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FOREWORD
The 5-year vision of the Church of Pentecost covering the period 2013-2018 is Impacting Generations. The theme for 2016 is Hearing and Obeying the Lord’s Voice in My Generation (1 Sam. 3:9-10). We live in an age where we face more choices in life than ever and hear so many voices on life’s decisions. Knowing the Master’s voice, therefore, is very critical.

The focal scripture for our theme, 1 Samuel 3, describes the call of Samuel. As young Samuel ministers under Eli, he hears God’s voice four times. Three times Samuel responds by going to Eli saying, “Here I am” (verse 5, 6, 8). Samuel responds once to God as directed by Eli, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears” (Verse 9, NKJV).

Although Samuel’s promptness and obedience are admirable, he mistook God’s voice for an ailing Eli’s voice. The reason as explained by the writer of 1 Samuel in verse 7, is that “Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the Word of the Lord yet revealed unto him”. Indeed, Samuel knew about Jehovah, the God of Israel, and knew somewhat of His Word, worship, ways and ordinances, in which he had been instructed by Eli. However, he did not have an intimate relationship with Him. He was ignorant of the fact that God could speak with ordinary and familiar voice to men and thus could not distinguish between the voice of God and the voice of Eli.
Furthermore, the reason for Samuel’s situation is attributed to the fact that “in those days, the Word of the Lord was rare and prophetic visions were not widespread” (verse 2). For example, it was said of Eli’s children that “[they] were corrupt; they did not know the Lord” (1 Sam 2:12-13, NKJV).

Meanwhile they were assisting their father Eli, the priest, who was in his nineties, and could not see because his eyes were dim (1 Sam 4:15). The adult sons of Eli should have mentored Samuel, but they could not do that, because they did not qualify before the Lord and the people.

Despite these challenges, Samuel stayed close to Eli, the old man (1 Sam 3:4-9). Eli, the old man, was able to instruct Samuel on how to respond to the voice of God. This shows the need and importance of older generations instructing the younger ones on how to recognize and respond to the voice of God (1 Sam. 3:8–9). The current leadership of the church, in impacting the generations, is seeking to equip and empower this generation with the ability to hear personally from God and thus receive God’s direction for their personal lives and ministries now and beyond.

Jesus’ statement, “my sheep hear my voice” (John 10:4) is very significant. It implies that Jesus still speaks to those who belong to Him. The question then is, how can we recognize God’s voice when He speaks in our day?
Fortunately, we have something that Samuel did not have. We have the complete Bible, the inspired Word of God, to read, study, and meditate upon.

For “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

When we have questions about certain decisions in our lives, we should look at what God says about them up in the Bible. God will never lead us contrary to what He has taught in His Word (Titus 1:2). While God could speak audibly to people today, He speaks primarily through His written Word. Sometimes, God’s leading, can come through other means such as prophecy, Word of knowledge, Word of wisdom, special impression of the Holy Spirit, dreams, visions, circumstances, and through the exhortations of other people of God By comparing what we hear to the truth of Scripture, we learn to recognise God’s voice.

We develop our ability to hear His voice when we spend time in Bible study and quiet meditation on His Word. The more time we spend intimately with God and His Word, the easier it is to recognise His voice and His leading in our lives. Employees at a bank are trained to recognise counterfeit currency notes by studying genuine ones so closely that it is easy to spot a fake.
We should be so familiar with God’s Word that when someone distorts any part of it to us, we can easily identify that, it is not of God.

It is in this light that the National Bible Study and Home Cell Committee is highly commended for producing this study manual for our Discipleship enterprise. This study material flows in line with the direction of the year’s theme and deals with subjects raised during our leadership meeting in November 2015. The study manual will be used for our Bible Study and Home Cell meetings to further equip the entire church for every good work.

I therefore recommend these lessons to you and request that you make a firm commitment to study them diligently and also apply them to every aspect of your life. I trust that by so doing, you shall hear the Lord’s voice, be strengthened to obey it, and impact all the people around you. God bless you.

Opoku Onyinah (Apostle Dr.)
Chairman, The Church of Pentecost
INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The theme chosen by the Chairman and the Executive Council for the year 2016 to provide direction for the church is ‘Hearing and Obeying the Lord’s Voice in My Generation’ (1 Sam. 3:9-10).

The theme flows out of the 5-year vision of the current Executive Council and consequently the church-Impacting Generations. This year, the aim of the current leadership of the church is to equip and empower this generation with the ability to hear personally from God and thus receive God’s direction for their life and ministry. The Bible Study and Home Cell Ministry, which is one of the church’s structure for discipleship and pastoral care, will once again serve as a means of fulfilling, equipping and empowering this generation. The study outlines prepared are basically based on the theme and aimed at enhancing the systematic study of the Word in small relational groups.

In line with the vision to ensure that the Bible Study and Home Cell Ministry is fully owned by the local Assembly, the Bible study structure will continue to be used for the study of the Word every Sunday morning except the Lord’s Supper Sundays. However, the Home Cell meetings have been modified a little.

For the Home Cell meetings, the first (1st) week is designated Family Day (i.e. every Lord’s Supper Day).
On this day, families (husband, wife, children and dependants) are expected to meet in their various homes to discuss issues pertaining to their growth and also to pray together. On the Family Day, the head of the family or his representative will provide direction for the day’s activities. Where a person is living alone, they can possibly join another family for the family day, as a way of being nurtured in a family set-up.

The second (2nd) week, designated Digging Deeper, is meant to purposely study the Word. Thus, study outlines have been provided for these weeks.

The third (3rd) week has been designated Pastoral Care Groupings/Follow-up and Visitation. On this day, members could share the sermon heard in church, consider how to implement them practically and pray. Members could then meet their pastoral care leader or visit one another.

The fourth (4th) week (and where there is a 5th week) is designated District/Local/Cell Input Day. This week allows the District, Local or Cell to make an input to the Cell meetings. On this day, the District Minister through the Presiding Elders or Cell leaders provide the direction for study. It could be used for prayer, fellowship, get together, evangelism, etc. There could also be a study on issues that are pressing within the District/Local/Cell Group(or locality).
It is expected that the District Minister (District Cell Coordinator) will have weekly or biweekly Preparatory Classes with the Cell Leaders and study the material with them. THIS IS VERY NECESSARY.

This will enable him to untie hard knots, and empower them to go and teach effectively in the Bible study classes and Cell meetings and make the meetings more relaxed and refreshing. The focus of the study should be the practical application of the text to daily life. The Cell Leader thus has a responsibility ahead of the class to study diligently on their own so they can impact the class during the studies.

As a Committee, whilst we are grateful to God, we duly acknowledge the visionary leadership and great support of the Chairman, Apostle Dr. Opoku Onyinah, and his Executive Council members. We appreciate the good relationship that we have enjoyed with the General Secretary, Apostle Alexander Nana Yaw Kumil-Larbi and his swift response to our many challenges.

We are also extremely grateful to the script writers who painstakingly developed study outlines from the synopsis of the 2015 (2016) presentations of November Heads’ Meeting. They are Pastors Franklin Agbovi Hushie, Henry Sowah Ako-Nai, Christian Tsékpoe, Emmanuel Agyei Kwafo and Samuel Gakpetor. The rest are Ovr. Joseph Owusu-Boateng; Mrs. Mabel Darko, Sylvia Acquah-Sampson, and Elder Barnabas Asare.
We are greatly indebted to the translators who diligently translated the scripts from English to nine other local languages and French as well. They are as shown below: Akuapem – Ps. Henry Obuobi & Ovr. Ernest Perbi Asare; Asante – Ps. William Boachie-Ansah & Ps. Alex Kieninger Anum; Dangme – Elder Tsatsu Owulah & Ovr. Gordon Ansah; Ewe – Elder Caiaphas Badzi & Bro. Ernest Hodofe; Fante – Mrs. Sylvia Acquah-Sampson and Mr. Patrick Wonkyi; Ga – Ps. Ako-Nai & Ps. Ben A. Noye; Kokomba Ps. James Magyam, Ps. George Mpoamah Yenabi and Rev. John Nlenkiba; Nzema; Ps. Ewusie-Ocran & Dcn. Evans Gyenny-Mensah and French; Elder Jonas Kabore and Mr. M.D. Nana Sei.

The members of the National Bible Study & Home Cell Committee have done very well and deserve commendation. They are:

Apostle John Appiah Aidoo Dep. Coordinator
Ps. Franklin Agbovi Hushie Secretary
Apostle Matthew Larbi-Wettey Member
Ps. Dr. Ben Ali Member
Ps. Henry Sowah Ako-Nai Member
Ps. Samuel Kojo Gakpetor Member

Aps. Dr. Stephen Kofi Baidoo
National Coordinator,
National Bible Study & Home Cell Committee
# 2016 Week by Week Tabular Bible Study Guide

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WEEK 1

LORD’S SUPPER
WEEK 2

DOES GOD SPEAK TODAY?

Main Text: Acts 15:1-29

Memory Verse: Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

Introduction

You would always hear the young desiring to have been part of past generations especially when they hear wonderful stories about how God performed wonders and spoke to the people of old through many means. We always wish we had been part of those days and sometimes wonder if that same God is still alive and is at work among us. It is interesting to note that those past generations we praise had similar desires about the God of their fathers (Judges 6:13). The assurance that God still speaks in our age and time is relevant in how we obey him and the leadership he has put in place. In today’s lesson and the next one, we will discuss whether God still speaks in our time.
Discussion Questions

1. What was the cause of the debate between Paul and Barnabas and the other men from Judea? Verses 1-2

2. How did the Church in Antioch seek to resolve this dispute? Verses 2-3

3. Which people met to consider the issues which were brought to the Church? Verse 2

4. What was James' decision on the matter? Verse 19

5. How did God work through leadership to resolve the issue? Verse 28

6. Practically discuss how God speaks to issues bothering the Church.

Conclusion

In our main text, we learn about how some men came to the church teaching false doctrines. The church leadership responded by sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for the Apostles to clarify the issue. God through the Holy Spirit directed the church. He spoke to His church in ages past and He still speaks to us in this generation.
Main Text: Acts 13:1-12

Memory Verse: Acts 13:2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them

Introduction

We established in our previous lesson that God speaks to His Church today as He did in days of old. In the days of the early Church God spoke through the Holy Spirit to the Church to set apart Paul and Barnabas for His special assignment. The Church obeyed and sent them on missions. Since their assignment was from God, He proved their ministry through signs and wonders and winning of souls. In Paphos a sorcerer interrupted their work. Paul ‘knew’ by the Holy Spirit that the man was using an evil spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. Mention the prophets and teachers identified in Verse 1.

2. On what occasion did the Holy Spirit call for Paul and Barnabas to be set apart? Verse 2

3. Who sent them on the missionary journey? Verse 4
4. How did Paul identify the spirit with which Elymas spoke? Verses 9-11

5. How does today’s lesson teach us about the way God speaks to His Church?

**Conclusion**

There are many critical lessons to learn from today’s readings. God speaks to His Church through the Holy Spirit using human agents - prophets, apostles, teachers, pastors and true believers. He also uses visions, dreams and other media to communicate to us. Subsequent lessons will discuss some means through which God speaks to individuals, the church and the state. We must open up and obey leadership as God through them and many other means communicate His will to the Church.
WEEK 4

THE ART OF HEARING FROM GOD

Main Text: 1 Samuel 3:1-12

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 3:8  *A third time the Lord called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”*

Introduction

One of the most important features of any relationship is communication. Though there are various forms through which we communicate, speaking and listening is one of the most profound ways. To build an effective relationship with God, it is important for us to effectively know His voice from the voices around us. It is common to hear Christians say, “the Lord spoke to me”, “I heard from the Lord” and the like.

What can we do to hear the voice of God? How do we know that what we are hearing or experiencing is from God? This study highlights ways we can hear from God as believers.

Discussion Questions

1. Who called Samuel? 1 Samuel 3:4

2. What was Samuel’s initial response to the LORD’s call? 1 Samuel 3:5a
3. What was Eli’s response to Samuel? 1 Samuel 3:5b
4. Why did Samuel go to Eli on three occasions? 1 Samuel 3:7
5. Why do some Christians find it difficult to hear God’s voice?
6. Why do you think it is important to hear from God?

Conclusion

Samuel, a young minister before the Lord, struggles to differentiate between the voice of God and that of man. Like Samuel, most Christians go through the same struggle. God called Samuel but he went to Eli on three occasions thinking Eli was the one calling him. We learn that, Samuel did not yet know the Lord (1 Samuel 3:7). This shows that, to hear from God, one must first know Him in a personal way.

Even in our lives as humans, we easily identify the voices of the people we know even if others are also talking. When Samuel finally responded to God’s call, mysteries were revealed to him. When we are able to hear from God, He will reveal mysteries to us about our lives, the church and even the nation. God is always speaking to His people. It is up to us to identify His voice and bless others with what He tells us.
WEEK 5

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT


Memory Verse: John 16:13  But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Introduction

As Christians we must yield to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, as it is one of the ways God speaks to us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us once we receive Christ as our saviour, and God speaks to us through Him (Rom. 8:16). We therefore cannot live a victorious Christian life without obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit who serves as our guide. We have to listen to what He tells us.

In our main text, we learn of how the Holy Spirit ministered to Simeon that he would see the Messiah before he dies. However, Simeon had the responsibility to listen to, and obey the Holy Spirit for God’s promise of seeing the Messiah to be fulfilled. Simeon may not have been the only righteous person waiting for the consolation of Israel, but because he was moved and yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit, he saw the Messiah.
Discussion Questions

1. Who was Simeon? Verse 25

2. How did Simeon know he would not die until he sees the Messiah? Verse 26

3. How did Simeon get to the Temple courts in time? Verse 27

4. What did Simeon say when he picked the child in his arms? Verses 29-32

5. What do you understand by the statement “a light to the gentiles?” Verses 29-32?

6. How would you apply this study to your life?

Conclusion

Our study today shows us that, God still speaks to us through the Holy Spirit. If Simeon had disobeyed the Holy Spirit, he would have missed seeing the Messiah and thus, the fulfilment of God’s promise in his life. God has planned something better for us (Hebrews 11:40), but it is only by yielding to Him that we would be made perfect through our obedience to the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility, to move according to the direction of the Holy Spirit.
WEEK 6

LORD’S SUPPER
Main Text: Matthew 1: 18-28

Memory Verse: Matthew 1:24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Introduction

In the previous lesson, we established that God speaks through the Holy Spirit. Today’s study will focus on visions and dreams as other means through which God communicate to us. Dreams refer to mental images and thoughts that come to us whiles we are asleep or unconscious. Visions are ‘dreams’ we have whiles awake. They may have sources from God, Satan or the human spirit. It is important that we discern dreams, hear God’s voice and obey. The Bible records some dreams that God used to communicate to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus Christ. Today’s study will focus only on the dream in which Joseph heard the voice of an angel of the Lord telling him to take Mary home as wife. Joseph obeyed every instruction given him in the dream.
Discussion Questions

1. Who was Joseph? Verse 19. Name any other Joseph you know in the Bible.
2. What was he planning to do and why? Verses 18 -19
3. Why did Joseph change his plan of breaking his engagement with Mary? Verses 20-21
4. What did Joseph do after hearing the voice of God? Verse 24
6. Are there any practical lessons to be derived from Joseph and Peter’s response to God’s voice?

Conclusion

Humanly speaking, it would have been difficult for any man to have accepted Mary as a wife. We need to discern when God speaks and obey Him even when it seems very difficult. One of the channels through which God speaks to us is dreams. Joseph would have missed the glory and honour of caring for the Messiah if he had disobeyed God. Initially we may not understand the reason(s) for our obedience, but with time, God makes it clearer as His name is glorified. Indeed Joseph was a righteous man who feared God. This character of his is demonstrated in his complete obedience to God.
WEEK 8
GOD SPEAKS THROUGH DREAMS 2

Main Text: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Memory Verse: Matthew 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Get up, he said, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.

Introduction

We continue our study on Joseph, the husband of Mary. We have studied how Joseph through a dream heard God’s voice and obeyed him by taking Mary as his wife. In today’s study, the focus is on the other recorded dreams. In preserving the life of the boy Jesus and the family, God through dreams gave specific instructions to Joseph on where to go at given periods. God cares for individual lives, families and nations. He can give specific and detailed instructions to persons, families and nations through dreams. This may afford guidance, provision and protection to His own.

Discussion Questions

1. Where was Joseph asked to go and why? verse 13
2. What specific instructions were given to him? Verses 13, 20 & 22
3. Why was he given these instructions? Verses 13 and 20
4. Describe Joseph’s reactions to the dreams. Verses 14 and 21
5. What was the outcome of Joseph’s obedience?
6. Share your experience of how God spoke to you in a dream and the outcome.

Conclusion

Without knowing how long he had to keep his family in a foreign land, Joseph just simply obeyed God until he was told to return home. He made the perilous journey at night without questioning God. The outcome of that journey was that he saved the life of baby Jesus. Human as we are, we must position ourselves to hear Him, recognize His voice and do what He says. It is mandatory in our walk with the Lord to do what He tells us to do, even through dreams, especially when we have mastered to hear His voice through that medium.
Main Text: Exodus 20: 1-17

Memory Verse: Exodus 20:17. You shall not covet your neighbour’s house. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Introduction

Africans and other nations who lived for several years under colonial rule can best describe what it means to be independent. Despite some positive contributions made towards education, improvement in healthcare and sanitation, the people were refused the right to govern themselves and had to live under the oppressive rule of some colonial masters. Accordingly, we can appreciate what it meant for Israel to be free from Egyptian bondage.

Discussion Questions

1. What did God require Israel to do for their spiritual well-being? Verses 3-5
2. What was Israel to do to enjoy good health and sound environment? Verses 8-11
3. What did God say about honour, adultery, stealing, and murder? Verses 12-15
4. Why do you think God gave Israel laws to live by?

5. How does the passage speak to as a citizen of your nation?

Conclusion

God created us to be free in our choices and decisions but with responsibility to answer for our conduct. Man’s depraved nature brought about slavery and exploitation of man by man as occurred in Egypt with the Hebrews being the victims. Their deliverance remains a remarkable event in their history. But it is one thing to be independent and another thing to live in freedom. For this reason God gave Israel the Law to serve as their constitution to guide all aspects of their lives for national development.

Ghanaians for instance are preparing to celebrate their 59th anniversary of independence from British rule. The celebration often comes with stock taking. A nation can look behind either with pride and admiration or with shame and utter disappointment. Ghanaians could be asking themselves questions about their stewardship concerning the environment, the rule of law, moral uprightness, integrity in leadership, reverence for God, and respect for human life. It would be sad if people in Ghana today live in fear because of armed robbers, serial killers, and false religious leaders. Ghanaians should be free to ask each other, “how have we fared so far?”
WEEK 10

LORD’S SUPPER
WEEK 11

GOD HAS SPOKEN

Main Text: Hebrews 1: 1-14

Memory Verses: Hebrews 1: 1-2. In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days, He has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Introduction

God has since creation revealed himself to humanity in various ways and at various times. He has revealed Himself to us through creation and His Word. However, his final revelation to mankind is through his Son, Jesus Christ who, having provided purification for the sins of humanity, “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” Various tribal groups have their versions of purification. The idea of purification especially in Africa is to deal with sin in the community and secure peace with divinities. The Akuapem, in Ghana call it Odwira, while the Ga in Ghana, call it hetuumT. But such purifications often involving animal sacrifices are mere shadows of the real purification which Jesus provided once for all peoples and for all times.
Discussion Questions

1. How did God speak to our forefathers in the past? Verse 1
2. How has God spoken to humanity in the last days? Verse 2
3. When did Jesus sit at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven? Verse 3
4. What does purification mean to believers in relation to His presence?
5. How have you benefitted from God’s final purification through his Son?

Conclusion

The purification that Jesus provided for humanity is unique. First it was achieved through the sacrifice of God’s own Son who shares deity with God in all things (He is one with God in creating and sustaining the universe). It involves the shedding of blood which is without blemish. It shows the sovereignty of God in dealing once and for all with the struggles of humanity with sin. Purifications thus allows to go into his presence and to communicate with God. It is this outstanding purification that gives meaning to Easter. As we plan to celebrate another Easter with activities like conventions, picnics, family reunions, and other social activities, we should not lose sight of the essence of Easter as revealed to us by God through His Son.
WEEK 12

JESUS CHRIST, OUR ELDER BROTHER

Main Text: Hebrews 2: 14-18

Memory Verse: Hebrews 2: 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Introduction

Brotherliness in the natural sense involves blood relations among individuals. It deals with common destinies as well as common aspirations and values. In the spiritual sense, however, brotherhood involves spiritual birth by the Spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ is significant for the fact that he chose to become like us in all things. For this reason He is our elder brother in redemption.

Discussion Questions

1. For what natural reason did Jesus Christ share in our humanity? Verse 14a

2. For what redemptive reasons did Jesus Christ share in our humanity? Verses 14b-15

3. Why was Jesus Christ made in every way like His brothers? Verse 17
4. Why is Jesus Christ able to help His brothers when they are tempted? Verse 18

5. In what ways can you say that Jesus Christ is indeed your elder brother?

Conclusion

Easter reminds Christians the world over of the shame, pain, agony, and death of Jesus Christ on the cross. These are things we all try to avoid. And if any of our loved ones is caught in any shameful act we try to avoid being identified as their relation or friend. But Easter is not all about suffering, loneliness, and rejection. It also comes with songs of God’s love for humanity, Jesus’ sacrificial death, his burial and resurrection. Indeed his resurrection sheds new light on mankind’s afterlife. It gives assurance to all of us who believe in Jesus Christ that we shall also resurrect to eternal life if we die before the rapture. This assurance is also for believers who have gone into glory. Easter is also a time for jubilation and evangelism for believers in Christ. It reminds us of the death of Jesus, our Elder Brother to destroy the devil, overcome the power and sting of death, and secure our release from bondage to sin. A new dawn was opened for mankind to be reconciled to God. For the unbeliever, to celebrate Easter without sober reflection on the need for cleansing by the blood of Jesus is mere waste of time, energy, and constitutes self-deception.
WEEK 14
LORD’S SUPPER
WEEK 15

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ANGELS

Main Text: Acts 8:26-38

Memory Verse: Acts 8:29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

Introduction

In some of our previous lessons, we studied how to hear from God. We identified, that though speaking and listening is one of the main ways God communicates with us, it is not the only way. Today, we will be looking at how God speaks through the Holy Spirit and angels. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. He is with us forever (John 14:17). Angels are ministering spirits that God sends to us for specific assignments (Joshua 5:14).

The Holy Spirit is our partner who guides and leads us to fulfil the purpose of God in our lives. Angels minister to us as God sends them with specific instructions. Our ability to hear from God through these media would impact our lives greatly.
Discussion Questions
1. Who told Philip to “go south to the road”? Acts 8:26
2. What happened when Philip obeyed the angel? Acts 8:27
3. What was the challenge of the Ethiopian Eunuch? Acts 8:30-31
4. How did the angel and the Holy Spirit contribute to the salvation of the Ethiopian Eunuch?
5. How often do you hear God speak to you in this generation? Share some personal experiences.

Conclusion
Deacon Philip was enjoying the revival in Samaria, however, an Ethiopian Eunuch on the desert needed to be saved before he got to his destination. The angel of the Lord and the Holy Spirit used Philip to accomplish this purpose.

We know that God is Omnipresent and so is His Spirit. Our ability to cling to the voice of the Spirit can lead us to accomplish a lot for the Lord. Angels also speak to us, as in the case of Philip who readily obeyed God’s voice through the angel. Angels do not always come in white robes or with “wings”. The book of Hebrews tells us that through hospitality, some have welcomed angles without knowing (Heb. 13:2).
As you go about your daily activities at church, at home and at work, expect God to speak to you through His Spirit and through His ministering angels. He will speak to you in your car, in a taxi or public transport (trotro). He will speak to you in the office, at the shopping mall, in the market, on your farm or at your workshop.
WEEK 16

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH
THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH

Main Text: Acts 18:24-28

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:11-12 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Introduction

The Bible is God’s manual for life. Christians believe that it is the infallible Word of God. It therefore forms the basis of our practices and doctrines. God speaks to us on sensitive issues through the Bible. The Bible guides us in our marriage, finances, relationship with others, our jobs and even how to treat our enemies. It is important for us to know that, going to Church is not for us to have grand weddings, meet friends and associates, get a befitting burial among other social reasons. Rather, we go to church to receive the Word of God that will impact our lives. In today’s study, we will take a look at how God uses the Bible and the Church to speak to believers.
Discussion Questions

1. How was Apollos described in Acts 18:24?
3. What was Apollos’ shortcoming? Acts 18:25b
5. How does God use the Bible and the Church to speak to you?

Conclusion

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers and Pastors are called by God to sharpen believers and provide a firm direction for their faith. Apollos was a man who could speak with fervour and teach accurately. However, he only knew about the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila taught him and he became a greater asset to the Church in Achaia. When God through His appointed leaders provide directions for the Church, we should know that God can also speak to us through the Church and accept the directions He gives.
Main Text: Nehemiah 5: 1-13

Memory Verse: Nehemiah 5: 10. I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let the exacting of usury stop!

Introduction

Is it true that in certain societies people live, progress, and prosper at the expense of their fellow citizens? To what extent can Christians be said to be guiltless of this sort of exploitation? It may also be true that there are workers who get paid for no work done. There others too who out of reverence for God ensure that they do the right thing at all times and wherever they find themselves. They have no motivation to cheat or exploit others.

Discussion Questions

1. What reason do we find in verse 2 for the outcry raised by the men and their wives?

2. What reason do we find in verse 3 for the outcry raised by some of the Jews?

3. What did some of the Jews complain of in verses 4-5?
4. Why do you think Nehemiah took action when he heard the complaints? Verses 6-13

5. To which of the group sof people in the passage do you belong?

Conclusion

Some political office holders get so busy pursuing their personal interest that they lose sight of why they are in office. For some businessmen the quest to maximize profits makes them become insensitive to human suffering. And some well-meaning Christians are likely to be guilty of offering to help the needy only to enslave them. Painfully, people in leadership positions who should ensure equity in society, look on with indifference as the weak and vulnerable are plundered by the rich and powerful. Nevertheless, we should always bear in mind that, God has never lacked a Nehemiah for any society where greed and wickedness are glorified.

Nehemiah was a man of integrity so he was spiritually sensitive to the corrupt practices. He showed compassion on the needy in society (verse 10) so he had the moral courage to confront the corrupt officials. He called for a public trial to sanction the corrupt government officials (verse 7) because he hated to cover up evil out of genuine reverence for God. Nehemiah retrieved from the officials all the ill-gotten assets to deter others from corrupt practices. Does your country cry for a Nehemiah?
WEEK 18

LORD’S SUPPER
WEEK 19

DISCERN WHAT YOU HEAR

Main Text: Joshua 9: 11-27
Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5: 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.

Introduction

God speaks through dreams, visions, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, prophesies and many more. However, there is the need to pay careful attention to all we hear from the Lord through discernment and prayer. This is to make sure it is the Lord speaking to us and to understand what He actually intends to communicate. Christians who do not develop the virtue to distinguish between the voice of God and other voices are likely to accept all that people say and this can be dangerous for our Christian growth. In our main text, we learn of how the Gibeonites acted deceitfully towards the people of Israel. They deceived them with old clothes, worn out sandals and decaying food that they had come from a long distance when in fact they were near them. Joshua and the people failed to consult the Lord and probably depended on their rich military experiences or the evidence provided by the Gibeonites.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the Gibeonites act towards the Israelites? Verses. 4,5
3. What did Joshua and the people fail to do before accepting the Gibeonites? Verses 14
4. In our world today, how can the following guide us in avoiding being deceived?
   a. Giving the Word of God first place
   b. Obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit
5. What lessons have you personally learnt from the study?

Conclusion

We live in an era where many claim to speak from the Lord announcing, “Thus saith the Lord”. How do you know whether it is the Lord speaking or it is man speaking? We must not despise prophesies or look down on those means by which God speaks to us. Rather, we should compare what we hear with the Word of God. If you want to know God’s will in a given situation, the first thing to do is to go to the Bible. If the Bible has the answer, do not expect another answer anywhere. That is why we are advised to meditate on His law day and night (Ps.1:3; Josh.1:8-9). We must be careful not to elevate any human writing, experience, revelation, Church tradition or practice above the Scripture but accept the Bible as the final authority for instruction for godly living and doctrine (Acts 17:10-11; Matth. 5:7-8).
Main Text: Genesis 6:13-22

Memory Verse: Genesis 6:22  Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Introduction

Obedience is a non-negotiable standard of God. God delights in absolute obedience to His Word rather than sacrifices (1 Samuel 15:22). Our obedience to God as believers must affect every facet of our lives. When we receive instructions from God through His Word or any other medium, we must not hesitate to act on His directions. What is crucial about it is that, our obedience may be linked to the lives of others we may not know. In our reading today, we encounter Noah, who was tasked to build an ark with some detailed specifications. Let us discuss some of the lessons we can learn from Noah.

Discussion Questions

1. What was Noah asked to do? Gen. 6:14
2. Describe how the ark should look like. Gen. 6:14-16
3. Why was Noah directed to build the ark? Gen 6:17
4. What was Noah to bring into the ark? Gen. 6:19-21
5. How did Noah execute the task given to him?
6. How would you describe Noah’s level of obedience?

Conclusion

Obedience to God has been one of the main challenges of many Christians. God’s standard on life issues does not change. Just as he made Noah build the ark, so He continually gives us specific instructions. Examples include; paying of tithe, avoiding sin, loving our neighbours, forgiving those who offend us and caring for His flock. We might say that combining all these with our personal responsibilities is difficult. However, Noah presents us with a perfect example as he builds an ark 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high with various decks and compartments. He also had to get various animals into the ark before the rains started. Amazingly, “Noah did everything just as God commanded”.
WEEK 21

THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE 1

Main Text: Genesis 26:1-6; 12-14

Memory Verse: Genesis 26:6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Introduction

Obedience to God comes with a lot of far-reaching benefits. One of the attributes of God is that, He is all knowing, that is, He knows the end from the beginning. When He commands us to do something, it means He is fully aware of what He wants to do at the end. In this study, we will look at how God blessed Isaac for his obedience to stay in Gerar. When God speaks to us concerning our finances, marriage, job, health among other things, we must trust that He has a better plan in place for us.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Isaac plan to go to Egypt? Genesis 26:1
2. What did the Lord tell Isaac and why? Genesis 26:3-4 what was there any challenges if he obeyed and stayed on?
3. Why did the Lord promise to bless Isaac? Genesis 26:5
4. How did Isaac obey the Lord? Genesis 26:6

5. How was Isaac blessed after obeying God? Genesis 26:12-14

6. Have you ever been blessed because you obeyed God? Share experiences.

**Conclusion**

Staying in a land plagued with famine can be very uncomfortable and challenging. Isaac however obeyed God and stayed in Gerar. We learn that even in the famine, God blessed Isaac so much that his crops, animals and even servants increased. The Bible says he had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him (Genesis 26:14). To receive the blessings of God, obedience is the key.
THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE 2

Main Text: Exodus 12:7-13; 28-30

Memory Verse: Exodus 12:28 The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

Introduction

We learnt from our previous study on the blessing of obedience that, no matter how difficult situations may look like, as long as we obey God, there is always hope because God will always honour his Word with blessings. In today’s reading, we encounter the Israelites whose lives hang on their obedience to God’s directions. Why should we obey God? What do we get when we obey God? These are some questions that ring in the hearts of men. Many a time, what God tells us through the Church or leaders may seem burdensome. However, our very lives and the lives of others may be connected to our obedience to His Word.

Discussion Questions

1. Identify the instructions the Lord gave to the Israelites? Exodus 12:7-11

2. What form of punishment was awaiting the Egyptians? Exodus 12:12
3. How were the Israelites going to be spared from the punishment? Exodus 12:13
5. What happened to the Egyptians? Exodus 12:29
6. How can Christians save themselves and others from the wrath of God?

Conclusion

God’s wrath was against the people of Egypt. There was an impending danger as the lives of the first born of the Egyptians and people who lived in the land were at risk. God, however, provided a direction, which saved the Israelites. We identify that some of the things they were to do included: smearing the blood of lambs on their door posts, eating the meat roasted and not cooked in water, eating everything and eating in haste among other things. The Israelites did exactly as the Lord commanded them. Hence, they were spared the pain of losing their firstborns. God will continue to speak to us through our leaders and the Bible. We will save our lives and that of others when we obey Him.
WEEK 23

LORD’S SUPPER
WEEK 24

CONSEQUENCES OF SELECTIVE OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S VOICE

Main Text: 1 Samuel 15:17-23

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22  But Samuel replied: Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Introduction

In our previous study on total obedience to God, we looked at how Noah absolutely obeyed God and how important that act of obedience was. In today’s study, we will look at the results of selective obedience. Many Christians obey God selectively. They will obey God on certain issues such as: fornication, drunkenness and murder but disobey Him when it comes to bribery, honesty, forgiveness or tithing. In our main text, we encounter King Saul who selectively obeys the Lord and how God disapproved of such a behaviour. Partially obeying God is equal to disobeying Him and this comes with its related punishments.

Discussion Questions

1. What did God command Saul to do? 1 Samuel 15:18
2. What was Saul’s response to Samuel’s query?  
   1 Samuel 15:20

3. In which way did Saul selectively obey the Lord?  
   1 Samuel 15:21

4. In which ways do Christians selectively obey the Lord?  

5. What does the Lord delight in according to 1 Samuel 15:22?  

6. What was the result of Saul’s selective obedience?  
   1 Samuel 15:23

**Conclusion**

Obeying God must not be selective. This form of obedience is like doing evil in the sight of the Lord. Saul attacked the Amalekites just as God commanded, but contrary to God’s instruction, he decided on his own to bring their king alive. He also spared the best of the sheep, cattle and fat calves for sacrifice. As Christians, there is always the temptation to obey God selectively especially in this generation. The Lord does not delight in sacrifices but rather obedience. Running around, putting your life at risk in the name of the Lord, among other things, is good but it is important to first seek to obey God absolutely.
Main Text: Jonah: 1:1-17

Memory Verse: Jonah: 1:12.  *Pick me up and throw me into the sea,* he replied, *“and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.*

Introduction

God is described in scripture as infinite, loving and kind, tenderly watching over His earthly children and guiding the steps of the faithful. He speaks of us as the people of his pasture, the flock under his care (Psalm: 95:7). This great love led him to send His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sin, that we might escape the punishment we deserve. If God could do this for us, what other good thing would He withhold from us? All we have to do is to learn to trust His love and say yes to Him in all our days. In the first chapter of the book of Jonah, we learn how God instructed Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach, and how he disobeyed by running away from the Lord, forgetting that he was dealing with the omnipotent God.

Discussion Questions

1. What was Jonah’s relationship with God? Verse 9
2. What did God instruct him to do? Verses 1, 2
3. How did Jonah respond to the instructions of God? Verse 3
4. What happened to him and the other sailors on the boat? Verse 4
5. What are the consequences of disobeying God?
6. What have you learnt from today’s study?

**Conclusion**

The human spirit is capable of withstanding enormous discomfort including the prospects of death. Many martyrs, political prisoners and war heroes have gone to their graves willingly and confidently. They understood the sacrifice they were making and accepted its meaning in their lives. The debt of the love of God and the fact of his omnipotence should always be our source of motivation to obey His voice in every area of our lives with all reverence and trembling. Even though Jonah knew the depth of God’s love, he disobeyed Him and suffered for his disobedience.
Main Text: Gen: 19:12-26

Memory Verse: Genesis 19:26 But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Introduction

The scripture teaches clearly that, one of the consequences of disobedience to God is death. James describes the connection this way: “Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death” James 1:14-15. A biblical example is the story of Lot’s wife (Gen. 19:12-26). Her desire for earthly things caused her to disobey the instruction from the Lord by looking back. She suffered dearly for this by turning into a pillar of salt.

Discussion Questions

1. What was Lot instructed to do? Verses 12,15
2. When they hesitated, what did the men do to signal God’s mercy towards them? Verse 16
3. How did Lot’s wife disobey God? Verse 26
4. What was the cost of her disobedience?

5. Personally, what have you learnt from the story?

Conclusion

God wanted to show mercy on the household of lot. He therefore instructed them to leave the city of Sodom immediately to avoid the destruction which was coming upon the city. However, Lot’s wife disobeyed and paid dearly for it. God does not delight in the destruction of the disobedient. Rather, He forbids certain behaviour because He knows it would ultimately destroy its victims. As a merciful God, He did all he could to save Lot’s wife but she was really dragged and enticed by her evil desires that she forgot to count the cost of her disobedience. Sadly she turned into a pillar of salt. We must always be careful to obey God in order to avoid the effects of disobedience.
WEEK 27

LORD’S SUPPER
Main Text: Malachi 3:6-12

Memory Verse: Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the LORD Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Introduction

Our main text begins with a remarkable statement telling us that the Lord does not change. Though He has told us to bring the full tithe into His storehouse, many Christians find it difficult to obey this command. The fact is that, the payment of our tithes only shows that, we love God. For He is the one who gives us the grace (strength and ability) to possess whatever we possess. Just like disobeying God in sexual sins comes with its own consequences, disobeying Him in tithing also comes with its attendant effects.

Discussion Questions

1. In which ways do Christians rob God? Verse 8
2. Why does the Bible say the nation is under a curse? Verse 9
3. What did the Lord command the people to do in Malachi: 3:10?

4. Why do some Christians disobey this command?

5. How can we be faithful in obeying this command?

Conclusion

There is nothing we have that does not belong to God. Therefore His request that we bring the whole tithe and offering demands that we submit to Him. Disobedience of this command leads to pests destroying our crops and vines (work/ homes). There is a blessing of God you will never receive until you tithe faithfully. We must make every effort to obey God in tithing.
WEEK 29

HOMOSEXUALITY, WHAT IS IT?

Main Text: Genesis 19: 1-25

Memory Verse: Leviticus 18:22. Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.

Introduction

Discussions on the subject of Homosexuality has received much attention in recent times following the shocking news of its legalization in certain countries. Thus, it is imperative to provide a biblical perspective against the backdrop of various shades of opinion propagated by different interest groups in modern day society. In three studies we shall explore the meaning, biblical view and the effects of homosexuality. Our study today looks at the meaning, of homosexuality and the first mention of its occurrence in the Bible.

Discussion Questions

1. What did the men of Sodom seek to do with the angels? Verse 5

2. What was Lot’s response to their request? Verse 7-8
3. In what ways did their actions constitute homosexual behaviour?

4. What does the first mention of homosexuality in the bible say about the practice?

5. What is your attitude to homosexuality? Why?

**Conclusion**

Homosexuality is sexual desire or attraction directed and expressed between persons of the same sex. Males between whom such sexual desire is expressed are termed *gay* while females guilty of this immoral conduct are called *lesbians*. This is what the men of Sodom sought to do with the angels and were subsequently destroyed. The story discussed above provides the first mention of homosexuality in the Bible. More importantly, the story indicates that the practice is forbidden by God as shown by the destruction of the city and the men who attempted this despicable act with the angels. Homosexuality is one of many sexual perversions and acts of the sinful nature spoken of in Romans 1: 26-27. God designed sexual relations to take place between a man and a woman within marriage and thus, forbids sexual expressions between persons of the same sex.
WEEK 30
HOMOSEXUALITY – BIBLICAL VIEW

Main Text: I Corinthians 6: 9 - 12

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10  Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Introduction

In our previous discussion, we looked at the meaning of homosexuality. Moving on, we shall explore what the Bible says about this practice. This is of paramount interest considering the conscious attempts by various interest groups to justify homosexual behaviour using various theories and excuses as basis. In the midst of such attempts, the Bible which is the final authority in all issues of life is explicit on the boundaries of sexual expression. Sexual relations as designed by God should only take place between man (male) and woman (female) in the context of marriage. This position is absolute and non-negotiable under any circumstance.
Discussion Questions

1. From the scripture read can homosexuals be part of the kingdom of God? Discuss verse 9

2. How do you understand verse 11?

3. What is God’s counsel on human sexuality? 1 Corinthians 6: 9, 1 Corinthians 7: 2, Genesis 2:22-24

4. How is Homosexuality opposed to God’s counsel on sexual expression?

5. For what reasons will you condemn homosexuality?

6. What practical steps can we take to address the problem of homosexuality in the churches and our communities?

Conclusion

The Bible speaks against sexual relations between persons of the same sex and also indicates that, the right avenue for sexual expression is heterosexual marriage (I Cor. 7:2). Homosexuality contravenes the biblical stance on human sexuality for two reasons.

First, it encourages sexual relations between persons of the same gender and secondly, defies the right context for sexual expression. Thus, we can deduce from our study that homosexuality is the result of unbridled sensual human passions and deception (Romans 1: 24-27), rather than an alternative sexual orientation as advocates for homosexuality would want us to believe.
More so, in I Corinthians 6:11, Paul indicated that homosexuals and other sinners who turned to the Lord were washed, cleansed and set apart for the Lord’s use. Thus, the argument that some are born homosexuals and can never change is deceptive. It also implies that, Homosexuals are sinners who need to repent of their sins and become part of the kingdom of God.
WEEK 31

EFFECTS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Main Text: Romans 1:18-32

Memory Verse: Leviticus 20:13 *If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

Introduction

Today, we shall conclude our study on Homosexuality with a discussion on its effects on the individual, family and society. The effects include increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections and child molestation by adult homosexuals which may initiate a vicious cycle of the practice. It could also lead to possible breakdown of the family structure with its attendant negative implications for social stability. Having identified the effects, our study will help us know some measures to take that would possibly avert such dire future implications.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the statement, ”God gave them over to their depraved minds” mean? Verse 26

2. What happened when God gave the evil-doers over to shameful lusts? Verse 27-28
3. What are the eternal repercussions for those who indulge in these shameful lusts? 1 Cor. 6: 18, Gal 5: 18.

4. How will homosexuality affect the family structure and nurturing of children?

5. What do you think the Church and families can do:

   i. To help those practising homosexuality to come out of its grips?

   ii. To help the youth especially to stay away from all deceptions that lure people into the practice?

**Conclusion**

In our study, we realized that the total neglect of the knowledge and wisdom of God led to self-indulgence in shameful lusts and homosexuality. It is thus imperative to follow God’s counsel on every subject to avoid moral degeneration into acts like homosexuality. Our discussions also revealed severe negative implications of homosexuality for the individual, family life, social stability and nation building. We also learnt that those who indulge in homosexuality will not inherit the Kingdom of God, as well as the Church’s response to preserve human dignity. To avert this situation, parents must provide sex education to children.
Furthermore, they must be vigilant to detect abnormal sexual behaviours among children and also prevent molestation from adult homosexuals. Also, people must be enlightened on the harmful effects of homosexuality and the need to abstain from such practices. For those already suffering from the effects of homosexuality, we must direct them to the appropriate facility for counselling and rehabilitation.
WEEK 32
LORD’S SUPPER

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WEEK 33

CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

Main Text: James 1:2-4

Memory Verse: Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your Word.

Introduction

Suffering has been defined as a pain we are unable to do anything about. The causes of this pain may include famine, poverty, natural disasters, earthquakes, floods, fire, accidents; airplanes and motor crashes, as well as sickness and diseases. Others are sexual abuse, crime etc. Suffering could also be the removal or reduction of one or more of the things that make up the good things of life as we know them. These things may include; money, cars, loved ones, friends, health, marriage, sex, job, house, possessions, social life, etc. The issue of Christian suffering is one of the most difficult matters in Christianity. People have asked, why did God create man if He knew he would suffer? Why does God allow evil if He is a good God? If He cares, why doesn’t he do something? Why did he desert me? Indeed suffering is real and the questions we need to ask as Christians include: How can we make sense of it? What can we learn from it? Can we overcome it?
The purpose of our studies on suffering is to better understand why God allows suffering, the sources of suffering and the Christian response to suffering.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How do you understand ‘trials of many kinds’ as indicated in verse 2?
2. What should be our attitude in suffering? Verse 2
3. What are the purposes of suffering? Verses 3 -4.
4. Could you identify other purposes of suffering as found in the Bible?
5. What lessons have you learnt from today’s study?

**Conclusion**

From our study, we learnt that trials may come to us in diverse ways whether we pray for it or not. Jesus said that in this world we will face many trials but He has overcome the world. Trials of many kinds imply that it shall be in diverse forms. The purpose of suffering is, among other things, to develop in us perseverance and make us mature, lacking nothing. God uses these trials to develop great virtues in us: make us obedient (Ps. 119:67), drive us to pray (Rom. 8:26), make us understand others better (2 Cor. 1:3-4) and bring out the best in us (Rom. 5:3-4).
Main Text: Gen. 3:1-19

Memory Verse: Gen. 3:17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

Introduction

In some parts of the world, it seems that all kinds of calamities and sufferings are attributed to the works of sorcerers, witches and the devil. This has led to the situation where many Christians become so focused on the devil in their prayers. It is so sad that sometimes, when the prayer meeting is not focused on dealing with the enemy, attendance is low. Unfortunately, some ministers have taken advantage of this ignorance to exploit Church members. This is not right. It is important to understand the sources of suffering so that we can relate better to them when they arise. In the next three studies, we shall seek to answer the questions, who or what is responsible for the suffering? Is it the work of God Himself? Is it Satan? Is it simply natural consequences in a world of cause and effect?
In today’s study, however, we shall consider the natural causes of suffering.

Discussion Question

1. How did the disobedience of Adam and Eve affect:
   a. Nature Verses 14, 17, 18
   b. The woman Verse 16
   c. The man Verse 19

2. Do the effects of the fall affect us today? Rom. 8:18-23

3. Practically, how is the fall responsible for some of the sufferings today?

4. How do our actions and decisions sometimes cause others to suffer?

5. What lessons have you learnt today?

Conclusion

After the fall (Gen. 3:14-19), the world has never been perfect. The universe and its systems, together with the living things and the human beings are groaning (Rom. 8:18-23). Although Jesus has redeemed us from the fall, we live in the “already-but-not-yet” (i.e. our redemption has not yet been consummated). So we are still subject to the “fallen nature of the world”. Thus, we suffer from some of the natural consequences. For instance, old age comes with its associated diseases
(loss of vision, loss of memory due to the dying of the brain cells, weaknesses, menopause etc.). Natural occurrences like floods and earthquakes can affect us and even kill our loved ones. These could be due to the consequences of the fall.

Related to the natural cause is the fact that the world is now governed by natural laws; laws of cause and effect, laws of sowing and reaping among others. When these laws are violated, the natural consequences occur, for instance a car accident caused by someone else’s carelessness.
Main Text: Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:8. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Introduction

In the Bible, Satan is presented as the cause of some suffering as in the case of Job and the case of the persecuted Christians (1 Pet. 5:8-9). In our main text, God gave a great testimony about Job but Satan thought Job was worshipping God because of the blessings of God and thus wanted to prove that without the blessings, Job will deny the Lord. God was certain that, Job loved and served Him for who He is and therefore permitted the suffering. Let us study the text together.

Discussion Questions

1. What was the Lord’s testimony about Job? 1:8; 2:3
3. From the passage, what was Satan’s purpose in bringing suffering to Job? 1:11; 2:5

5. What do you personally learn from the study?

Conclusion

Satan’s main objective for every kind of suffering is that we might curse God and deny Him. However, God uses the sufferings to perfect, establish, strengthen and settle us (1 Pet 5:10). It is refreshing to know that in the case of the believer, Satan needs God’s permission to touch us (Job 1:10). Nevertheless, even with permission, God further places limits on Satan (not to touch the life of Job). Indeed, God is sovereign and has the authority to use any of His created beings (including Satan and evil spirits) to fulfil any purpose. Thus, Satan cannot just request God to bring suffering to a believer anytime. As promised in 1 Cor. 10:13, God will not tempt us beyond our ability and even with the temptation, He makes a way of escape for us. God always has the final say.

Memory Verse: Proverbs. 3:11-12. *My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.*

Introduction

In both the Old and New Testaments, God is presented as sometimes chastening His children through various kinds of suffering. When God is presented as the source of the suffering, it could be as a result of no wrong done (as the case in Paul’s thorn in the flesh- 2 Cor. 12:7-12) or as a result of sin (the sickness and death of David’s child-2 Sam. 12:13-18). Like a loving parent, God chastises His children not because He delights in doing so but because it is necessary; to correct us (Heb. 12:9), that we may be partakers of His Holiness (Heb. 12:10), that we may yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:11) and so that we will not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32). Our study focuses on Ananias and Sapphira who were chastised by God for wrong doing.
Discussion Questions

1. What was the intention of Ananias and Sapphira in selling their property?

2. What wrong did Ananias and his wife do? Verse 2

3. According to Peter, why did Ananias do what he did? Verse 3

4. Why do you think Ananias lied to Peter?

5. How did the death of Ananias and Sapphira affect the whole Church? Verses 5, 11

6. What lessons have you learnt about God chastening His children?

Conclusion

In our study, Ananias had a good intention but allowed Satan to fill his heart to lie to God. He could just have stated that he used some of the money but rather he tried to look good in the eyes of the leadership (may be because of Barnabas’ example-Acts 4:36). Indeed, the death of Ananias and Sapphira brought great fear to the whole Church. It is likely, that incident did not happen again in the Church.
WEEK 38

HOW TO HANDLE SUFFERING

Main Text: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Memory Verse: I Cor. 10:13. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Introduction

In our previous studies, we considered Christian suffering and the 3 sources of suffering: natural, Satan or God. In this last lesson on suffering, we will consider what our response to suffering should be. In the midst of pain and suffering, many cry: “if God so loves, why did He let this happen?”, “if he cares, why doesn’t He do something?”, “Why did He desert me?” Throughout scripture, servants of the Lord have experienced one suffering or the other. No matter the source of our suffering, it is for a purpose and we must seek to understand it and learn from the experience. The mark of maturity in a Christian is not freedom from pain but total trust during pain. Our passage today will help us know how to handle suffering.
Discussion Questions

1. From the passage, how should we view sufferings? Verse 12


4. How do you understand verse 15?

5. Share any experience where you suffered for the cause of Christ and the outcome.

6. What should be your attitude during periods of suffering? Verses 13, 19

Conclusion

Having completed the study on the sources of suffering, how then should we respond to suffering? From our main passage, we are to rejoice, praise God that we bear the name of Christ, commit ourselves to God and continue to do good. In every case of suffering, believe that God cares deeply for you no matter the circumstances; expect God to give you the grace necessary to bear your affliction until deliverance comes; do not complain about suffering, do not question God, accept it graciously; ask God to show you the purpose of the suffering and always remember that your High Priest is interceding for you. Indeed, the momentary troubles cannot compare with the eternal glory that awaits us (2 Cor. 4:17).
WEEK 39

GRACE IN TIMES OF SUFFERING

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 12: 1-14

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 12:9. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

Introduction

The fall of man carried in its trail several dire repercussions for mankind. Consequently, humanity is surrounded by sickness, pain, disaster, misfortune and death. Furthermore, the Christian, though saved from the power and effect of sin, is not exempted from the physical conditions of this world and may suffer the effects of droughts, floods, disasters, sicknesses and death. Nevertheless, God’s grace is sufficient to keep us through such difficult times. Our study illustrates the work of grace even in times of suffering for the ultimate purpose of perfecting our character in line with God’s sovereign will.
Discussion Questions

1. What was the purpose of the thorn in Paul’s flesh? Verse 7

2. How did Paul deal with this thorn? Verse 8

3. How do you understand God’s response to Paul’s request? Verse 9

4. How do hardships refine our character as Christians? Rom. 5:3-5.

5. Mention some of the adverse conditions Christians go through in life?

Conclusion

From our study, we realize that Paul’s thorn in the flesh was sent by God to keep him humble. Thus, suffering though unpleasant, allows God to work on our weaknesses towards perfection of character. More so, God’s grace is sufficient to keep us through the period of suffering as promised in 2 Corinthians 12:9. In the light of the above discussions, we must not waver in faith in times of suffering, bearing in mind that the grace of God is sufficient and all things will work together for our good (Romans 8:28).
WEEK 40

LORD’S SUPPER
Main Text: Matthew 7:15-20

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 11:13-14. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Introduction

This year, as we study about hearing and obeying God’s voice, it is necessary to learn to discern the ‘wrong voice.’ In the following few weeks, we will learn how to identify the voice of false prophets. Bible warns us to beware of false prophets because they disguise themselves like angels of light, just like the devil, even though they are angels of darkness. The Bible describes them as ‘ravenous wolves in sheep clothes’. The good news is that, a sheep bleats while a wolf howls. Thus, a careful observation of the character and voice of false prophets will betray their true identity and help you recognise them. A true prophet and false prophet may look alike in appearance, but their fruits will separate them. We must therefore follow the instructions of scripture to identify false prophets by their fruits.

Discussion Question

1. Identify two things the Bible compares false prophets to in the passage? Verses 15-17.
2. Identify ways in which both good and bad prophets could look alike.


4. Why does the Bible warn us to beware of false prophets?

5. What will you do personally to beware of false prophets?

**Conclusion**

Trees are generally identified by their fruits. A mango tree cannot produce orange. Matthew 12:33-35 further explains that if you make a tree good, its fruit will also be good but if the tree is corrupt, its fruit will also be corrupt. In like manner, false prophets can be distinguished from good prophets by their fruits. True prophets and false prophets may look alike in appearance, ministration and accomplishments. Here again, their fruits will determine their credibility. Fruit as used here refers to character as stated in Galatians 5: 22-23. It is also important to examine the biblical basis of their utterances and discern the spirit backing their operations because familiar spirits can also make accurate predictions. In order to see through their deception, we must read the Word of God and pray daily as well as desist from moving from one prayer meeting to the other in search of prophetic messages.
Main Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Memory Verse: 1 John 4:1. Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Introduction

Deception is much common in contemporary society such that, it is becoming difficult for some Christians to identify God’s voice in the midst of many voices. The Bible clearly warns us not to believe every spirit but test the spirits and all things to prove whether they are of God (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1). To do this, we need to measure every contemporary discovery with the standard of the Word of God. The believers in Berea were considered to be more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica because, they received the Word with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures to check whether the teachings were true (Acts 17:11).

Discussion Question

1. Why does the Bible admonish us to test the spirits?
   1 John 4:1
2. In what ways will you be able to test all things? Acts 17:11

3. How do you understand the statement ‘hold fast to what is good’? 1 Thessalonians 5:21

4. How do people quench the Spirit and despise prophecies?

5. What have you learnt personally from the study?

Conclusion

Our discussions show that we quench the Holy Spirit when we do not act His promptings. Also, when we fail to accept and heed to prophetic messages, we despise prophecy. However, we must be careful to test the spirits through discernment. We must also weigh every message and teaching by the standards of the scriptures before we believe them. The call to test the spirits is very timely. This is because technology has made information available at all times and at every location. These opportunities, though good, expose the contemporary Christian to both sound and bad doctrines. Testing the spirit will enable us discern the right path to choose.
Main Text: 1 Samuel 9: 1-17

Memory Verse: 1 Sam 9:17. When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.

Introduction

Israel gained her independence from Egyptian bondage under the leadership of Moses. Yet, the One who directed the cause of Israel’s history was God. He was their unseen King and provider and demonstrated his sovereignty from Egypt to the Promised Land after which Israel asked for a king. Both Samuel and God were displeased at the request, but God granted it and led Saul under trying conditions to the house of Samuel to be anointed as king.

Discussion Questions

1. How is Saul described in the passage? Verse 1a
2. Why did Kish send Saul and the servant? Verse 3
3. What did Saul do to demonstrate that he was:
   • Hard working? Verses 4
   • Concerned about the well-being of others? Verse 5
• Humble and open to good advice? Verses 6-10

4. What do you learn from the passage about God’s choice of leaders? Verses 15-16

5. What leadership qualities do you have that God can tap into?

6. What leadership qualities should be considered when choosing leaders at various levels?

Conclusion

As Saul went from place to place in search of donkeys, he demonstrated his belief in the dignity of labour; in his interaction with the servant, he showed himself as someone who had good human relations and respect for others; his concern for his father’s well-being showed that he was sensitive to the needs of others. Saul’s concern about what to give to the man of God paints a picture of a godly person who respected the office that Samuel occupied; his approach to the young girls was with deep respect. Again he demonstrated the fact that everybody needs somebody.

The practice of multi-party democracy requires the citizens to elect a president and parliamentarians periodically as practiced for instance in Ghana. It is expected that those elected will be godly persons who cherish the dignity of labour, and have the welfare of the people at heart.
Unfortunately, various factors like financial inducement, ethnicity, nepotism, greed, and propaganda tend to corrupt the system so much that often those elected into office do not represent the choice of God. As Ghanaians prepare for elections it is expected that people will seek guidance from God to vote for the right candidates.
WEEK 44

A LEADER FOR THE NATION II

Main Text: 1 Kings 12: 1-20

Memory Verse: 1 Kings 12: 8. But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.

Introduction

How does God deal with corrupt government officials (Presidents, Parliamentarians, Chief Executive Officers, and Judges, among others)? Why do corrupt officials continue to stay in office when they exploit the people and turn them into perpetual mourners? Does God care when leaders become arrogant and greedy and promote a state of fear and injustice in any nation? How does he deal with ungodly but religious leaders? In his old age as king of Israel, Solomon departed from the Lord (1 Kings 11: 1-6). His son Rehoboam succeeded him as King. But was he fit to occupy the throne?

Discussion Questions

1. What request did the people of Israel put before Rehoboam? Verse 4

2. What advice did the elders who worked for his father give him? Verses 6-7
3. What advice did the young men in his service give him? Verses 8-10


5. How did the response of Rehoboam affect the nation? Verses 16,17,18-20

6. Why have you learnt about the sovereignty of God in choosing leaders for a nation?

Conclusion

When people are elected into office it is expected of them to use state resources to seek the good of the people. Wise leaders are careful to pursue the path of personal integrity, faithfulness, justice, and people-centred development. They therefore seek good advice from experienced and credible elders to pursue policies and programs. Wise leaders are careful in the way they respond to concerns expressed by the people; they commit themselves to making life more bearable for the people, sometimes at great sacrifice of personal comfort and resources.

However, like Rehoboam, bad leaders despise wise and mature counsel; they are greedy for gain and inflict heavy taxes on the people. Rehoboam thought he had state resources at his disposal to do what he pleased, but he lost the confidence of 10 of the tribes of Israel.
Ghanaians, for example, should continue to be guided by their commitment to honesty, justice, true godliness, and integrity as they prepare for the pending general elections. Ghana deserves the best of leaders; voters should demonstrate this for the good of Ghana.
WEEK 45

LORD’S SUPPER
WEEK 46
TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU

Main Text: Matthew 24:4-13

Memory Verse: Matthew 24:11-12. And many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.

Introduction

One common characteristic of false prophets and false teachers is that they deceive people and draw them away from God. In view of this, believers must be cautious not to follow their deception. Jesus warns that false prophets are not afraid to speak in His name. This makes it difficult for people to recognise their true identity. However, the best way to spot a counterfeit is to study the original. Thus, falsehood can easily be recognised if Christians devote ample time to prayer and studying the Word of God.

Discussion Question

1. How will the false prophets come? Verse 5
2. What role do believers need to play in the midst of false prophets? Verse. 4
3. What challenges will the true believer encounter according to Verse 9?
4. How do you understand the statement ‘because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold’? Verse 12

5. What will you do personally to ensure that you are not deceived?

Conclusion

Jesus warns that false prophets will come in his name to deceive and lead many astray. Also, the statement ‘the love of many will grow cold’ implies a decline in fervency of spirit due to the abundance of iniquity. Thus, following what everybody does can be misleading because the majority is not always right. Our study also reveals that believers who speak and hold on to the truth will face persecution. Nevertheless, God is pleased if we face persecution and hold fast to what the Bible teaches us even if the majority chooses to go astray.
WEEK 47
THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

Main Text: Gen. 22:1-8

Memory Verse: Genesis 22:3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

Introduction

Soon, we are about ending our study on hearing and obeying the voice of the Lord. Hearing and obeying the Lord brings great blessings. Jesus himself modelled the attitude of obedience for us. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He asked His Father to remove the “cup” of humiliation and death from Him. He knew fully what the crucifixion meant. The emotional pressure was so intense that great drops of blood penetrated His skin. Yet even in the midst of that agony, Jesus prayed, “yet not my will, but yours be done” Luke: 22:42. There are many other biblical examples of those who yielded to divine authority. Abraham after waiting patiently on God for the promise of an heir coming from his own body was later asked to sacrifice him. His obedience to this strong instruction from the Lord gladdened God’s heart.
Discussion Questions

1. What did God instruct Abraham to do? Genesis 22:2
2. How did Abraham respond to God’s instruction? Genesis 22:3
4. Personally, have you been instructed by God before? What was your response to him?

Conclusion

The blessings that resulted from Jesus’ obedience was that, He was given all authority and the name that is above all names. Abraham was also recognized as a man of great faith and the father of generations. As we learn to obey God, He directs our paths and blesses us. It is time we learn to pray like Jesus and say “Thy will be done” Lord!
Main Text: John 1: 1-14

Memory Verse: John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Introduction

God created mankind in His image and likeness to exercise authority in creation as His representatives. The disobedience of Adam and Eve placed them under God’s judgment. Their sin created a barrier between God and mankind as it was impossible for a holy God to be in fellowship with sinful man. However, before God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, He clothed them with the skin of an animal to cover their nakedness. The provision of animal skin shows the death of an animal, and for that matter the shedding of blood (Genesis 3: 21-23). The significance of this provision brings out the love of God for mankind and points to a special gift that will be of eternal value. During Christmas, we celebrate the love of God expressed in the incarnation of Christ.
Discussion Questions

1. Who is referred to in verse 1 as the Word?

2. What do we learn about the Word in verses 2 to 4, and 10?

3. How can a person become a child of God? Verses 11-13


5. How do you show gratitude to God for “becoming flesh and dwelling among us” for the purpose of reconciliation?

6. How does the Christmas season remind us of reconciliation of man to God?

Conclusion

Sacrifices are part of rituals that are performed in some societies to seek reconciliation between the offender and the offended. Yet these sacrifices are not able to deal with the root cause of sin in mankind. The need for a perfect sacrifice was met by God Himself who became man and dwelt among us (John 1:14). The event therefore is the fulfilment of the promised seed of the woman who shall bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:14-15).
It is important for each of us to prepare our hearts to welcome the Son of God into our hearts. By this means we can truly talk about having been reconciled to God, and enjoying peace with Him. One occasion that reminds people the world over about God’s love and the incarnation is Christmas. As we gradually move closer to celebrating another Christmas, we should keep reflecting on the purpose of the Word becoming flesh – reconciling man to God.
WEEK 50
THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION II

Main Text: Luke 1: 26-38

Memory Verse: Luke 1:35 The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Introduction

It is common practice in several communities the world over for individuals, families, as well as friends to prepare to celebrate the birth of a new born child. In Ghana for instance, the celebration takes the form of naming ceremonies, among other activities during which gifts are presented to the parents to support the upkeep of the new member of the community. However, in the case of the “new birth”, God presented Himself to humanity as a unique gift that should be received for our regeneration into His kingdom.

Discussion Questions

1. How was the woman to whom God sent Gabriel described? Verses 26-27

2. What did the angel tell Mary concerning the child to be born to her? Verses 31-33
3. How do you understand Gabriel’s statement in verse 35?

4. How would you describe Mary to other members of your congregation?

5. How would you present Jesus as a Christmas gift to a non-Christian?

Conclusion

Gabriel’s visit to Mary to announce that she would be with a child shows God’s desire to always bring mankind into lasting relationship of peace and happiness. The visit also reveals God’s favour to Mary. This favour is for all who share in the purpose of the Word becoming flesh. Christmas reminds mankind of the uniqueness of the birth of Christ. First, that God became flesh and dwelt among us. This event had been foretold several centuries before it happened (Isaiah 7: 14), and it occurred in human history within a specific culture (Luke 1: 26-27). Christmas also reminds us of the birth of the Son of the Most High, whose kingdom will never end. This reveals the work of the Holy Spirit in God’s plan of salvation for humanity (Luke 1: 35). Christmas does not only speak to humanity about the love of God, but also reminds us about God’s provision of eternal life to all who believe in the Son of God. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, we should reflect more on the eternal value of the occasion than we do on the immediate enjoyment. This brings true happiness.
WEEK 51

CHRISTMAS CONVENTION
WEEK 52
CHRISTMAS CONVENTION

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WEEK 1

LORD’S SUPPER
Main Text: Nehemiah 2: 1-18

Memory Verse: Nehemiah 2: 17 Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.”

Introduction

To love one’s nation is to be disturbed when things don’t go on well in it, and be prepared to do something positive to help fix the problem. This is different from the unproductive approach of being critical of leaders and nothing more. Nehemiah was a man of action. He sat down and wept and mourned before God for some days when he heard about the destruction of Jerusalem. Then he sought the face of God in repentance, fasting, and prayer, confessing the sins of his people and his own sins. Following this, God planted a vision in his heart to mobilize his people for national reconstruction.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the king get to know that Nehemiah was mourning? Verses 1-2

2. What was Nehemiah’s reply when the king asked him what he wanted? Verse 5
3. What did Nehemiah do after inspecting the destruction in Jerusalem? Verse 17

4. Why do you think Nehemiah had confidence that he would succeed?

5. What are you doing to fix a problem at home, the workplace, the church or in the nation?

Conclusion

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem with the assurance that the broken wall will be rebuilt and the burned gates replaced. Furthermore, the temple will be rebuilt; the altar reconstructed, and the economic situation will improve. He had high hopes that national security and the dignity of the people will be restored.

As a faithful steward, Nehemiah was ready to move with God for a mighty revival since he had all the abilities needed to carry out the vision. God found him trustworthy enough to commit resources to his care (Verse 6-8). The leadership style of Nehemiah affirms the fact that, leaders who share their God-given vision with others at the right time are more likely to enjoy the support of others than those who do it alone. When nations tend to despair as a result of leadership failure, it is necessary to have visionary leadership who will rise to the occasion and assure the people that, “Come what may, there is hope for the future.”
WEEK 3

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE
(THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP ON A STAND)

Main Text: Matthew: 5:13-16

Memory Verse: Matthew: 5:14. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Introduction

A lamp is a device that generates heat or gives light. In other words where a lamp is lighted, there is no darkness. What will happen if a lamp is lighted and placed under a bowl? It will definitely lose its usefulness. The scripture says we are the light of the world. And as a city on a hill cannot be hidden, so must our Christian witness be clear to all.

Jesus identifies Himself as the light of the world and He expects us to reflect His character by the way we live. This is what He means when He says we should let our light so shine before men. If we put a lamp on a stand to shine, it overcomes darkness. So should our shining lives overcome evil in society. For, one cannot live a sinful life and shine for others to see.

Discussion Questions

1. Who are the light of the world? Verse 14
2. Explain why a city on a hill cannot be hidden.
3. What is the life in Christ to men? John:1:4
4. How can we shine for others to see?
5. Why should we let our life shine before men?
6. What have you personally learnt from the study?

Conclusion:

One goal of the kingdom of God is righteousness. God demands righteousness because he is righteous. One cannot enter into the kingdom of God and ignore righteous living. The Sermon on the Mount recommends some values and behaviour for members of the Kingdom and encourages us to let our light shine before men. We need to show a life of integrity at home, in business, in politics, in our offices and wherever we find ourselves as Christians.
WEEK 4

BRING UP CHILDREN
IN THE WAY OF THE LORD

Main Text: Mark 10: 13-16

Memory Verse: Mark 10:14. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Introduction

One of the blessings God gave to Adam and Eve was to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:20). After the flood, God pronounced the same blessing on Noah and his family (Genesis 9:1). It is obvious that one way we can multiply is through birth. God expects our offspring to be God-fearing and a light to the world. In our world today, some children are rebellious to the things of God. Some are involved in petty stealing, drug abuse, armed robbery among others. Some have become street children just because they lacked parental love and care. Thus, our responsibility as parents goes beyond dedicating our children to the Lord in Church and giving them Christian names. Rather we have to ensure that these children grow and remain in the Lord.
Discussion Questions

1. Who brought the children to Jesus and what was the purpose? Verse 13
2. Discuss the reaction of the disciples when the children were brought to Christ. Verse 13
3. Why do you think the disciples behaved this way?
4. How did Jesus respond to the disciples’ behaviour? Verse 14
5. How did Jesus receive the children? Verse 16
6. In what ways can parents, siblings, and other adults become obstacles in the godly upbringing of children and their conversion to Christ?

Conclusion

Parents and other adults in the family can become obstacles to children coming to Christ through bad examples. These may include non-involvement in church activities, use of abusive language, quarrelling, fighting, lying and depriving children the right to education and food. The disciples may have considered the children to be a nuisance to Jesus. However, Jesus rebuked them and blessed the children. It is the responsibility of adults to train up children in the way of the Lord so they will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).
WEEK 5
TOUCHING THE LIVES OF OTHERS
(THE PARABLE OF THE YEAST)

Main Text: Matthew 13:33

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:16. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”.

Introduction

We have learnt about how in our Christian walk with Christ we can touch lives through our faith in the Lord. In a previous lesson, we learnt about how the kingdom of God is compared to a mustard seed. This study is on the parable of the yeast. In this parable, we have been compared to a little yeast that causes the whole dough to rise. Without yeast our loaves will be very flat.

Discussion Questions

1. How useful is yeast in baking?

2. How can we be useful and impact people in the following places:
   a. In the family
   b. In the church
   c. Your community
   d. Your working environment
3. Share any story of how you have impacted someone.

4. What happens:
   a. To dough without yeast?
   b. When we fail to impact others?

**Conclusion**

From the discussions so far, we understand that as followers of Christ, it is our responsibility to influence the lives of people in positive ways. This can be done through mentoring, coaching, discipleship among others. When we fail to do that many people who otherwise would have come to Christ will not come but find solutions to their problems outside the Word of God. Our character and attitude as Christians in the family, in the church, in our communities and at our work places should positively influence other people around us just as a little yeast will cause the dough to rise.
WEEK 6
LORD’S SUPPER
# 2016 WEEK BY WEEK TABULAR HOME CELL STUDY GUIDE

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**JANUARY 2017**

**FEBRUARY 2017**

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Main Text: Matthew 13:31-32

Memory Verse: 2 Peter 3:18-But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Introduction

The mustard seed is a very small seed, but when sown and nurtured it can grow into a big tree providing a resting place and shade for all kinds of birds. We are expected to be like the mustard seed. Our faith in the Lord must grow and mature and impact lives. This is demonstrated in the ministry of Christ. Like the mustard seed, He discipled a small number of 12 disciples whose ministries touched the rest of the world was touched. In this parable, Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. The life and ministry of those who come to the kingdom must touch and impact lives.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus compare the Kingdom of God to? Verse 31
2. Mention three practical things a gardener will do for the mustard seed to grow into a big tree.

3. Mention three spiritual exercises you will do to grow in the Lord.

4. In what way was the tree beneficial? Verse 32

5. In what ways can you also be a channel of blessing to others?

Conclusion

Daily Bible reading, praying, and constant fellowship are some of the things we can do to mature spiritually. As we grow in the Lord, we must touch lives, having in mind that Christ is the answer and he alone can provide rest and peace. The parable may also depict the expected all-pervasive influence of the church. Like Pastor James McKeown who came to the shores of Ghana (then Gold Coast) with only his Bible. Over 50 years down the line, the power in the gospel he preached has grown to influence many for the Lord.
Main Text: Matthew 9:17

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Introduction

In the New Testament times, wine was not kept in glass bottles but in goat’s skins sewn around the edges to form watertight bags. The new fresh grape juice begins to produce gases as it ferments, and these gases cause the new elastic wineskins to expand accordingly. If the wineskins were old and rigid, they did not stretch. Instead, they broke and spilt the wine. Here, again the Lord is teaching that the new wine represents the fresh message of the gospel which the old systems of Jewish religion could not contain. The old wineskin represented the old mind-set and attitudes of the Jews. The new gospel says that Jesus Christ, God’s son, offers all peoples forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God by faith, and this did not fit into the old rigid legalistic system of Jewish religion.
Discussion Questions
1. Where do people keep new wine? Verse 17
2. What does the new wine represent?
3. Why did the Jews not put fresh wine into old wine skins? Verse 17
4. What does the old wineskin represent?
5. Why should new wine put in new wine skin?
6. Discuss the lesson this parable seeks to teach.

Conclusion
In this parable, Jesus seeks to teach an important truth that the Christian gospel and Jewish understanding of salvation are not compatible. Salvation by obedience to Jewish laws, and salvation by grace through faith are two different ways through which God has dealt with humankind at different times. God’s dealing with the Jews produced in them a certain mind-set which is represented by the “old wineskin’, which made it difficult for them to accept the gospel message. However, the liberating message of Jesus Christ is the ‘new wine’ which can only be received with a new attitude or mind-set (new wineskin). By application, the gospel of Christ will conflict with some aspects of our traditional cultures. However, since Christ is above the culture, we must change our mind-set (old wineskin) to be able to accept and live by the dictates of the Christ.
WEEK 4

DISCUSSION OF SERMON/PASTORAL CARE GROUPINGS/VISITATION
WEEK 5

DISTRICT/LOCAL/ CELL INPUT
WEEK 6
FAMILY DAY
WEEK 7
SOWING AND BEARING FRUIT
(THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER)

Main Text: Mark: 4:3-20

Memory Verse: John 15:16 -You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

Introduction

In the parable of the sower, Jesus explained the various ways people respond to the Word of God and the result that follows. The seed represents the Word of God, and the soil on which the seed (Word) fell represents the state or condition of our hearts with which we receive the Word of God. We should therefore be careful to develop positive attitude towards the Word of God in order to bear the expected fruit.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Jesus explain the following?
   a. The seed that fell along the path? Verse 15
   b. The seed that fell on rocky places Verses 16 & 17
   c. The seed that fell among thorns Verses 18 & 19
   d. The seed that fell on good soil Verse 20
2. If you were the sower, what type of soil would you spend much energy on and why?

3. What is the Christian’s personal responsibility towards understanding God’s Word?

Conclusion

The seeds which fell on good soil grew and produced crops, multiplying even a hundred times. This means there is full acceptance of the Word. Sometimes it is possible to be listening to the Word of God with your ears but your mind and heart may be closed to it. For us to bear fruit to the glory of God, we should be careful we do not allow persecution, worries of this life, deceitfulness of wealth, and the desire for other things to compete with our devotion to Christ and obedience to His Word.
WEEK 8

SERMON DISCUSSION/PASTORAL CARE
GROUPINGS & VISITATION
WEEK 9

DISTRICT/LOCAL/CELL INPUT
WEEK 10
FAMILY DAY
YOU MUST FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER
(THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT)

Main Text: Matthew 18:23-35

Memory Verse: Matthew 18:35 - This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

Introduction

The parable of the unmerciful servant demonstrates that the master was not happy with the wicked servant. He failed to forgive his fellow servant, even though the master had earlier forgiven him a greater debt. The lesson of forgiveness is one that has been clearly taught in the Bible as crucial for salvation. When Jesus was teaching the disciples to pray, he taught them to ask the Father to forgive them their trespasses as they also forgave those who trespassed against them (Matt. 6:12). Jesus added a profound statement, For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins (Matt. 6:14-15 NIV). This parable clearly emphasizes the need to forgive those who offend us.
Discussion Questions

1. Who is the king in this parable and who are the servants?
2. State how much debt the servant owed his master? Verse 24
3. What various things were needed to be sold before the debt could be paid? Verse 25
4. Compare the debt of the unmerciful servant to that of his fellow servant and give your impression.
5. Why do you think the unmerciful servant refused to forgive his fellow servant?
6. How do we sometimes behave like the unmerciful servant?
7. What lesson have you learnt from the parable about forgiveness?

Conclusion

The amount of debt Jesus has forgiven us cannot be compared to any evil a fellow human being will commit against us. The Bible says, “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” We are also much aware that the wages of sin is death. But through mercy, He who knew no sin paid our debt and forgave us our trespasses. In the parable, the unmerciful servant refused to forgive his fellow servant because he did not appreciate what had been done for him by his master. If we appreciate what Jesus did for us by way of dying on the cross to set us free from the bondage of sin and its consequences, we will easily forgive people who offend us.
WEEK 13

DISTRICT/LOCAL/CELL INPUT
WEEK 14

FAMILY DAY
WEEK 15

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR LORD

(THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS)

Main Text: Matthew 25: 1-13

Memory Verse: Matthew 25: 6, But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.

Introduction

Today’s lesson is based on Jesus’ parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. He likened believers expecting his return to ten virgins. He admonishes us to be watchful on daily basis, especially as it seems to some that his coming has delayed. Like the five wise virgins there are so many things we can do to ensure that, at any time at all, that the Master appears we shall have enough oil in our lamps to attend the wedding banquet.

Discussion Questions

1. What things do the ten virgins have in common?
2. What distinguishes the five wise virgins from the foolish ones? Verses 3-4
3. Why did the wise virgins take along extra oil for their lamps?
4. What happened to the ten virgins when the bridegroom tarried? Verse 5
5. Why were the foolish virgins rejected by the bridegroom?
6. What lessons can be learnt from the parable as we await the coming of the Master?
7. What do we do now that can be likened to “carrying extra oil”?

**Conclusion**

Preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ is a process that requires diligence in work, alertness in living, and consistence in prayer. We learn from the study that, it was only at the arrival of the bridegroom that it became clear that half of the number of virgins were foolish. This is because they failed to prepare adequately for his coming. This should remind us, as Christians, to continue to assess ourselves whether we have enough oil for our lamps as we await the coming of Jesus. It is good to be involved in so many activities in the name of Jesus, but “the oil factor” which is our constant vigilance and alertness, is very important. This is the reason we should be concerned, aside all things, about our personal devotion to Christ, and living by the Word of God.
WEEK 16

SERMON DISCUSSION/PASTORAL GROUPINGS & VISITATION
WEEK 17

DISTRICT/LOCAL/CELL INPUT
WEEK 19

HUMILITY IN PRAYER
(The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector)

Main Text: Luke: 18:10-14

Memory Verse: James 4:6, For God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Introduction

Throughout his ministry, Jesus used parables to teach both the disciples and the multitudes. We learn from our main text the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector, who went to pray. In his prayer, the Pharisee portrayed himself self-righteous as he looked down on the tax collector. On his part, the tax collector saw himself as an unworthy sinner who needed mercy from the Lord. Jesus used the parable to teach us to be humble and refrain from judging others.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think was wrong with the prayer of the Pharisee? Verse 11 & 12

2. Why do you think the tax collector went home justified? Verse 14
3. In what ways do we sometimes behave like the Pharisee?

4. What should be our attitude towards God in prayer?

5. What insights have you gained from the parable?

Conclusion

Jesus condemned the prayer of the Pharisee because he was proud, self-righteous and looked down on the tax collector. Today’s memory verse draws our attention to the fact that God gives grace to the humble but opposes the proud. In spite of our status, education, titles, spiritual gifts, abilities, wealth, among others, we should always humble ourselves before God and not look down on others.
WEEK 20

PERSISTENT PRAYER
(THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW AND THE CROOKED JUDGE)


Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Pray continually.

Introduction

The importance of developing a persistent prayer life has been clearly taught in the Scriptures. Jesus demonstrated this throughout His earthly ministry to the extent that His disciples came to ask Him to teach them to pray. Jesus told this parable to teach us why we should pray continually until we get what we are looking for. The parable demonstrates that even though the judge was unjust and wicked, he granted the widow’s request because of her persistence. Similarly, our heavenly Father who is just will grant our request when we cry to Him day and night in prayer.

Discussion Questions

1. What two specific things did Jesus say about the judge? Verse 2

2. How will you describe the widow’s behaviour? Verse 3
3. Why did the judge finally grant the widow’s request? Verse 5
4. What time should we pray? Verse 7
5. How will God bring the answers to our requests? Verse 8
6. What lessons have you personally learnt from the parable?
7. How different will your prayer life be after this discussion?

**Conclusion**

The parable makes it clear that although the judge neither feared God nor cared about what people thought, he was compelled by the persistence of the widow to give her justice. By this parable Jesus revealed a very important secret about God. He answers persistent prayer according to His perfect will. Matthew 7:7-11 makes it clear that to everyone who asks it shall be given, to everyone who knocks at the door shall be opened and everyone who seeks shall find. Matthew 7:11 confirms that if wicked parents know how to grant their children’s request, how much more our heavenly Father who is faithful and just.
WEEK 21
SERMON DISCUSSION/PASTORAL CARE GROUPINGS & VISITATION
WEEK 23

FAMILY DAY
WEEK 24

WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR?
(THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN)


Memory Verse: James 2: 14, What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?

Introduction

Quite often we behave like the law expert recorded in the parable of the Good Samaritan. He might have learnt the theoretical aspect of the law but lacked the practical aspect of it. We ‘busy’ ourselves with so many things, which in our eyes seem important in our service to God and ignore the basic and fundamental ones, which touch the heart of God. We profess to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and might; yet when it comes to loving our neighbours, we are found wanting. The law expert, in his quest to know what he must do in order to inherit eternal life, was told the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus told him to do as the Samaritan had done. In other words, he was told to help those in need, give without expecting anything in return and have a better understanding of who his neighbour is.
Discussion Questions

1. According to the parable, what must the teacher of the law do to inherit eternal life? Verses 25 & 27)

2. The Good Samaritan was considered the neighbour in the parable. Why?

3. In what ways do we sometimes behave like the priest and the Levite?

4. In what ways can you be a neighbour to others who are suffering?

5. How can you love your neighbour as yourself?

6. What have you learnt personally from this parable?

Conclusion

Sometimes we can be so preoccupied with offices we hold and services we ‘render to God’ that we can lose sight of the needs of people around us. People, who are in affliction, need not to be our friends, relatives or from our tribes before we help them. As Christians, our faith must be demonstrated in concrete ways to all manner of people. Faith is made complete by actions. We must therefore strive to back our faith with good deeds.
WEEK 25

SERMON DISCUSSION/PASTORAL CARE
GROUPINGS & VISITATION
WEEK 27
FAMILY DAY
WEEK 28

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD
(THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP, GATE AND SHEPHERD)

Main Text: John 10:1-13

Memory Verse: John 10:11, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Introduction

In the parable, Jesus represents the gate in two ways. First, He is the gate by which the shepherd enters the sheep pen. Anyone who does not enter by this gate but enters by other means is a thief (verse 1 & 2). Second, He is the gate by which the sheep enter and are saved. They will come in and go out through this gate and find pasture (verse 9). This parable contains specific lessons for Christian leaders and general lessons for all children of God.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the thief and the shepherd? Verses 1, 2
2. Who are the ‘sheep’ in this parable?
3. What does Jesus mean by saying I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved? Verse 9
4. Describe the relationship between the sheep and the good shepherd Verse 14
5. What differentiates the good shepherd from the hired hand? Verse 11-13
6. In what practical ways, do you think, you can imitate Jesus the good shepherd?

Conclusion

The sheep in the parable represents the children of God. They are so dear to the Lord to the extent that He watches over them so that the thief and wolf will not have the opportunity to destroy them. He also wants the sheep to identify His voice so that they will not follow the stranger or the thief and robber. The shepherd is expected to identify the voice of the sheep and lead them to where they can find pasture. He even lays down his life for them. This will differentiate the good shepherd from the hired hand. The good shepherd in the parable is Jesus. Leaders of the church, at all levels, are expected to imitate Jesus by protecting their congregations from false teachers. They are supposed to teach sound doctrines. In teaching, biblical doctrines should be differentiated from Church practice and personal opinions. The members of the church are also expected to be obedient and listen to the voice of their leaders.
WEEK 29

JESUS EARNESTLY SEEKS THE LOST (THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN)

Main Text: Luke 15: 8-10

Memory Verse: Luke 15:10, In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Introduction

During my childhood days, my mother traded in bread which we sold by the street at night. Because of the possibility of some of the monies falling on the ground, each night after sales, we did a careful search. We used our traditional light called “bobo” (kind of lamp which uses wick and kerosene) to carefully search the ground if any of our coins had dropped. This was to make sure nothing we had toiled for gets lost. Jesus daily seeks the lost in even a more earnest manner as indicated in the parable.

Discussion Questions

1. How many of the woman’s coins got lost? Verse 8
2. How did she do the search? Verse 8
3. What did she do when the coin was found? Verse 9
4. What effect does the repentance of a sinner have in heaven? Verse 10

5. How should this parable encourage us to do effective evangelism in the church?

Conclusion

The woman had ten coins and only one out of the ten got missing but she kept the nine safely and lighted a lamp, swept the house and searched carefully until she found the lost coin. Finding the lost coin, she invited all her friends and neighbours to join her for celebration.

All unbelievers are lost coins that Jesus is looking for. However, He has entrusted this business of searching for the lost to the church (Matthew 28:18-20). We must employ all available tools and measures to bring the lost to the saving knowledge of Christ because anybody, who wins a soul for Christ, brings great joy to the angels of God.
WEEK 30

SERMON DISCUSSION/PASTORAL CARE
GROUPINGS & VISITATION

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WEEK 32
FAMILY DAY
WEEK 33

BOLDNESS IN PRAYER
(THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND IN NEED)

Main Text: Luke 11: 5-8

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:7  Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.

Introduction

Christ has not promised a Christian life without challenges. However, He promises His unfailing love and faithfulness. Our relationship with Him demands that we cast all our cares upon him no matter the circumstances. This calls for boldness in prayer and confidence in the Lord. The parable teaches us about boldness in prayer. Boldness does not imply making unreasonable demands or giving God ultimatums, but rather going to Him in confident trust that He will answer when we call.

Discussion Questions

1. To whom did the man go when he was in need? Verse 5
2. At what time did he make his request? Verse 5
3. Why was his request granted? Verse 8
4. What does the parable tell us about prayer?

5. What should we do in our time of need?

6. Share a testimony of how God recently answered your bold request.

**Conclusion**

Christ our friend and mediator has made the way for us to enter God’s presence with confidence and boldness (Hebrews 4:16). One of the lessons we can learn from this parable is that, having a good relationship with the Lord enables us to go to his presence in boldness. The man in the parable went to his friend at midnight to request for a favour. This means that as Christians we can go to God anytime in prayer. Our communication with God should not be limited to times and seasons.
WEEK 34

SERMON DISCUSSION/PASTORAL CARE
GROUPINGS & VISITATION

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WEEK 37

THE RICH FOOL
(THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL)


Memory Verse: Luke 12: 15, Watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Introduction

According to Paul, the love of money and, by extension, wealth is a root of all kinds of evil. The biblical writers were so much aware of its power and influence that they spent a great deal of time on the subject. In His ministry, Jesus devoted a lot of His teachings on the consequences of wrong desire for material possessions. Greed and selfishness are some of the vices that make people pursue material gains and reject God in all they do. Jesus told this parable to sound a note of warning about the tendency to love money.

Discussion Questions

1. What was wrong with the rich man’s decision? Verse 18

2. Why did God call him fool and demanded his life that very night? Verses 19 & 20
3. How will it end with anyone who stores up things for himself but is mean towards God? Verse 20
4. How do you understand the statement, “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”?
5. What would you have done with your wealth if you were the rich man?
6. What should be your attitude towards money?

**Conclusion**

Jesus taught that, if not handled well, riches and material possessions can hinder us from entering into the Kingdom of God. As Christians we have to be on guard against all kinds of greed and concentrate on God’s special concern for the poor. By so doing, we will save our souls from the damning effects of wealth.
WEEK 38

SERMON DISCUSSION/ PASTORAL CARE GROUPINGS & VISITATION
WEEK 39

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WEEK 40

FAMILY DAY

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 4:10, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

Introduction

This parable, which has been named “The Prodigal Son”, contains a number of lessons that demand our attention as Christians. In the first place, the younger son demands his portion of the estate while his father was still alive and goes away from the oversight and authority of his father to “do his own thing”. He is representative of the Christian who finds the authority of God oppressive or restrictive and, therefore, backslides. He goes far away to spend his inheritance in wild living.

A prodigal person is one given to wasteful and reckless expenditure especially of money. The backslidden Christian will find himself wildly spending his time, money, gifts and other resources on sexual immorality, impurity, lust and evil desires (Col. 3:5).
Others involve themselves in bad company, obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking which are out of place (Eph. 5:4).

**Discussion Questions**

1. What did the younger son say to his father?  
   Verse 12

2. What did he do with his portion of the inheritance?  
   Verse 13

3. What does it mean to be prodigal?  

4. ‘The Prodigal Son represents the backslidden Christian’. Discuss.

5. What are some behavioural traits a backslidden Christian is likely to exhibit?

6. Why do some Christians backslide?

**Conclusion**

Backsliding Christians usually find the loving care of God and his authority over their lives oppressive, and they desire the evil worldly liberties. They long for the pleasures of sin that the world offers. Demas deserted Paul because he loved this world (2Tim. 4:10). The apostle Paul mentions some traits of the worldly Christian in Colossians 3:5 and Ephesians 5:4
WEEK 42

‘HE CAME TO HIS SENSES’
(THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON)

Main Text: Luke 15:14-20

Memory Verse: Isaiah 1: 18, *Come now, let us reason together” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*

Introduction

The Bible indicates that after the young man was confronted with the results of his rebellion, to the extent of feeding on pig food, he came to his senses. Before a sinner can repent and come back to God, he must realize the true state of his predicament, that is, his bondage to sin, his depravity and his need for God. And this is exactly what that young man did.

Repentance begins in the mind with a mental acknowledgement of one’s own moral bankruptcy. This realization then activates certain remedial actions. In this case, the young man decides he will stop eating pig food and go back home. Repentance always involves a U-turn and throwing oneself on the mercy of God.
The repentant person humbly accepts his wrong decisions, choices or behaviour and turns to God for forgiveness and restoration. There is an eternal welcome back to God for the repentant sinner (Isa. 1:18).

**Discussion Questions**

1. What happened to the young man after he had spent all his money? Verse 14
2. What did he do to himself? Verse 15
3. What does the statement -”he came to his senses”- mean?
4. Repentance always involves a turning around. Discuss.
5. What does Isaiah 1:18 say?

**Conclusion**

Repentance and confession of sins are important prerequisites for salvation and acceptance with God. In today’s reading, the young man realized these truths and decided to go back home. “He came to his senses” means he realized how bad his situation was, consorting with pigs and eating food meant for pigs was the lowest a Jew could go. In Isaiah 1:18, the Lord calls out to all who are burdened by sin to come for cleansing, forgiveness and restoration. Today, God is still in the business of receiving sinners.
WEEK 43

SERMON DISCUSSION / PASTORAL CARE
GROUPINGS & VISITATION
WEEK 44

PRAYER FOR PEACEFUL NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Pray that Ghanaians will choose the right Leader at all level, Pray for Electoral Commission to be fair, firm and faithful, Pray for Security Services to be effective in protecting the Electoral process.
WEEK 45
FAMILY DAY
WEEK 46

THE GREAT BANQUET
(THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET)


Memory Verse: Revelation 19:9, Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are true Words of God.”

Introduction

This parable is an illustration of God’s great invitation to mankind and the flimsy excuses men usually give for not accepting His invitation. Jesus told this parable at a feast in a Pharisee’s home. The story originally applied to Israel and how they rejected the gospel by making excuses (vrs 16-22) and how the invitation was extended to the Gentiles (vrs 23 & 24). Today, however, the parable has a strong personal message to all men everywhere. Men are saved by responding to God’s invitation through Christ and they are lost by making excuses. Some of the excuses men are making include acquiring property, doing business, and marriage. These activities are not bad in themselves but when they are pursued at the total exclusion of God and His will for us, they become a snare that denies us Heaven.
Discussion Questions

1. Why did the invitees refuse to attend the banquet? Verse 18

2. What are some of the excuses they made? Verses 18-20

3. What are some excuses some people are making today to reject the call of Christ?

4. When and where will this Great Banquet be held? Verse 15b

5. Discuss verse 22 in light of what the Lord said in John 14:2.

Conclusion

God’s invitation for salvation is to all. God loved humankind of all races and gave His son for all. However, mankind has all kinds of excuses to reject the gospel of Christ.

For the philosopher, it does not make sense, for the businessman, it is not profitable, for the worldly it is not exciting, for religionists, it is a lie, the list goes on. But God’s invitation still remains to “whosoever will”. We must bring in as many as we can while there is still time.
WEEK 50

JESUS, THE ONLY WAY

Main Text: John 10: 1-5

Memory Verse: John 14:6, Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.’

Introduction

There are many religions in the world and there have been many people who have made varied claims of either giving salvation or pointing the way to salvation. How have they made these claims? What are their claims about their relationship with God, the creator? Jesus compares salvation to a sheep pen that has a gate and doorkeeper.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Jesus describe those who do not enter the sheep pen through the gate? Verse 1
2. Who is the one who enters the sheep pen by the door? Verse 2
3. What are the characteristics of the shepherd? Verses 2-6)
4. What lessons can you learn from the text?
Conclusion

Those who do not enter the sheep pen by the gate are thieves and robbers but the shepherd comes in through the gate. Jesus is the Shepherd of the church and He came through the prescribed method given by God. He was of the tribe of Judah, was of virgin birth, led asinless life, was crucified, He died, resurrected, ascended and poured down the Holy Spirit. That is the gate and He entered through it; all others who claim to give salvation or point us to God apart from Christ are thieves and robbers. The church hears His voice, and He knows and calls us by name, goes ahead of us in life in all our daily dealings and we recognize His voice.
### WEEK 51

**SERMON DISCUSSION / PASTORAL CARE GROUPINGS & VISITATION**

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WEEK 1

FAMILY DAY
WEEK 2

EVALUATE THE CELL MEETINGS
IN 2016 AND PLAN FOR 2017
WEEK 3

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP
(THREE PARABLES OF THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP)

Main Text: Luke 14:28-33

Memory Verse: Matthew 16:24, Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Introduction

Discipleship is the process by which a person accepts the Lordship of Jesus and commits himself to His teachings and way of life. The cost of discipleship is the price one has to pay for being a follower of Christ. Many believers from non-Christian families have experienced hostility because of their faith. In some religious cultures, converts to Christianity are disowned by their families or even killed. The life and death of Jesus are prime examples to show that following Christ demands self-denial. From our main text, we learn from the parables that whoever wants to follow Christ must first consider the cost.

Discussion Questions

1. What two examples did Jesus liken to the cost of discipleship? Verses 28 & 31
2. Why must one first consider the cost of discipleship?

3. How do you understand Jesus’ statement, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life - he cannot become my disciple”? Luke 14:26

4. Give examples of the price people have paid for being disciples of Christ?

Conclusion

Nothing (not even close family members) must come between the disciple and his Lord. Sometimes, we tend to put ourselves and our families ahead of our commitment to discipleship. Jesus’ statement that he who does not hate his family cannot be His disciple, does not suggest that we should literally fight our family members. Rather, He was speaking about the divisions that would inevitably result from our decision to follow Him.
Main Text: Matthew7:24-27

Memory Verse: Matthew7:24, Therefore everyone who hears these Words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Introduction

Putting up structures requires wisdom from the builders. In recent times we have witnessed the collapse of some buildings and walls, which were not built on strong foundation. Every disciple is expected to be like a wise builder, by building on a strong foundation or on a rock. In this study, the wise builder is likened to the one who does the will of God. Today, our churches are filled with people who profess to be disciples of Christ, but who fail to do God’s will. The Lord, in this parable, emphasized the importance of hearing His voice and obeying Him. What needs to be understood is that, building on a rock protects the building from natural hazards like floods and storms. It is important that we do God’s will despite challenges that may come in form of ‘storms’ and ‘floods’.
Discussion Questions

1. Who is a wise builder? Verse 24
2. Who is a foolish builder? Verse 26
3. Explain the outcome of building on rock or on sand. Verses 25 & 27
4. Give examples of situations that hinder us from doing God’s will.
5. What could be the possible consequences of not obeying the Word of God?
6. Can you share any experience (about yourself or another) on the consequences of not obeying the Lord in a particular situation?

Conclusion

The need for money, marriage, job, and the desire to give birth, among many other things, may hinder us from doing the will of God. However, the disciple who does the will of God is like the man who builds on a rock. Being a disciple of Christ does not mean all our desires and needs may be met as expected. We should remember that failure to do God’s will is likened to building on a sandy ground and its outcome is destruction.
WEEK 5

SERMON DISCUSSION/ PASTORAL CARE GROUPINGS & VISITATION

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ANY QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS & ANY OTHER INFORMATION?
ALL GENERAL questions, suggestions or information to be forwarded to any of
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You can also send your suggestions to the emails below;
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