerment the Holy Spirit also endowed people for certain skills for the work of God in His sanctuary. Bezaleel was endowed with artistic skills for the construction of the tabernacle and with ability to teach others (**Ex.31:2-3**).

- ii. New Testament (NT):** The empowering work of the Holy Spirit in the NT is seen first and most fully in His anointing and empowering of Jesus as the Messiah. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism (**Mark 1: 10-11**). Jesus entered into the temptation in the wilderness "full of the Holy Spirit" (**Luke 4:1**), and after His temptation, at the beginning of His ministry, "Jesus returned in the power of the Holy Spirit in to Galilee" (**Luke 4:14**). The power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus's life was then seen in His subsequent miracles, as He cast out demons with a Word and healed all who came to Him (**Luke 4:40-41**). Jesus had an anointing of the Holy Spirit without measure, and this anointing remained on Him (**Acts 10:38**). The Holy Spirit was pleased to dwell in Jesus and empower Him, for He fully delighted in the absolute moral purity of Jesus' life.

Practical application: In general the Holy Spirit speaks through the gospel message as it is effectively proclaimed to people's hearts, not only in the preaching of the gospel

message, but also in the reading and teaching of Scripture, the Holy Spirit continues to speak to people's heart each day (**Hebrew 3:7; 10:15**).

Another aspect of empowering Christians for service is the Holy Spirit activity of giving spiritual gifts to equip Christians for ministry. "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (**1 Cor. 12:7**).

More also, in the prayer lives of individual believers, the Holy Spirit empowers prayer and makes it effective (**Rom8:26**). We "have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:18).

Yet another, aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in empowering Christians for service is empowering people to overcome spiritual opposition to the preaching of the gospel and to God's work in people's lives (**Matt 12 :28; Acts 13:9-11**).

2. Holy Spirit Purifies

One of His primary activities is to cleanse us from sin and to "sanctify us" or make us more holy in actual conduct of life (**John 16:8; Acts 7: 51**). When people become Christians, the Holy Spirit does an initial cleansing work in them, making a decisive break with the patterns of sin that were in their lives before (**1 Cor. 6:11**).

Holy Spirit produces in us growth in holiness of life, He brings forth the "fruit of the Spirit" within us (**Gal. 5:22-23**), those qualities that reflect the character of God as we continually "are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another.

Sanctification comes by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to "put to death the deeds of the body" and grow in personal holiness (**Rom 8:13**).

3. Holy Spirit Reveals

- i.** *Revelation to Prophets and Apostles.* The work of the Holy Spirit in revealing God's Words to the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles in many cases so that these Words could be put into Scripture for example, (**2 Peter 1:20-21; Zechariah 7:12**).
- ii.** *He Gives Evidence Of God's Presence.* The Holy Spirit frequently made Himself known by phenomena that indicated His activity. The Holy Spirit came upon the seventy elders with Moses and they prophesied (**Num. 11:25-26;**). In some instances people could see the effect of the Holy Spirit coming on the Lord's servants to do great works of power (**1Sam 10:10; Acts 2:2-3; John 1:32**).

In the lives of individual believers, the Holy Spirit makes Himself known in various ways and reveals His desires to us to follow them (**Rom8:16; Gal. 4:6;**).

And from time to time He works miraculous signs and wonders that strongly attest to the presence of God in the preaching of the gospel (**Hebrew 2:4**) and make the presence of God known. The Holy Spirit works in various ways that can be perceived by believers and unbelievers. This encourages people's faith that God is near and that He is working to fulfil His purposes in the church and to bring blessing to His people.

iii. *He Guides and Directs God's people.* The Holy Spirit gave direct words of guidance to people, saying to Philip, for example, "Go up and join this chariot" (**Acts 8:29**), or telling Peter to go with three men who came to him from Cornelius's household (**Acts 10:19**), directing the Christians at Antioch, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (**Acts 13:2**). The leading and guiding by the Holy Spirit is a day- to -day guidance, and walking according, to the Spirit and obedience to the moral commands of the scripture is necessary (**Rom 8:14; Gal 5:16, 18;**); not to gratify the desire of the flesh or sinful nature.

iv. *He provides a Godlike atmosphere when He manifests His presence.* The Holy Spirit is fully God, and shares all the attributes of God, His influence bring a Godlike atmosphere to the situation in which He is active. The Holy Spirit manifests and creates an atmosphere of love, (**Col. 1:8**). The Holy Spirit brings an atmosphere of peace into situation, (**1Cor.14:33**); and of joy (**Acts 13:52**).

v. *He gives us assurance:* The Holy Spirit bears witness "with our spirits that we are children of God" (**Rom 8:16**), and gives evidence of the work of God within us. He also witnesses that God abides in us and that we are abiding in Him.

vi. *He teaches and illumines:* Another aspect of the Holy Spirit's revealing work is teaching certain things to God's people and illumining them so that they can understand things (**John 14:26**). At another times the Holy Spirit revealed specific information to people (**Luke 2: 26; Acts 11:28**).

4. Holy Spirit Unifies

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: Lesson 5

There is an emphasis on the Holy Spirit coming on a community of believers (**Acts 2:16-18**). He created a new community which was the church. The church was marked by unprecedented unity (**Acts 2:44-47**). This unifying function of the Holy Spirit is also seen in **Phil. 2:1-2 & Eph. 4:3**. However, differing gifts are empowered by one and the same spirit. The Holy Spirit unifies the church and produces love in our hearts (**Rom. 5:5; Col. 3:4**), and this love binds everything together in perfect harmony.

5. The Holy Spirit and Our Response to Him

The Old and New Testaments indicate that Holy Spirit will bestow or withdraw blessing according to whether or not He is pleased by the situation He sees in us. It is noteworthy that Jesus was completely without sin and the Holy Spirit remained on Him and was given to Him without measure (**John 1:32, 3: 34**). Also the Holy Spirit can also be grieved and cease to bring blessing in some situations as indicated in **Acts 7:51 & 1Thess 5:9**. Even more serious is disobedience to him that brings strong judgement (**Acts 5: 3**). And blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven (**Luke 12:10**).

CONCLUSION

Christians must be careful not to grieve or offend the Holy Spirit. He will not force Himself on us against our wills but if we resist and quench and oppose Him, then His empowering will depart and He will remove much of the blessing of God from ones' lives. It is important that all our ministry be done in an atmosphere of God's presence created by the Holy Spirit such as atmosphere of power, love, joy, truth, holiness, righteousness and peace (**Acts 9:31**).

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Have you ever been aware of the Holy Spirit empowering in a specific situation of ministry?
2. How did you perceive the presence of Holy Spirit during Bible teaching, prayer or worship or what made you aware of His presence?
3. In what ways does the guidance of the Holy Spirit come to us?

PRAYER POINTS

THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT: Lesson 5

- (1) Fresh anointing from on high, baptize my life to do more exploits for the Lord, in Jesus name.
- (2) The anointing of God upon my life shall not run dry, in Jesus name.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION

THEME 2

THE DOCTRINE OF THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION

LESSON 1: COMMON GRACE

MEMORY VERSE:

Luke 6: 35 – 36: “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful”.

TEXTS: Matt 5: 44 - 45, Luke 6: 32 - 36

INTRODUCTION

When human beings sin, they become liable to the wrath of God (**Rom. 6: 23**) and are eternally separated and cut off from experiencing any good from God. However, God bestows common grace (undeserved blessings) on all people, both believers and unbelievers. Human beings use the blessings of common grace that God gives either for good or for evil purposes.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Evidence of God’s Common Grace

1. *The Physical Realm.* Evidence of common grace in the physical realm is manifested as unbelievers continue to live on and enjoy blessings of the earth (**Matt.5:44 – 45; Ps.145:15-16**). The goodness that is found in the whole creation is due to God’s goodness and compassion. The beauty of the natural world (the beauty of multi-coloured flowers, of grass and woodlands, of rivers and lakes and mountains and ocean shores) remain daily testimony of God’s common grace.
2. *The Intellectual Realm.* Great intelligence and understanding among men irrespective of their faith is a result of God’s common grace (**Jn.1: 9**). An ability to grasp truth and distinguish it from error, and to experience growth in knowledge that can be used in the investigation of the universe and in the task of subduing the earth by non-Christians is attributed to the common grace on all mankind.

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3. *The Moral Realm.* God gives all men inward sense of right and wrong (conscience) such that they will frequently approve of moral standards that reflect many of the moral standards of the scripture (**Rom.2:14 – 15**). This leads to the establishment of laws and customs in society that respect the sanctity of marriage and family, protect human life, prohibit theft and falsehood in speech. However, if people persist hard-heartedly and repeatedly in following sin over a course of time, develop reprobate minds (**Rom.1:28**).
4. *The Creative Realm.* As a result of the common grace, God has allowed significant measures of skill in artistic and musical areas as well as in athletics, cooking, writing, etc. to be poured out on both unbelievers and believers.
5. *The Societal Realm.* The common grace of God is evidenced in organisations and structures in human society. The human family persist today as created by God (**Gen. 2:18, 23, 24**) not simply as institution for believers, but for all people. Human government is also a result of the common grace; it was instituted in principle by God after the flood (**Gen.9: 6; Rom 13:1,4**). Other organisations in human society (educational institutions, businesses and corporations as well as voluntary associations) function to bring some measure of good to human beings and are all expressions of the common grace of God.
6. *The Religious Realm.* When we seek good for unbelievers, it is consistent with God's own practice of granting sunshine and rain on the just and on the unjust (**Matt. 5: 45**) and also consistent with the practice of Jesus during His earthly ministry when He healed every person who was brought to Him (**Luke 4: 40**).

However, it is important to know that common grace does not save people. Common grace does not change the human heart or bring people to genuine repentance and faith. It is also important to recognise that the actions of unbelievers performed by virtue of common grace do not in themselves merit God's approval or favour.

REASONS FOR COMMON GRACE

1. *To redeem those who will be saved.* God allows sinful humans to live for some time, so that they might have an opportunity to repent and also so that they would bear children and enable subsequent generation to live and then hear the gospel and repent (**2 Pet. 3: 9 – 10**).

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2. *To demonstrate God's goodness and mercy.* It is not unjust for God to delay the execution of punishment upon sin and to give temporary blessings to human beings. In delaying punishment, God shows clearly that He has no pleasure in executing final judgement rather delights in the salvation of men and women (**Ezek. 33: 11; 1Tim. 2: 4**).
3. *To demonstrate God's justice.* When God repeatedly invites sinners to come to faith and when they repeatedly refuse His invitations, the justice of God in condemning them is seen much more clearly (**Rom. 2: 5; 3:19**).
4. *To demonstrate God's glory.* In developing and exercising dominion over the earth, men and women demonstrate and reflect the wisdom and excellence of their Creator thereby bringing significant glory to God.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

1. Common grace does not mean that those who receive it will be saved. The most skilled, most intelligent, most wealthy and powerful people in the world still need the gospel of Christ without which they will be condemned for eternity (**Matt 12: 30**).
2. We must be careful not to reject the good things that unbelievers do as totally evil. We should see God's hand in the good unbelievers do as a result of the common grace and give glory to God.
3. The doctrine of common grace should stir our hearts to much greater thankfulness to God. We should realize that God in His sovereignty is ultimately responsible for all blessings including granting sinners (who are totally undeserving) access to the blessings. The blessings are evidence of God's power and wisdom as well as continual manifestation of His abundant grace.

CONCLUSION

It is important that *common grace* be not mistaken with *saving grace* which is the grace of God that brings people to salvation. Common grace abounds to all so that human beings (unbelievers) can embrace the saving grace.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Before now, do you think unbelievers deserve the ordinary benefits of the world around them? How has your perspective changed, if at all?

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2. Do you think that God often uses the blessings of common grace as a means to prepare people to receive the (saving grace) gospel?
3. In what ways will this doctrine change the way you relate to an unbelieving neighbour or friend?
4. If you are kind to an unbeliever and he (or she) never comes to accept Christ, has it done any good in God's sight?

PRAYER POINT

O LORD my father, grant me the grace to show your unconditional love to all, in Jesus name.

LESSON 2: ELECTION AND REPROBATION

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

TEXTS: Ephesians 1:3-7; Titus 1:16.

INTRODUCTION

Election is God's decision to choose us to be saved before the foundation of the world. It is an extension of God's grace.

It is the first step of God bringing salvation to us. Other steps in applying salvation to our lives includes our hearing the gospel call, our being regenerated by the Holy spirit , our responding in faith and repentance and God forgiving us and giving us membership of his family ,as well as granting us growth in the Christian life and keeping us faithful to Himself throughout life.

At the end of life we die and go into His presence, then when Christ returns we receive resurrection bodies, and the process of acquiring salvation is complete. This list of events in which God applies salvation to us is called “ The order of salvation ” and can be summarised as below:

“The order of salvation”

1. Election (God's choice of people to be saved).
2. The gospel call (proclaiming the message of the gospel).
3. Regeneration (being born again).
4. Conversion (faith and repentance).
5. Justification (right legal standing).
6. Adoption (membership in God's family).
7. Sanctification (right conduct of life).

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8. Perseverance (remaining a Christian).
9. Death (going to be with the Lord).
10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body).

We may define election as an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.

The term predestination is a broader term and it includes the election (for believers) and reprobation (for unbelievers).

Reprobation is the sign when a sinner is so hardened as to feel no remorse or misgiving of his or her conscience (Romans 1:28). People with reprobate minds have some knowledge of God and perhaps know of His commandments. However, they live impure lives and have very little desire to please God. Those who have reprobate minds live corrupt and selfish lives. Sin is justified and acceptable to them. The reprobates are those whom God has rejected and has left to their own devices.

Biblical references to God's election in the New Testament

1. Paul wrote in **Romans 8:29 - 30** "In everything God work for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose' 'for those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His son.... and those He predestined He also called....justified ...glorified'" (**Rom.5:29-30**). Paul's point is that, God has always acted for the good of those whom He called to Himself .Looking at the distant past before the creation of the world; He sees that God foreknew and predestined His people to conform to the image of Christ. Looking at the recent past He finds that God called and justified His people whom He had predestined. And looking at the future when Christ returns, He sees that God has determined to give perfect, glorified bodies to those who believe in Christ. From eternity to eternity God has acted with the good of His people in mind.
2. Paul tells the Christians at Thessalonica, 'we give thanks to God always for you all..... for we know, brethren beloved by God, that He has chosen you '(**1 Thess.1:12,4**).The reason Paul can give thanks to God for the Thessalonians' Christians is that he knows God is ultimately responsible for their salvation and has in fact chosen them to be saved. This is made more clearer in **2 Thessalonians**

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2:13 ‘But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved. Paul was obligated to give thanks to God for the Christians at Thessalonica because he knew that their salvation was ultimately due to God’s choice of them.

3. In **2nd Tim.2:10** Paul says. ” I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory”. He knows that God has chosen some people to be saved, and he sees this as an encouragement to preach the gospel, even if it means enduring great suffering.

CORRECTING MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

- **Election is not fatalistic.** By ‘fatalism’ means - a system in which human choices or decisions does not make any difference. In fatalism, no matter what we do, things are going to turn out as they have been previously ordained. In contrast to the fatalistic system the New Testament shows that not only do we make willing choices as real persons, but these choices also affect the course of events in the world. They affect our own lives and the lives and destinies of others. **John 3:18** says” He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God. Our personal decision to believe or not to believe in Christ has eternal consequences in our lives, and Scripture is willing to talk about our decision to believe or not believe as a factor that decides our eternal destiny. The implication of this is that we certainly must preach the gospel, and people’s eternal destiny hinges on whether we proclaim the gospel or not.
- **Election is unfair:** Sometimes people regard the doctrine of election as unfair, since it teaches that God chooses some to be saved and passes over others. At a deeper level this objection will say it is not fair for God to create some people who He knew would sin and be eternally condemned, and whom He would not redeem. Paul raises this objection; after saying that God” has mercy upon whomever He wills, and He hardens the heart of whomever He wills (**Rom 9:18**).

CONCLUSION

Election is unconditional: We conclude that the reason for election is simply God’s sovereign choice - He ‘destined us in love to be sons’ (**Eph.1:5**). God chose us simply

THE DOCTRINE OF THE APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION: Lesson 2

because He decided to bestow His love upon us. It is not because of any foreseen faith or foreseen merit in us.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

(1) In the light of 2nd Timo.2:10; should we as the “elected” need to do evangelism in the knowledge of “unconditional election” by God? If no, what is / are your reason(s)? If yes? When last did you participate in evangelism?

(2) Can a Christian have a reprobate mind? (See 2 Corin. 5:17 & John 14:26).

PRAYER POINT

O Lord my Father, strengthen me to run this race of Christianity to the end of my life, in Jesus name.

LESSON 3: THE GOSPEL CALL AND EFFECTIVE CALLING

MEMORY VERSE:

Romans 8:30: “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified”.

TEXT: 1 Peter 2:9.

INTRODUCTION

People who have been called by God “belong to Jesus Christ” (**Romans 1:6**). They are called to “be saints” (**Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2**), and have come into a realm of peace (**1 Corinthians 7:15, Colossians 3:15**). Paul talks about the way God brings salvation into our lives in **Romans 8:30**. He points to the fact that in the actual outworking of His purpose in our lives, God called us. Paul immediately lists justification and glorification showing that these come after calling.

(1) EFFECTIVE CALLING

Effective calling can be defined as “an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which He summons people to Himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith”.

Calling is the act of God, because He is the one who predestines people “to be conformed to the image of His Son according to **Romans 8:29**. We have been called out of darkness into His marvellous light and into fellowship with Him (**1 Peter 2:9**). This calling has the capacity to draw us out of the kingdom of darkness and bring us into God’s kingdom so we can join in full fellowship with Him (**1 Corinthians 1:9**).

Although effective calling awakens and brings forth a response from us, we must always insist that the response still has to be a voluntary and willing response in which the individual person puts his or her trust in Christ. This is why prayer is so important for effective evangelism. Unless God works in people’s hearts to make the proclamation of the gospel effective, there will be no genuine saving response. Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (**John 6:44**).

(2) THE GOSPEL CALL

In distinction from effective calling, which is entirely an act of God, we may talk about the gospel call in general which comes through human speech. This gospel call is offered to all people even those who do not accept it. Sometimes this gospel call is referred to as external calling or general calling. By contrast, the effective calling of God that actually brings about a willing response from the person who hears it is sometimes called internal calling.

The general call is general, external and often rejected; while the effective call is particular, internal and always effective. However, this is not to diminish the importance of the gospel call because it is the means God has appointed through which effective calling will come. Without the gospel call, no one could respond and be saved. **Romans 10:14** states: “how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?”.

The elements of the gospel call

- A. *Explanation of the facts concerning salvation*: Anyone who comes to Christ for salvation must have at least a basic understanding of who Christ is and how He meets our needs for salvation. Therefore an explanation of the facts concerning salvation must include the following:
- All people have sinned (**Romans 3:23**)
 - The penalty for our sin is death (**Rom 6:23**)
 - Jesus Christ came to pay the penalty for our sins (**Romans 5:8**).
- B. *Invitation to respond to Christ personally in repentance and faith*: When the New Testament talks about people coming to salvation it speaks in terms of a personal response to an invitation from Christ Himself. That invitation is expressed in **Matthew 11:28-30**. There is also the need for personal response as expressed in **John 1:11-12**: “He came to His own and His own people received Him not. But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God”. However, when we come to Christ and trust Him to save us from our sin, we cannot any longer cling to sin but must willingly renounce it in genuine repentance.
- C. *A promise of forgiveness and eternal life*: Although the words of personal invitation spoken by Christ do have promises of rest, and power to become children of God, it is helpful to make explicit just what Christ promises to those who come to Him in repentance and faith.

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The primary thing that is promised in the gospel message is the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God as shown in **Acts 3:19** and **John 3:16**. Christ will surely accept those who come to Him in sincere repentance and faith seeking salvation: “Him who comes to me I will not cast out” (**John 6:37**).

CONCLUSION

The powerful act of God is often referred to as effective calling to distinguish it from the general gospel of invitation that goes to all people and which some people reject. This is not to say that human gospel proclamation is not involved. God’s effective calling comes through the human preaching of the gospel. There are many who hear the general call of the gospel message and do not respond. But in some cases the gospel call is made so effective by the working of the Holy Spirit in people’s hearts that they do respond; we can say that they have received “effective calling”.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Can you explain the difference between the gospel calling and effective calling in your own terms?
2. What are some of the basic truths you heard about salvation before giving your life to Jesus Christ?

PRAYER POINT

Lord, help me to understand the purpose of your effective calling upon my life and to live a life in accordance with my calling, in Jesus name.

LESSON 4: REGENERATION

MEMORY VERSE:

John 3:3: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”.

TEXT: John 3: 4-7

INTRODUCTION

Regeneration could be defined as “a secret act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life to us”. This is sometimes called "being born again" (**John 3:7**).

Regeneration is totally the work of God; we play no active role at all. The fact that we are passive in regeneration is also evident when Scripture refers to it as being born again. We did not choose to be made physically alive and we did not choose to be born. It is something that happened to us; which suggests that we are entirely passive in regeneration. (**James 1:18NLT; Ezekiel 36: 26-27**).

When Jesus speaks of being born of the spirit (**John 3:3**); He indicates God the Holy Spirit produces regeneration, and also there is an involvement of God the Father in regeneration as stated in **Eph. 2:5** “ God who made us alive together with Christ”. God according to His abundant mercy has given us new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (**1 Peter1:3 NLT**).

BASIC FACTS ABOUT REGENERATION

(A) *The exact nature of regeneration is mysterious to us:* What happens in regeneration is mysterious to us, we know that somehow we who were spiritually dead have been made alive to God and in a very real sense we have been " born again" but we don't understand how this happens or what exactly God does to us to give us this new spiritual life (**Eph.2:1**). Jesus says, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit" (**John 3:8**). The Scripture views regeneration as something that affects us as whole person. Our spirits are alive to God after regeneration (**Rom. 8:10**), but every part of us is affected

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by regeneration "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

- (B) *It is a work of God within us in which He gives us new life and it is an instantaneous event:* We do not always know exactly when this instantaneous change occurs, especially for Christian who attends an evangelical church or Bible study and grow gradually in their understanding of the gospel, there may not be a dramatic crisis with a radical change of behaviour, but there will be an instantaneous change when God through the Holy Spirit, in an unseen, invisible way, awakens spiritual life within. The change will become evident over time in patterns of behaviour and desires that are pleasing God. In other cases when people become Christians, regeneration takes place at a clearly recognizable time at which the person realizes that previously he or she was separated from God and spiritually dead, but immediately afterward there was clearly new spiritual life within. The results can usually be seen at once. People may say something like this "I don't know exactly what happened, but before that moment I did not trust in Christ for Salvation. I was still wandering and questioning in my mind, but after that moment I realized that I did trust in Christ and He is my Saviour. Something happened in my heart. Even in these cases we are not quite sure exactly what has happened in our hearts, so it is the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.
- (C) *It comes before saving faith:* It is essential to understand that regeneration comes before saving faith. It is in fact this work of God that gives us the spiritual ability to respond to God in faith. It is crucial to remember that they always come so close together that it will ordinarily seem to us that they are happening at the same time. But God regenerates us and we respond in faith and repentance to this call. It is hard to tell any difference in time, since regeneration is a spiritual work that we cannot perceive with our eyes or even understand with our minds (John 3:5). Our inability to come to Christ on our own, without an initial work of God within us is also emphasized in John 6:44; Acts 16:14. Example of Lydia in this Bible verse is that, first the Lord opened her heart, then she was able to give heed to Paul's preaching and then respond in faith.
- (D) *Genuine regeneration must bring results in life:* The scripture explains that when a person who is born again has that spiritual "seed" - that life generating and growing power within him / her keeps the person living a life free of continual sin (1 John 3:9). This does not mean that the person will have a perfect life but the pattern of life

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will not be one of continuing indulgence in sin. A genuine, Christ-like love will be one specific result in life (**1John 4:7**). Another effect of the new birth is Overcoming the world (**1John 5:3-4**).

(E) *Other results of regeneration are the "Fruit of the Spirit"*: This is the result in life that is produced by the power of the Holy Spirit working within every believer. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (**Gal. 5:22-23**). If there is true regeneration in the life of an individual believer; then these elements of the fruit of the Spirit will be more evident in that person's life. But unbelievers and pretending to be believers will clearly lack these character traits in their lives. (**Matt. 7:16-20**).

(F) *Moreover another result of regeneration is protecting from Satan himself (1John 5:18)*. Though there will be attacks from Satan, but the Word of God reassures us that "The one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world"(**1John 4:4**). **Our Motto in OCFL**. This greater power of the Holy Spirit within us keeps us safe from ultimate spiritual harm by the evil one.

CONCLUSION

Finally, Jesus did not point to many miracles, mighty works, prophecy, exorcism, and church activity in the strength of the flesh as evidence of regeneration or convincing evidence that a person is truly born again; but rather a genuine love for God and His people, heartfelt obedience to his commands and the Christ-like character traits called "the fruit of the Spirit" demonstrated consistently in a person's life.

This godly traits simply cannot be produced by Satan or by the natural man or woman working in his/her own strength; but can only come about by the Spirit of God working within and giving us new life.

Even though a person was truly born again, for regeneration to be evidence in one's own spiritual life the kind of church one attends is important. The teaching one is receiving; the kind of Christian fellowship one has, and the regularity of one's personal time of Bible reading and prayer are essential and will affect one's own spiritual life and growth in the Lord.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. If you are not sure whether you have been born again what did the Scripture encourages you to do in order to be truly born again?

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2. Do you think it is too late to give your life to Christ and be born again?
3. Are there areas where the results of regeneration are not very clearly seen in your own life and what is the next step to take?

PRAYER POINTS

1. Holy Spirit revives my life for people to see you in me, in Jesus Name.
2. My Father (x3), regenerate my life and make me your true child, in Jesus name

LESSON 5: CONVERSION (FAITH AND REPENTANCE)

MEMORY VERSE:

Acts 3:19: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”.

TEXT: Hebrews 10: 22-23

INTRODUCTION

Conversion could be defined as “our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation”.

Conversion represents a spiritual turn meaning “turning” i.e. turning from sin to Christ. The turning from sin is called repentance, and the turning to Christ is called faith. Neither one can occur without the other nor they must occur together when true conversion takes place.

FACTS OF CONVERSION

(1) True Saving Faith (includes Knowledge, Approval, and Personal Trust)

a. Knowledge alone is not enough: personal saving faith, involves more than mere knowledge. It is necessary that we have some knowledge of who Christ is and what He has done, for "how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? (**Rom10:14**). But knowledge about the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for us is essential but not enough, for people can know facts but rebel against them or dislike them. "Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them" (**Rom1:32**).

b. Knowledge and approval are not enough: Merely knowing the facts and approving of them or agreeing that they are true is not enough. Nicodemus knew that Jesus had come from God, for he had evaluated the facts of the situation, including Jesus teaching and His remarkable miracles, and had drawn a correct conclusion from those facts. Jesus was a teacher from God. But this alone did not mean that Nicodemus had saving faith, for he still had to put his trust in Christ for salvation; he still had to believe in Him (**John 3:2**).

c. I must decide to depend on Jesus to save me personally: In order to be saved, I must decide to depend on Jesus to save me, in doing this I move from being an interested observer of the facts of salvation and the teaching of the Bible to being someone who enters into a new relationship with Jesus Christ as a living person. Therefore, saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This fuller sense of personal trust is indicated in (**John 1:12; 3:16**).

Personal application: Nevertheless, when a person comes to trust In Jesus Christ, all three elements must be present. There must be some basic knowledge or understanding of the facts of the gospel. Approval of, or agreement with these facts which includes a conviction that the facts spoken of the gospel are true, and recognize that I am a sinner in need of salvation and Christ alone has paid the penalty for my sin and offers salvation to me. I need to make a decision of my own will to put my trust in Christ as my Saviour with my heart, the central faculty of my entire being.

d. Faith should increase as our knowledge increases: Saving faith is consistent with knowledge and true understanding of facts. **Rom 10:17** says "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ". The more we know about Him and about the character of God that is completely revealed, the more fully we are able to put our trust in Him. Thus faith is not weakened by knowledge but should increase with more true knowledge.

(2) Faith and Repentance Must Come Together.

Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ. This indicates that repentance is something that can occur at a specific point in time, and is not equivalent to a demonstration of change in a person's pattern of life.

Repentance is a spiritual understanding that sin is wrong, and hatred of it and a personal decision to turn from it and forsake it lead to a life of obedience to Christ. Genuine repentance will result in a changed life. It is something that occurs in the heart and involves the whole person in a decision to turn from sin.

It is important to realize that mere sorrow for one's actions, or even deep remorse over one's actions does not constitute genuine repentance unless it is accompanied by a sincere decision to forsake sin that is being committed against God (**Acts 20:21; 2 Cor. 7:9-10**).

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The scripture puts repentance and faith together as different aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation. They are simply two different sides of the same coin, or two different aspects of the one event of conversion. The person who genuinely turns to Christ for salvation must at the same time release the sin to which he or she has been clinging and turn away from that sin in order to turn to Christ. Thus, neither repentance nor faith comes first they must come together.

Faith and repentance continue throughout life. We have been considering faith and repentance as the two aspects of conversion at the beginning of the Christian life, it is important to realize that faith and repentance are not confined to the beginning of the Christian life, they are rather attitudes of heart that continue throughout our lives as Christians. Jesus tells His disciples to pray daily, "And forgive us our sins as we also have forgiven those who sin against us" (**Matt 6:12**). If faith is trusting God to provide all our needs, then this attitude will never cease, not even in the age to come. "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"(**Gal 2:20**).

CONCLUSION

Nevertheless as Christians each day there should be heartfelt repentance for sins that we have committed, and faith in a Christ to provide for our needs and empower us to live the Christian life.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What does genuine repentance involves for a Christian?
2. If your faith has not increased along with your knowledge, what can you do to encourage your faith to grow more in the Lord?
3. Do you think faith and repentance remained a continuing part of a Christian life?

PRAYER POINTS

1. O Lord creates a new heart and right spirit within me in Jesus Name.
2. O Lord my Father increase my faith in you, in Jesus Name.

LESSON 6: JUSTIFICATION (RIGHT LEGAL STANDING BEFORE GOD)

MEMORY VERSE:

Rom. 8: 30: “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified”.

TEXT: Eph. 2: 8 – 9.

INTRODUCTION

Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which our sins has been forgiven and Christ's righteousness belong to us and declares us to be righteous in His sight.

This legal declaration concerning our relationship to God's laws, stating that we are completely forgiven and no longer liable to punishment is crucial and a right understanding of justification is absolutely necessary for all Christian faith. Justification comes after our faith and as God's response to our faith (**Rom 3: 26 & 28, Gal 2: 16**). God justifies him who has faith in Jesus (**Rom 8:33**).

PRINCIPLES OF JUSTIFICATION

- **God Declares Us to Be Just in His Sight**

He specific declaration that we are just in His sight involves two aspects:

1. First, it means He declares that we have no penalty to pay for sin, including past, present, and future sins and not subject to any charge of guilt or condemnation (**Rom.8:33-34;Ps.103:12**). However, forgiveness of past sins is one part of justification but is not enough to earn us favour with God, we must move to a point of having positive righteousness before God. The righteousness of a life of perfect obedience to Him.
2. He must declare us to have the merits of perfect righteousness before Him, even though we have not earned it ourselves (**Isa 61:10**). As a solution to our need for righteousness, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, (**Rom. 3:21-22**) although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. This came about through the obedience of Christ (**Rom 5:19**).

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- **Imputation of Christ righteousness to us.**

God imputes Christ's righteousness to us in that God thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us. We are those who received the free gift of righteousness (**Rom 5: 17**). Abraham believes God it was reckoned to him as righteousness (**Gen 15: 6**). It is not our own righteousness but Christ's righteousness that is freely given to us. God made Christ to be our wisdom, our righteousness, sanctification and redemption (**1Cor 1:30**).

It is essential to the heart of believers of the gospel to insist that God declares us to be just not on the basis of our actual condition of righteousness or holiness, but rather on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness. There is always sin that remains in our lives and if not for Christ's sake, there would be no provision for forgiveness of past sins committed before we were changed internally. We would have no assurance of forgiveness with God and no confidence to draw near to Him (**Heb.10: 19 & 22**).

- **Justification comes to us entirely by God's grace, not on an account of any merit in ourselves.**

God's grace means His unmerited favour. We are completely unable to earn favour with God. The only way we could be righteous is if God freely provides salvation for us by grace totally apart from our work. No human being will be justified in His sight by works of the law. Grace is clearly put in contrast to works or merit as the reason why God is willing to justify us. We are justified by God's grace as we make ourselves fit to receive the grace of justification as we grow in this state grace (**Eph. 2: 8 – 9, Titus 3: 7**).

God justifies us through our faith in Christ. Understanding faith to be the instrument through which justification is given to us, solely because of the merits of Christ's work. (**Rom. 5:17 - 19**). When we come to Christ in faith we essentially say "I give up, I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer. Therefore, Jesus I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God". That is why it depends on faith. (**Gal. 2: 16**).

CONCLUSION

The doctrine of justification by faith enables us to offer genuine hope to unbelievers who know they could never make themselves righteous before God because of what they have done in life. It also gives us the confidence that God will never make us pay the penalty for sins that have been forgiven on Christ's merits. However, we may suffer the ordinary

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consequences of sin like a thief who is justified may still go to jail for his / her penalty. God may discipline us if we continue to act in ways that are disobedient to Him.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. As a Christian / believer do you have confidence that God has declared you not guilty?
2. On what merit are you justified as believers?
3. How essential is it for a believer to understand the principle of the doctrine of faith in regards to justification?
4. How does this doctrine of justification help to offer hope to unbelievers around us?

LESSON 7: ADOPTION (MEMBERSHIP IN GOD'S FAMILY)

MEMORY VERSE:

John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”.

TEXT: Romans: 8: 14- 17

INTRODUCTION

Adoption is an act of God whereby He makes us members of His family. In adoption God makes us members of His family on the personal relationships that salvation gives us with God and with His people. By contrast, those who do not believe in Christ are not children of God or adopted into His family, but are children of wrath and sons of disobedience (**Eph. 2:2-3; 5:6**). This adoption into God's family makes us to be God's children in a special sense and members of His family (**Rom 8: 14-17**). The status of adoption as God's children were not fully realized in the old covenant before faith came. We were confined under the law. The law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith (**Gal 3:23-26**).

However, this is not to say that the old testament completely omitted talk of God as our Father, for God did call Himself the Father of the children of Israel in several places in the Scripture (**Ps.103:13; Isa. 43:6-7; Mal.1:6**). But the full benefits and privileges of the membership in God's family and the full realisation of that membership did not come until Christ came and the spirit of the Son of God was poured into our hearts, bearing witness with our spirit that we are God's children.

Although, we are now God's Children as in **1John 3:2**; we should note that there is another sense in which our adoption is still future because we will not receive the full benefits and privileges of adoption until Christ returns and we have new resurrection bodies (**Rom. 8: 23**).

Adoption follows conversion and is an outcome of saving faith. The scripture did not connect adoption with regeneration. The idea of adoption is opposite to the idea of being born into a family. Adoption connects with saving faith, and is the response to our

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trusting in Christ that God has adopted us into His family (**Gal. 3: 23-26**). God adopted us as sons and Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit to assure us that we are members of God's family. This work of the Holy Spirit gives us assurance of our adoption, and after we have become sons, God causes His Holy Spirit within our hearts to cry Abba! Father! (**Gal 4:6**).

ADOPTION IS A PRIVILEGE

Although adoption is a privilege that comes to us at the time we become Christians; it is important to realize this because it helps us to recognize how great our privileges in the adoption are. This has to do with our relationship with God as our Father, and in adoption we are giving many of the greatest blessings that we will know for all eternity. We should realise the excellence of these blessings and appreciate that God has no obligation to give us any of them, and we will see what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God and so we are (**1John 3:1**).

THE PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION

- a. One of the greatest privileges of our adoption is being able to speak to God and relate to Him as a good and loving Father. Therefore we now relate to God not as a slave relates to a slave master, but as a child relates to his or her father (**Gal 4:7**). God gives us an internal witness from the Holy Spirit that causes us instinctively to call God our Father and we cry Abba! Father! (**Rom 8:15-16**). This relationship to God as our Father is the foundation of many other blessings of the Christian life. Certainly it is true that God is our Creator, our judge, our Lord and Master, our teacher, our provider and protector, and the One who by His providential care sustains our existence. The role that is most intimate that conveys the highest privileges of fellowship with God for eternity is His role as our Heavenly Father (**Matt 6:9**). The fact that God relates to us as Father shows very clearly that He loves us and understands us and has compassion on those who fear Him (**1John 3:1**). And He takes care of our need (**Matt.6:9**). He also gives us a great inheritance in heaven, because we have become joint heirs with Christ, (**Rom 8:17**). All the great blessings of heaven are laid up for us and put at our disposal because we are children of the King and members of the royal family, (princes and princesses) who will reign with Christ over the new heaven and new earth (**Rev 2:26-27; 3:21**).

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- b. The privilege of being led by the Holy Spirit is a benefit of adoption. This is a moral benefit whereby the Holy Spirit puts in us the desire to obey God and live according to His will (**Rom.8: 13-14**); and He gives this as the reason Christians should put to death the deeds of the body. Holy Spirit leads and guides God's children in paths of obedience to God.
- c. Another privilege of adoption into God's family is the fact that God disciplines us as His children (**Heb.12:5-6; Prov.3:11-12**). God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. The fact that we are joint heirs with Christ, we have the privilege of sharing both in His suffering and in His subsequent glory. (**Luke 24:26**).
- d. We also have privilege of adoption that affects the way that we relate to each other and affect our own personal conduct. Because we are God's children, our relationship with each other is far deeper and more intimate than the relationship that angels have to one another, for we are all members of one family and refers Christians as "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ (**1Cor.1:10; Matt.12:50**). This indicates the strong consciousness of the nature of the church as the family of God (**1Timothy 5:1-2**).

CONCLUSION

The church as God's family and the work of the church is family work and never to compete with each other or hinder one another in their efforts but to encourage one another and be thankful for whatever progress comes in building up the church which ought to be times of great joy and fellowship with one another. We also need to welcome new members to the family of Christ eagerly with love.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. How can you appreciate the doctrine of adoption as a believer?
2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of adoption?
3. What does the doctrine of adoption means to the church?

PRAYER POINT

- (1) O Lord my God, continue to be my Father all the days of my life, in Jesus name.
- (2) Father of the fatherless, speak success and comfort into my situation, in Jesus name.

LESSON 8: SANCTIFICATION (GROWTH IN LIKENESS TO CHRIST)

MEMORY VERSE:

1John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God”.

TEXT: 1 Cor. 6: 11

INTRODUCTION

Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and be like Christ in our actual lives. Sanctification is something that continues throughout our Christian life and it is something the scripture encourages us to give effort and attention to. It is also a work in which God and man cooperate, each playing distinct roles. Once we have been born again we cannot continue to sin as a habit or a pattern of life, because the power of new spiritual life within us keeps us from yielding to a life of sin.

Three Stages of Sanctification:

1. ***Sanctification has a definite beginning at regeneration:*** This initial moral change is the first stage in sanctification. This moral change is actually a part of regeneration, but when we view it from the standpoint of moral change within us, we can also see it as the first stage of **sanctification (1Cor. 6:11; Acts 20:32)**. The initial step in sanctification involves a definite break from the ruling power and love of sin, so that the believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin **(Rom.6:11,14, &18)**. To be dead to sin and to be set free from sin involves the power to overcome acts or patterns of sinful behaviour in one's life by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection life of Christ working in the life of a Christian. Sin will no longer be our master, as once it was before we became Christians. This initial break with sin then involves a reorientation of our desires so that we no longer have a dominant love for sin in our lives. This change of one's primary love and primary desires occurs at the beginning of sanctification.
2. ***Sanctification increases throughout life:*** Sanctification is also seen as a process that continues throughout our Christian lives. Although the scripture says we have been

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set free from sin, nonetheless it recognizes that sin remains in the lives of Christians, so Christians are not to let sin reign and not to yield to sin. The task before every believer therefore; is to grow more and more in sanctification, (**Rom 6:19**) and yield their members to righteousness for sanctification. We are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another. We are progressively becoming more and more like Christ as we go on in the Christian life (**2 Cor. 3:18**). Sanctification involves increasing likeness to God in thoughts as well as our words and deeds. Believers should grow in likeness to Christ. Sanctification will need to increase throughout our Christian lives.

3. *Sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies)*: There is sin that still remains in our hearts even though we have become Christians (**Rom.6:12-13;1John 1:8**). Our sanctification will never be completed in this life but once we die and go to be with the Lord, then our sanctification is completed in one sense; for our souls are set free from indwelling sin and are made perfect. Moreover, we should appreciate that sanctification involves the whole person, including our bodies (**1Thess 5:23**); then we realize that sanctification will not be entirely completed until the Lord returns and we receive new resurrection bodies. It is at His coming that we will be made alive with a resurrection body and then we shall be fully bear the image of the Man of heaven (**1Cor. 15:49**).

Nevertheless, it is possible for us to attain a state of sinless perfection in this life. No one who abides in Him sins (**1John 3:6**). God commands all people everywhere to obey all of His moral laws and will hold them accountable for failing to obey them as Jesus commands us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (**Matt 5:48**). It simply shows that God's own absolute moral purity is the standard toward which we are to aim and the standard for which God holds us accountable. The fact that we are unable to attain that standard does not mean that it will be lowered rather; it means that we need God's grace and forgiveness to overcome our remaining sin.

Indeed, the more sanctified the person is, the more conformed he is to the image of His Saviour; and more conscious will be of the gravity of the sin that remains.

COOPERATION OF GOD AND MAN IN SANCTIFICATION

God's work is primary and our work in sanctification is only secondary. God works in our sanctification and we work as well for the same purpose. However, we did not have equal

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roles in sanctification neither do we work in the same level, but simply that we cooperate with God in ways that appropriate to our status as God's creatures make it to say that God call us to cooperate with Him in this activity (**Phil 2:12-13**).

God's role in sanctification

One specific role of God the Father in this sanctification is His process of disciplining us as His children (**Heb.12:5-11**). "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasures" (**Phil. 2:13**) thus; indicating the way in which God sanctifies them by causing them to want His will and by giving them power to do it. Moreover, the role of God the Son, Jesus Christ, in sanctification is that He earned our sanctification for us (**1Cor.1:30-31**). In the process of sanctification Jesus Christ suffered for you leaving you an example to follow in His steps (**1Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6**). Precisely it is God the Holy Spirit who works within us to change us and sanctify us, giving us greater holiness of life (**1Pet.1: 2; 2 Thess. 2:13**). It is Holy Spirit who produces in us the 'fruit of the spirit' and those character traits that are part of greater sanctification. If we grow in sanctification we walk by the spirit and are led by the spirit, then we are more responsive to the desires and promptings of the Holy Spirit in our life and character. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of holiness and He produces holiness within us (**Gal 5:16-18**).

Our role in sanctification

The role we play in sanctification is both a passive one in which we depend on God to sanctify us, and an active one in which we strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification. The scripture encourage us "Yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life" (**Rom 6:13; 8:13**).

There are many aspects to this active role that we have to play in sanctification.

We are to "Strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord, (**Heb12:14**), and to "abstain from immorality" and obey the will of God, which is our 'sanctification' (**1Thess. 4:3**). This kind of striving for obedience to God and for holiness may involve great effort on our part, to grow in character traits that accord with godliness. (**2 Cor. 7:1**). The scripture does not suggest any short-cuts by which we can grow in sanctification but admonish us to give ourselves to Bible reading and meditation, prayer, worship, witnessing, Christian fellowship and self-discipline or self-control.

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It is necessary that we continue to grow both in our passive trust in God to sanctify us and in our active striving for holiness and greater obedience in our lives. If we neglect active striving to obey God, we become passive and lazy Christians; then our sanctification will be greatly deficient. We must maintain faith and diligence to obey at the same time.

We are also admonished to consider how to stir up one another to love and do good works as our role in sanctification, not neglecting the fellowship of the children of God.

SANCTIFICATION AFFECTS THE WHOLE PERSON

Sanctification affects our intellect and our knowledge when the scripture says that we have to put on the new nature (**Col.3:10**). The sanctification of our intellects will involve growth in wisdom and knowledge as we increasingly take every thought captive to obey Christ and find that our thoughts are more and more the thoughts that God Himself imparts to us in His Word. Moreover, growth in sanctification will affect our emotions; we will see increase in our lives emotions such as love, joy, peace and patience. We will be able to obey and abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against the Soul, (**1Pet. 2:11**), and like our Saviour, delight to do God's will in ever-increasingly measure. We will also become obedient from the heart, and put away the negative emotions involved in bitterness and wrath, anger, clamour and slander (**Rom.6:17; Eph. 4:31**).

More also, sanctification will have an effect on our will, our decision-making faculty, because God is at work in us to will and to work for His good pleasure (**Phil. 2:13**). We grow in sanctification, our will become more and more conformed to the will of our Heavenly Father.

Sanctification affects our Spirit, the non-physical part of our beings. We are to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and Spirit and make holiness perfect in the fear of God (**2 Cor. 7:1**).

Sanctification also affects our physical bodies (**1Thess. 5:23; 2 Cor.7:1**). As we become more sanctified in our bodies, our bodies become more and more useful to God and more responsive to the will of God and the desire of the Holy Spirit. Therefore they are not to be recklessly mistreated but to treat our bodies with care and recognize that they are the means by which the Holy Spirit works through us in this life and to be made useful and respond to God's will (**1Cor. 6:19-20**).

CONCLUSION

Sanctification brings great joy to us. The more we grow in likeness to Christ, the more we will personally experience the joy and peace that are part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit and we draw near to the kind of life that we will have in heaven. As we become more and more obedient to God the return you get is sanctification and it's eternal life; this is the source of our true joy (**Rom.6:22**). This is the goal of perfect sanctification which we hope and yearn for and which will be ours when Christ returns.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Do believers need to continue to be sanctified throughout life? If Yes; why?
2. Explain the role of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in sanctification.
3. What is your role as a believer in sanctification?
4. How does sanctification affect the whole person?

PRAYER

1. Lord sanctifies me wholly for your use, in Jesus Name.

LESSON 9: BAPTISM IN AND FILLING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Cor.12: 12 – 13: “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit”.

TEXT: Acts 1: 1 - 8

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be baptised in the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Does the baptism in the Holy Spirit confer great blessings and effectiveness in terms of prayer and Bible study? Does it really bring about empowerment and new spiritual gifts especially the gift of speaking in tongue?

Areas of focus

1. **Traditional Pentecostal understanding.** The baptism in the Holy Spirit could come after or at the salvation (born again) experience with great blessings, spiritual gifts (especially the gift of speaking in tongues) as well as empowerment for ministry work (**John 20: 22, Acts 1: 4-5 & 8; 2: 4; 8: 12**). Jesus disciples were born-again believers long before the day of Pentecost when they were baptised with the Holy Spirit which resulted in great empowering for ministry as well as speaking in tongues. We as Christians should also ask Jesus for baptism in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit can be received by prayers (**Acts 8: 14 – 17**) and / or laying of hands (**Acts 19: 6**).
2. **What is the meaning of baptism in the Holy Spirit?** John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as the one to baptise with Holy Spirit and fire (**Matt. 3: 11, Mark 1: 8, John 1: 33**). Jesus Christ also confirmed this and declared that He would baptise with Holy Spirit (**Acts 1: 5; 11: 16**). Although, the Holy Spirit was seen at work in the life of Jesus Christ (**Luke 3: 21 – 22; 4: 44**) but the disciples were not baptised of the Holy Spirit for ministry work until the day of Pentecost (**Acts 1: 8, John 7: 19; Acts 2: 6**). The baptism of the Holy Spirit imparts power for living Christian life and for carrying out

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Christian ministry (**Eph. 4: 8, 11 – 13**). This baptism in the Holy Spirit made us members of the body of Christ (**1 Cor. 12: 13**). Though the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit starts in us at conversion as Christians (**Matt. 16: 16 - 17**), but the baptism in the Holy Spirit connotes greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit for ministry empowerment (**Acts 1: 8**). This is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel (**Acts 2: 16**); the authority of Jesus to pour out the Holy Spirit in new fullness and power as He returned to heaven (**Acts 2: 33**).

With baptism of the Holy Spirit comes more-powerful experience of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. We received much greater power for living the Christian life and for carrying out Christian ministry. It imparts more effectiveness in witnessing and ministry (**Eph.4: 8,11 - 13**), much greater power for victory over the influence of sin and power for victory over Satan and demonic forces (**2Cor.10: 3 – 4; Eph. 1: 19 – 21; 1 John 4: 4**).

3. **What is being filled with the Holy Spirit?** Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event but an event that can occur over and over again in a Christian life. Christians are to be filled with the Holy Spirit repeatedly as the fullness of the Holy Spirit results in renewed worship and thanksgiving and in renewed relationship to others especially those in authority over us or those under our authority (**Eph.5:18 – 21; 6:9**). In addition, being repeatedly filled with the Holy Spirit result in increased sanctification, increased power for ministry and increased effectiveness and perhaps diversity in the use of spiritual gifts.

CONCLUSION

Holy Spirit empowers us as Christians to live the Christian lives and be effective in the work of the ministry.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mention the benefits of being baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER POINT

Oh Lord my Father, fill me afresh with the power of Your Holy Spirit, in Jesus name.

LESSON 10: THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS (REMAINING A CHRISTIAN)

MEMORY VERSE:

Luke 9: 62: “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”.

TEXT: John 10: 27 – 28.

INTRODUCTION

The perseverance of the saints implies that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again. This establishes the assurance that truly born again Christians will be kept by God’s power until death and shall also live with Christ in heaven forever after death. However, continuing in the Christian life is one of the evidences that a person is truly born again.

AREAS OF FOCUS

1. **All who are truly born again will persevere to the end.** Jesus teaches that those who are genuinely Christians will continue in the Christian life until death and will then go to be with Him in heaven (**John 6:38 – 40**). Though it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that everyone who truly believes in Christ will remain a Christian up to the day of final resurrection into the blessings of life in the presence of God. However, as Jesus does the will of the Father (**John 10: 27 – 29**), likewise those given to the Son by the Father will not be lost. Apostle Paul also indicates that those who are truly born again will persevere to the end (**Rom. 8: 1, Phil. 1: 6**). Further evidence that God keeps those who are born again safe for eternity is the Holy Spirit of God within us who also acts as guarantee that we will receive the inheritance promised to us (**Eph.1:13 – 14**). Peter on the other hand stresses that the perseverance is by God’s power as well as personal faith because God’s power works through personal faith (**1Pet.1: 3, 23; 2Pet. 1; 4**). This implies that God’s power energizes and continually sustains individual personal faith.

2. **Only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again.** God guards us by working through our faith so that He enables us to continue to believe in Him (**1Pet.1: 5**). This emphasises the necessity of continuing in faith throughout life for those who are truly born again. Jesus also warns that one evidence of continuing in faith is continuing to believe in His word, what He says and living a life of obedience to His commands (**John 8:31 – 32**) stressing that He who endures to the end will be saved (**Matt.10: 22**). Those who do not continue in faith show that there was no genuine faith in their hearts in the first place (**Col.1: 23**). Thus, continuing in faith to the end is one means of assurance that we belong to Christ (**Heb. 3: 14**) and an indication of genuine faith. It should be noted however, that the necessity for continuing in faith should be seen as a warning against falling away, a warning that those who fall away give evidence that their faith was never real (**1John 2: 19**).
3. **Those who finally fall away may give many external signs of conversion.** It is not always easy to differentiate people having genuine saving faith in church and those with an intellectual persuasion of the truth of the gospel but without genuine faith in their hearts. Unbelievers in fellowship with the visible church can give some external signs or indications that make them look or sound like genuine believers e.g. Judas (**Matt. 26: 22, John 6: 64**). Paul also speaks of false brethren (**Gal. 2; 4, 2 Cor. 11: 15, 26**). However, this does not mean that all unbelievers in the church are servants of Satan. Some may be in the process of embracing genuine saving faith. Either way, they both give several signs that make them look like genuine believers (**Matt.7:21 – 23**). Some of those who eventually fall away may have been affiliated closely with the church fellowship; had sorrow for sin (repentance), understood the gospel, appreciated the attractiveness of the Christian life, probably had answers to prayers in their own lives, felt the power of the Holy Spirit at work perhaps even using some spiritual gifts (**Matt.7: 22**) and exposed to the true preaching of the Word. The repeated familiarity with the things of God and their experiences simply served to harden them against conversion (**Heb.10: 26**).
4. **What can give a believer genuine assurance?** To be sure of genuine salvation and assurance of the saving faith, the understated questions need to be addressed.
 - a. **Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?** Holding fast to our faith in Christ to the end is a key to believer genuine assurance (**Col. 1: 23, John 3: 16**). For our testimony of the saving faith to be genuine, our faith should be active every day.

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b. **Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?**

Does the Holy Spirit bears witness with us that we are God's children (**Rom. 8: 15 – 16**). This witness should accompany a sense of being led by the Holy Spirit in paths of obedience to God's will (**Rom.8:14**) and produce the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal.5:22 – 23**). Another evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit is to continue to believe and accept the sound teaching of the church (**1John 2:23 – 24**) in addition to obeying God's command, continuing in Christian fellowship; and giving to a brother in need (**1 John 3:17**).

c. **Do I see a long - term pattern of Christian growth in my life?** One of the ways to be sure of our genuineness as believers is to cultivate some character traits that will guarantee that we never fall (**2 Pet. 1: 5 – 8**). This emphasises the importance of continuous growth thus gaining greater assurance of our salvation.

CONCLUSION

Through the self-examination, every believer is expected to be assured of their salvation knowing fully well that they are been guarded by God's power working through our personal faith never to be lost, but to be raised up at the last day and enter His kingdom forever (**John 6: 40**).

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Do you have an assurance that you are truly born again? What are the evidences?
2. Do you doubt your born again experience? Why? What does the scripture encourages you to resolve the doubt? (**See 2 Pet. 1: 5 – 11, Matt. 11: 28 – 30, John 6: 37**).

PRAYER POINT

1. Oh Lord my father, keep me by Your grace to the end, in Jesus name.
2. In my Christian race, Lord help me not to fall or falter, in Jesus name.

LESSON 11: DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

MEMORY VERSE:

Phil. 1: 20: “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death”.

TEXT: Rom. 8: 35 - 39

INTRODUCTION

It is important to know why we die as Christians despite the fact that we were no longer slaves to sin, the reward of which is death (**Rom. 8: 1**). Our perception and how we think about our own death and the death of others as well as our understanding of what happens after people die to a great extent will influence our race on earth as Christians.

AREAS OF FOCUS

(1) Why do Christians die?

As Christians, death is not a punishment of our sin as the entire penalty for our sins has been paid. Rather, death is the final outcome of living in a fallen world (**1Cor.15: 26**) where the effects of sin have not all been removed. Until Christ returns, all of us will grow old and die (**1 Cor.15: 54 – 55**). God uses the experience of death to complete our sanctification.

The understanding that death is not in any way a punishment for sin, but simply something God bring us through in order to make us more like Christ, should be a great encouragement to us taking away the fear of death that haunts the minds of unbelievers. Our experience of death completes our union with Christ. Rather than taken us immediately to heaven when we become Christians God allows us to experience death such that we imitate Christ in what He did and thereby experience closer union with Him (**Rom. 8: 17;1 Pet. 2: 21**). If God uses the experience of death to deepen our trust in Him and to strengthen our obedience to Him; then it is important that we remember that the world’s goal of preserving one’s own physical life at all cost is not the highest goal for a

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Christian. Obedience to God and faithfulness to Him in every circumstance is far more important (**Acts 21: 13; Rev.2: 10**).

(2)How should we think of our own death and the death of others?

Our own death as Christians should not be viewed with fear but with joy at the prospect of going to be with Christ (**2 Cor. 5: 8; Rev. 14: 13**). As believers, we need not have fear of death (**Heb. 2: 15**). While we look forward to our own death as Christians with a joyful expectation of being in Christ's presence, how should we consider the death of our Christian friends and relatives? It is not wrong to express sorrow at the loss of fellowship with loved ones who have died and sorrow also for the suffering and hardship that they may have gone through prior to death (**Acts 8: 2**). Such sorrow showed the genuine grief felt at the loss of fellowship with loved ones. Nevertheless, such sorrow is clearly mingled with hope and joy (**1Thess.4:13**) as well as the worship of God and thanksgiving for the life of the loved one who has died (**2 Sam. 12: 20**).

However, when unbelievers die, the sorrow is not mingled with the joy of assurance that they have gone to be with the LORD forever. This sorrow is very deep and real (**Rom. 9:1-3**). This sorrow should cause us to reflect on our own life and destiny and it opens up opportunities to talk about the gospel with those who are still living.

(3)What happens when people die?

At the moment of death (separation of soul from the body), the souls of believers go immediately into God's presence rejoicing and enjoy fellowship with Him (**2 Cor. 5: 8, Phil.1:23; Luke 23:43; Heb.12:23**). The fact that the souls of believers go immediately into God's presence means that there is no such thing as purgatory (the place where the souls of believers go to be further purified from sin until they are ready to be admitted into heaven).

The Bible does not teach the doctrine of purgatory. In addition, the fact that the souls of believers go immediately into God's presence after death implies that the doctrine of soul sleep (teaches that when believers die, they go into a state of unconscious existence and the next thing they are conscious of will be when Christ returns and raises them to eternal life) is incorrect (**Eccl. 9:10, Isa. 38: 19, Ps. 115: 17 – 18**).

The concept of conscious existence and fellowship with God immediately after death for the believers leaves one asking question if the Old Testament believers enter immediately

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into God's presence? The Old Testament believers also entered immediately into the heaven and enjoyed a time of fellowship with God upon their death (**Gen. 5: 24, 2 Kings 2: 11, Ps. 23: 6, Matt. 22: 32, Luke 16: 25**). We should not pray for the dead; once believers die they enter into God's presence and they are in a state of perfect happiness with Him. To spend time praying for the dead is simply to pray for something that God has already decided, thereby encouraging false hope that the destinies of people might be changed after death (**Heb. 9: 27**). Unlike believers, at death the souls of the unbelievers go immediately to eternal punishment (**Luk.16:24-26; Heb.9:27**). There is conscious punishment for unbelievers after death and this punishment goes on forever (**Matt. 25: 41, 46**).

CONCLUSION

God will not leave dead bodies of believers in the earth forever. When Christ returns, the souls of believers will be reunited with the bodies, the bodies will be raised from the dead and live with Christ eternally. Though, the bodies of unbelievers will also be raised but this will not be until the day of final judgement. On that day, their bodies will be raised and reunited with their souls and they will stand before God's throne for final judgement to be pronounced upon them in the body (**John 5: 28 – 29, Acts 24: 15, Rev. 20: 12, 15**).

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What (if anything) do you fear about death?
2. Has this teaching changed your feelings about your own death in any way?
3. Do you think you would have the courage to refuse to sin if it meant being thrown to the lions in a Roman coliseum, or burned at the stake during Reformation, or thrown in prison for years in some foreign country today?
4. If death itself is viewed as part of the process of sanctification, then how should we view the process of growing older and weaker in this world?

PRAYER POINT

Oh LORD my Father, keep me by your power to the end as a Christian, and let me reign with You, in Jesus name.

LESSON 12: GLORIFICATION

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Cor.15:44: “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body”.

TEXT: 1 Cor. 15: 12 - 33

INTRODUCTION

Glorification, receiving a resurrection body and the final step in the application of redemption, will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, reunites them with their souls and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like His own.

AREAS OF FOCUS

1. *New Testament evidence for glorification.*

1Cor.15:12-58 is the main passage on glorification or resurrection of the body. The souls of those who have died and gone to be with Christ will come back and joined with their bodies on that day (**1Thess. 4:15,16**). However, Christians who remain alive when Christ returns will simply have their bodies instantaneously changed into new, resurrection bodies that can never grow old or weak and can never die (**1 Cor. 15: 51-52**).

2. *Old Testament support for glorification.*

There are indications that Old Testament authors had a strong expectation of the bodily resurrection to come in the future even though Old Testament believers did not have as much detail about the nature of the resurrection. **Job 19: 25-26, Ps. 49:15, Prov. 23:13-14, Isa. 26:19, Dan. 12:2 and Ezek. 37:1-14** are Old Testament passages that support glorification.

3. *What will our resurrection bodies be like?*

Our new bodies will be imperishable, which implies that the bodies will not wear out or grow old or ever be subject to any kind of sickness or disease, the bodies will be completely healthy and strong forever with no sign of aging (**1 Cor.15:42-44, 49**).

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There will also be a kind of radiance or brightness surrounding our bodies , an appropriate outward evidence of the position of exaltation and rule over all creation that God has given to us (**Matt. 13:43, Dan. 12:3**). The hints of the age to come that were seen in the shining of the glory of God from the face of Moses (**Exod. 34:35**) and, in a much greater way, the bright light that shone from Jesus at the transfiguration (**Matt. 17:2**) suggest that there will actually be a visible brightness or radiance that surrounds us when we are in our resurrection bodies. Contrary to the weakness we see in our bodies now, our resurrected bodies will be raised in power with fullness of strength and power that God intended human beings to have in their bodies at creation (**1 Cor. 15:43**). In addition, our resurrected bodies will be raised a spiritual body, completely subject to the will of the Holy Spirit and responsive to the Holy Spirit guidance (**1 Cor. 15: 44**).

4. *The entire creation will be renewed as well.*

When Adam sinned, God cursed the ground because of Adam (**Gen. 3: 17-19**) so that it brought forth thorns and thistles and would only yield food useful for mankind by painful toil. Paul in **Rom. 8: 21** says that “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God”. In fact, the creation is somehow longing for that day (**Rom. 8:19, 22-23**). In the renewed creation, there will be no more thorns or thistles, no more floods or drought, no more deserts or unthinkable jungles, no more earthquakes or tornadoes, no more poisonous snakes or bees that sting or mushrooms that kill. There will be a productive earth, an earth that will blossom and produce food abundantly for our enjoyment.

5. *The unbelieving dead will be raised for judgement on the day of final judgment.*

Unbelievers will also be raised from the dead to face the final judgement. Jesus teaches that “those who have done evil” will come forth “to the resurrection of judgement” (**John 5:29**). Paul also stated “that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust” (**Acts 24: 15**).

CONCLUSION

Christ redeems us as whole persons not just our spirits (or souls) alone but also the redemption of our bodies (glorification). However, the redemption of our bodies to a state of perfection only occurs when Christ returns and raises our bodies from the dead. At this point we will experience complete victory over death, a mark of our complete redemption.

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QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What is glorification?
2. State the differences between the mortal bodies and resurrected bodies.
3. Why will the unbelieving dead be raised from the dead?

PRAYER POINT

Oh LORD my Father, keep me till the very end as a faithful Christian that I may experience resurrection, in Jesus name.

LESSON 13: UNION WITH CHRIST (UNITED WITH CHRIST)

MEMORY VERSE:

Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”.

TEXT: Romans 6:4-8

INTRODUCTION

Union with Christ may be defined as several and different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ.

Union with Christ has its source in the election of God the Father before the foundation of the world and has its fulfilment in the glorification of the sons of God. Different aspects of our union with Christ are been specified in the Scripture: God choses us in Christ, it was in Christ that we were destined and appointed to live for the praise of His glory (**Ephesians 1:4, 11&12**).

FOUR ASPECTS OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

1. We are in Christ,
2. Christ is in us,
3. We are like Christ,
4. We are with Christ.

1. We are in Christ.

- a. **In God's Eternal plan:** God, looking into the future and knowing that we would exists, thought of us being in a special relationship with Christ. While choosing us, He at the same time thought about us as belonging to Christ in a special way, as being "in Christ". Therefore, He thought about us as eventually having the right to share in the blessings of Christ's work.

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b. **During Christ's life on earth:** Whatever Christ did as our representative, God counted it as being something we did too. When Jesus perfectly obeyed God for His whole life, God thought of us as having obeyed, too. "By one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (**Roman 5:19**). So Christ is our source of righteousness. Because God thought of us as being in Christ, He also think of our sins as belonging to Christ, God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us (**2 Cor 5:20**). The same way when Christ returned to heaven, all the blessings of salvation were earned for us.

c. **During our lives now:** Once we have been born and exist as real people in the world, we are brought also into an actual relationship with Christ through which the benefits of salvation can be applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit. The richness of our present life in Christ can be viewed from four different perspectives: (i) we have died and been raised with Christ, (ii) we have new life in Christ, (iii) all our actions can be done in Christ, (iv) all Christians together are one body in Christ.

i. We have died and raised with Jesus: The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus now have real effects in our lives. The baptism by water immersion and faith indicate that our dying and rising with Christ occur in this present life at the time we become Christians (**Col 2:12**). It is Holy Spirit that reproduces Jesus's death and resurrection in our lives when we believe in Christ. We become so unresponsive to the pressures, demands and attractions of our previous, sinful way of life, because we have died with Christ (**Gal 2:20; 5:24**). On the other hand, we find ourselves wanting to serve God much more, and able to serve Him with greater power and success because we have been raised up with Christ.

ii. We have new life in Christ: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. We have to walk in newness of life and come to fullness of life in Christ, a new creation in Him and we should set our minds on things that are above, where Christ is (**Col 3:1-3**). The Holy Spirit gives us all the blessings that Christ has earned because our lives are inseparably connected to Christ Himself. The blessings are in Him, but they are available only to those who are in Christ (**Eph.1:3**).

iii. All our action can be done in Christ: The foregoing changes within our individual lives are accompanied by a dramatic change in the realm in which we live. To become a Christian is to enter the newness of the age to come, and to experience to some degree the new powers of the kingdom of God affecting every part of our lives. To be in Christ is to be in that new realm that Christ controls. This means that every action in our

lives can be done in Christ, and in the power of His kingdom in the way that brings honour to Him (**1Cor 4:17**).

iv. All Christians together are one body in Christ: Christ is the head of the body, which is the church, (**Eph. 5:23**) and all who are in union with Christ are also related to one another in His body. This joining together makes us one body in Christ, and individual members one of another (**Rom.12:5; 1Cor. 12:12**). The ties of fellowship are so strong that Christians may only marry in the Lord. In this body of Christ, old hostilities disappear, sinful divisions among people are broken down, and worldly criteria of status no longer apply. The church made up of all true believers is collectively united to Christ as a husband is united to his wife. Christ's purpose is to perfect and cleanse and purify the church, so that it might more completely reflect what He is like and thereby bring glory to Him.

2. *Christ is in us.*

It is not only true that we are in Christ; He is also in us to give us power to live the Christian life (**Gal 2:20**). The factor that determines whether someone is a Christian is whether Christ is in Him. It is important to maintain the fact that there is a real, personal dwelling of Christ in us, and this does not mean that we agree with Christ or that His ideas are in us, rather He is in us and remains in us through faith as soon as we give our lives to Jesus Christ. This indwelling of Christ affects our response in whatever we do to help a Christian brother or sister which we do to Christ. Keeping Jesus commandments is an indication that He is in us, and the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us that Christ is in us (**1 John 3:24**).

3. *We are like Christ.*

A third aspect of union with Christ is our imitation of Him. He who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which Christ walked. Our lives ought to reflect what His life was like that we bring honour to Him in everything we do (**1 John 2:6; Phil1:20**). Throughout our lives, we are to run the race before us, looking up to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Christians are called to share His sufferings becoming like Him in His death. Our suffering is connected with sharing in Christ's glory when He returns. Also, since Christ perfectly obeyed His Father even in the face of great suffering, so our obedience, trust, and patience in suffering more fully portray what Christ was like, and so

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bring more honour to Him. It gives us great comfort to know that He therefore understands what we are going through, and listens sympathetically to our prayers. Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are exactly like one another in character yet remain distinct persons, so we can become like that with different gifts and different functions.

4. *We are with Christ.*

a. Personal fellowship with Christ: This is concern with our personal fellowship with Him. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them, and I am with you always, to the close of the age (**Matt 18:20; 28:20**). It is a very personal presence, in which we work together with Christ. To become a Christian is to be called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Furthermore, when we come to worship we now come into heaven itself, to innumerable angels and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven. Also in our prayers, we have fellowship with Him as our great High priest, who has entered into heaven Himself, now in the presence of God on our behalf. It gives us great joy to know that Christ actually desires to have us with Him (**Heb. 9:24; 4:16; John 17:24**). Our fellowship with Christ also brings us into fellowship with each other.

b. Union with the Father and with the Holy Spirit: This is a final aspect of union with Christ, because we are in union with Christ in these several relationships. We are in the Father and in the Holy Spirit then, we are like the Father. The Father is in us and the Holy Spirit is in us. We have fellowship with the Father and with the Holy Spirit (**John 17: 21; 1John 1:3; 2 Cor. 13:14**). We relate to the Father in His distinct role as our heavenly Father, to the Son in His distinct role as our Saviour and Lord, and to the Holy Spirit in His distinct role as the Spirit who empowers us and continually applies to us all the benefits of our salvation.

CONCLUSION

As Christians we need to develop close relationship with the Lord and this will help us to have union with Christ, and with the help of the Holy Spirit to imitate Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. As Christians how do we need to improve our relationship in order to have union with Christ?
2. Believers need to imitate Christ in life, Yes or No?

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3. How do we express the union of Christ in our fellowship with other Christians in the church?

PRAYER POINT

O Lord God, quicken me and increase my desire for the things of heaven, in Jesus Name.



OUR WEEKLY AND MONTHLY PROGRAMMES

(A) BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER MEETING

EVERY MONDAY 7.00PM - 9.00PM

(B) OUR SUNDAY SERVICE: EVERY SUNDAY: 10.30AM – 1.00PM

(C) THE HOUSE FELLOWSHIP GROUP MEETING DAY IS EVERY THURSDAY

TIME: 6PM -7PM

CHECK OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT THE PASTOR FOR A CENTER

(D) CITY EVANGELISM

3RD SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

TIME: 3PM - 4PM

MEETING POINT: FRONT OF HSBC BANK / DRAKE CIRCUS, PLYMOUTH CITY CENTRE

(E) BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER MEETING- THE LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

TIME: 7.00 PM – 9.00PM

**THIS IS THE MEETING WHERE YOKES ARE BEEN BROKEN AND THE
CAPTIVES ARE BEING SET FREE UNDER THE ATMOSPHERE OF
ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

(F) NIGHT VIGIL IS 2ND FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

TIME: 10.00 PM - 2.00AM

VENUE FOR ALL OUR MEETINGS

THE OVERCOMERS SANCTUARY, 15 GORDON TERRACE. MUTLEY, PLYMOUTH. PL4 6EP. U.K.

OCFI VISION

(A) A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP (HEB.10:25)

(B) A CALL TO WITNESSING (MARK 16:15)

(C) A CALL TO GREATNESS IN LIFE (1 JOHN 4:4)

“1 JOHN 4:4....GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD.”

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