

**Helping Our
Children Present
Jesus
as the
Son of God
Part 3**

**Growing Godly Families Series
Manual 28**

By

Duane L. Anderson

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**American Indian Bible Institute
Box 511
Norwalk, CA 90651-0511
www.aibi.org**

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Growing Godly Families Series

The “Growing Godly Families Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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Jesus Said He Was Going to Prepare a Place for Us

Judas left Jesus and the other disciples. Then, we see that Jesus began to teach the rest of the disciples some very important lessons to prepare them for the future. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn these same lessons so that they will be prepared when opposition comes from those who reject Jesus. In this topic, we are going to see that Jesus told the disciples why they did not need to be troubled or afraid.

Jesus had just told Peter that he would deny Him three times that evening. Then, Jesus went on to tell Peter and the other disciples not to be troubled. John 14:1-4 says, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” The word translated “troubled” means *to be anxious, distressed or to take away calmness of mind*. Jesus also used this word in John 14:27 where we read, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” In this verse, we see that peace is the opposite of being troubled. Jesus wanted the disciples to experience peace in their hearts.

Jesus told the disciples just a few verses earlier that He was going away and that where He was going they could not go immediately. Jesus reminded the disciples that they believed the Father and encouraged them to believe Him in the same way. Then, Jesus said that He was returning to His Father’s to prepare a place for them. The word translated “mansion” is only used one other place in the New Testament and that is in this chapter. John 14:23 says, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’” In this verse, we see that the word is translated “home.” Then, in verse 26, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to make His home in the human spirit of each believer. These verses point out the fact that we actually have all three members of the Trinity living in our lives as Christians.

Jesus also promised the disciples that He would come back for them and for all Christians after He prepares a home for us. At that time, Jesus said that He will receive us to Himself. The word translated “receive” means *to take with one’s self or to join with one’s self*. Paul used this word when he said in Colossians 2:6-7, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Just as we received Christ Jesus as Lord at the moment of salvation, He is going to receive us into heaven to spend all eternity with Him. Jesus told the disciples that they knew where He was going and that they also knew the way to heaven.

That statement by Jesus caused Thomas to ask a question. John 14:5-7 says, “Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.’” Thomas, and possibly the other disciples as well, did not understand what Jesus had said a few minutes earlier about the fact that He was returning to the Father. That was why Thomas asked this question so that the disciples could have full understanding.

First, Thomas made the statement, “Lord, we do not know where You are going.” Here, we see

that Thomas did not understand where Jesus was going. Jesus did not actually answer this part of the question at this time. Instead, that part was answered at the time Jesus returned to heaven. Acts 1:9-11 says, “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’” We see that Thomas and the other disciples had the opportunity to see Jesus return to the Father and then had two angels explain to them exactly where Jesus had gone.

Second, Thomas asked the question, “How can we know the way?” Jesus has said that He was going to the Father in verse two. Now, Jesus went on to explain the only way that a person can get to heaven and to the Father. To answer that question, Jesus used the words “I AM” for the sixth recorded time in the book of John. We see that Jesus explained that He is three things in just one sentence. First, Jesus is the only way to the Father. Jesus had explained earlier that there are only two ways that people can go. Matthew 7:13-14 says, “‘Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.’”

Then, Hebrews 10:19-22 explains why we must enter the narrow gate through Jesus when those verses say, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” The blood of Jesus made it possible for us to enter into the presence of the Father because of the fact that Jesus is the only One without sin.

Second, Jesus is the only One that is truth. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Then, John 1:17 adds, “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” Grace and truth could not come through the law but only through Jesus. Third, Jesus is the only One that gives life. Jesus had said in John 10:10-11, “‘The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.’” Later that night as Jesus prayed to the Father, He said in John 17:2, “‘As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.’” Jesus is the only way to have eternal life that makes it possible to come to the Father. Jesus went on to say that those who knew Him also knew the Father.

That brought the next question from Philip. John 14:8-12 says, “Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.’” Here, we see that Philip said that He would be satisfied if Jesus showed Him the Father.

Jesus began his answer to Philip by reminding him that Jesus had been with him and the other

disciples for over three years. Then, Jesus said that if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father. Later that evening in His prayer to the Father, Jesus said in John 17:20-21, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” Jesus said that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. To see Jesus was to see the Father. Jesus also said that He did not speak of His own authority. That was due to the fact that Jesus came to do the will of the Father. John 7:16 says, “Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’” Here, we see that Jesus said the things that He did and taught were from the Father.

Jesus said that they could believe what He said for two reasons. First, they could believe Him because the Father was in Him. Second, they could believe Him because of the works that Jesus did in the name of the Father. Then, Jesus went on to give a wonderful promise to everyone who would believe in Him. Jesus said that all those who believe in Him will do greater works than He did while He was here on the earth. Jesus said that this would be possible because of the fact that He was going to the Father.

Jesus went on to explain the meaning of this statement in the following verses. John 14:16-17 says, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” Jesus explained how the followers of Jesus would do greater works than the works that Jesus did while He was on this earth just before He returned to heaven. Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Those greater works would be taking the Gospel to the end of the earth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that we are laborers together in these greater works as we continue to spread the message of the Gospel. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to be a part of these greater works.

Jesus Promised to Send Another Helper

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus said that His followers would do greater works than He did. This is due to the fact that as Christians we have been commissioned to take the Gospel to the end of the earth. However, we cannot do that in our own strength. As a result, we are going to see in this topic that Jesus promised to send another Helper.

Jesus had just told the disciples that He was returning to the Father. He had also told them that they and others who would follow would do greater works. As a result, Jesus wanted the disciples to know that He would be available in heaven to help them. As a result, Jesus gave the disciples a wonderful promise about prayer. John 14:13-14 says, “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.” Here, we see that Jesus assured the disciples that they would not be forgotten when He returned to the Father.

John explained this promise in more detail for all Christians when he wrote in 1 John 5:14-15, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” Here, we see that the statement in John applies to all Christians and not just to the disciples there that night. These verses show that we can have this confidence as we pray according to the will of God and not for selfish purposes. We can know that God will hear us when we pray according to the will of God. We can also know that God will grant our petitions when we pray according to the will of God.

Jesus also told the disciples why He would answer their prayers. We see that He will answer our prayers so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. In His prayer to the Father, Jesus said in John 17:4, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Jesus prayed this prayer just a few hours before He went to the cross. As a result, Jesus is not talking about His death and resurrection in this verse. The work that the Father gave Jesus to do while He was on this earth was to prepare the disciples to take the Gospel to the end of the earth.

Christ gave us that same commission in Matthew 28:19-20 which says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.” In these verses, we have one command, “Make Disciples.” We carry out that command by doing three things: going, baptizing, and teaching those baptized to obey all that Jesus commanded us. We will also bring glory to both the Father and the Son as we are obedient. As we do the will of God and carry out the commands of Jesus, we have been promised that the Lord will answer our prayers.

Jesus then gave a second promise to the disciples so that they would not be alone when Jesus returned to heaven. We see that Jesus promised to send another Helper. John 14:15-18 says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” Jesus told the disciples that night that if they loved Him they would keep His commandments. That same thing is true for us in our lives.

However, we cannot keep the commandments of Jesus in our own strength. As a result, Jesus said that He would pray and ask the Father to give us another Helper. That Helper is the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” We were sealed with the Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation as the down payment and guarantee of our eternal salvation. We see the first promise that we have about the Holy Spirit is that He will abide with us forever. That is a guarantee that we cannot lose our salvation.

However, the Holy Spirit does much more for us than just guarantee our salvation. We see that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. John 14:26 says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” The Holy Spirit teaches us and guides us into all truth so that we can grow spiritually. He also brings to our remembrance the things that Jesus taught while He was here on the earth. As a result, we can depend on the Holy Spirit to teach us moment by moment and also to bring the Scriptures that we have studied to our remembrance so that we can give an answer from the Scriptures to the questions that others ask us day by day.

The world cannot receive this understanding from the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” The world cannot see the Holy Spirit. The world cannot know the Holy Spirit. As a result, the world cannot be taught by the Holy Spirit.

In contrast, Jesus promised the disciples that they could know the Holy Spirit. Jesus reminded the disciples that the Holy Spirit was already present with them. The Spirit has always been present in the world. Genesis 1:2 says, “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God *was* hovering over the face of the waters.” However, soon the Holy Spirit would be living within their human spirit. John 7:38-39 says, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Jesus promised that He would not leave the disciples alone so they did not have to fear that they would be orphans. Instead, Hebrews 13:5 promises, “*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*”

Jesus then reminded the disciples that they and we show our love by obedience to Him. John 14:19-21 says, “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Jesus said that in just a very short time the people of the world would not see Him again.

However, Jesus promised the disciples that they would see Him. Scripture gives us a total of at least ten appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:6 says, “After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.” Christ assured the disciples that they would also live because of the fact that Jesus lived. The resurrection of Jesus means that all who have repented of the sin of unbelief and placed their faith in Jesus have eternal life. In fact, we are given the Holy Spirit

as a down payment and guarantee of that life.

Jesus promised the disciples that when they saw Him after the resurrection they would understand their relationship to the Father. We see that Jesus is in the Father. In His prayer to the Father, in John 17:22-23, Jesus said, ““And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”” However, Jesus also told the disciples that they were in Him and He was in them. That relationship is true for all Christians because John 17:21 says, ““That they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.””

Jesus said that those who keep His commandments are those who love Him. The word translated “keep” means *to carefully observe and obey*. Here, Jesus made it clear that the way we show our love to Him is by obeying the commandments that He has given to us. However, Jesus also gives a wonderful promise to all those who obey His commandments. He said that every individual who loves Him will be loved by the Father. In addition, Jesus will do two things for all those who love Him. Jesus said that He will love them. Second, Jesus said that He will manifest Himself to them. The word translated “manifest” means *to show or reveal*. Jesus promises to reveal Himself to all those who love Him.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit as a Helper to all those who come to Jesus in repentance and faith. In addition, we want to help them understand that the way that we respond to the love of Jesus for us is by asking the Holy Spirit to give us His strength to obey the commands that Jesus gave. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to grow in their understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Jesus Promised the Holy Spirit Would Teach All Things

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the fact that Jesus promised to give them the Holy Spirit as the Helper to give them the strength to carry out the will of God. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus also promised that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things.

At the Last Supper, Jesus answered the questions of the various disciples (John 14:22-24). Now, we see that the Judas, was not Judas Iscariot, asked Jesus how He would show Himself to the disciples but not to the world. Jesus answered this question by talking about the way that He and the Father respond to those who love Him. Jesus said that anyone who loves Him will be obedient to His Word. Jesus said in the house of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:47, ““Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.”” Simon the Pharisee did not even show the common courtesy of washing the feet of Jesus when Jesus accepted the invitation to eat at his house. In contrast, a woman who was a sinner came and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, wiped them with her hair and anointed them with fragrant oil. That action by the woman was an illustration of the fact that love for Jesus will cause us to want to do even more than He commands.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says. “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Here, we see that love will cause us to do much more than duty. That is why it is so important for us to help our children understand the greatness of the love of Jesus for them. As they grow in their understanding of that love, they will be obedient to the commands of Jesus because of understanding His love for them. Christ gave a wonderful promise to all who show this kind of love to Him. He said that He and the Father will come to that person and make Their home with him. The word translated “home” is only used twice in the New Testament and both are in this chapter. In John 14:2, Jesus is preparing a home for us in heaven. Here, we see that our love causes the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to make their home in our hearts while we are on this earth.

In contrast, the person that does not love Jesus will not keep His words. This is why we should not expect those who are not Christians to live like Christians. They do not have the love of Jesus in their hearts and so they cannot act out of that love. Jesus said that the words and commands that Jesus spoke to the disciples did not come from Him. The source of those words was the Father who had sent Him. As a result, those who rejected the commands of Jesus were actually rejecting the commands of the Father.

Then, Jesus went on to help the disciples understand more about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the lives of all future believers. John 14:25-28 says, ““These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard Me say to you, “I am going away and coming *back* to you.” If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, “I am going to the Father,” for My Father is greater than I.”” Jesus said that He had spoken these things to the disciples while He was still with them on this earth. However, He would soon leave them.

Jesus wanted the disciples to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives. That is why Jesus promised the disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus. Jesus then explained one of the key ministries of the Holy Spirit in our lives as well as the lives of the disciples that were gathered there that night. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things. Ephesians 4:20-24 says, “But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us and help us to understand the things that Jesus taught.

Jesus also promised the disciples that they could experience His peace. That peace is for all Jews and Gentiles that become Christians because that peace gives us access to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 2:14 says, “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.” Then, Ephesians 2:17-18 adds, “And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Jesus said that He gives a peace that the world cannot give.

The reason that the world cannot give a peace like Jesus gives is due to the fact that He gives an inner peace. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that the peace of God guards both our hearts and our minds. That peace guards our hearts because we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God. That peace also guards our minds as we bring our requests to Him with thanksgiving. The reason that is true is due to the fact that thanksgiving indicates that we look forward to the fact that God will answer according to His will.

Jesus then went on to remind the disciples that He had told them both that He was going away and that He was coming back to them. This statement now had both an immediate fulfillment and a future fulfillment. Three times in John 20:19-26 Jesus reminded the disciples of that immediate peace. John 20:19-21 says, “Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace *be* with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’” The resurrection of Jesus brought peace to the disciples as well as a commission.

However, Jesus also promised the disciples that they would experience that peace even when they went through times of tribulation in the future. John 16:33 says, ““These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”” Jesus also reminded the disciples that they could rejoice because He was going to the Father. There, His full glory would be restored, which had been set aside when He came to this earth. In addition, Jesus is making intercession to the Father for us. Hebrews 7:25 says, “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” We can also rejoice because of the fact that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.

Jesus went on to say in John 14:29-31, ““And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.”” Jesus wanted

the disciples to know in advance that He was going back to the Father so that they could believe when it happened.

Jesus told the disciples in advance that He was going to die and be raised from the dead. He also told them in advance that He was going to return to the Father after He was raised from the dead. Satan had taken possession of Judas and they would be coming to betray Jesus in just a very short time. John 13:27 says, "Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'" Satan had personally taken possession of Judas to make certain that Jesus was betrayed for crucifixion. Now, Satan was going to carry out that plan through Judas.

However, what Satan did not realize or understand is that he had nothing in Jesus. Satan had no claim to Jesus because he could not charge Jesus with any sin. As a result, he could not hold Jesus in the grave. Hosea 13:14 says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes." This was a promise that God would one day restore Israel. However, Paul used this verse to show that God would make this restoration possible through Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 says, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Satan could not hold Jesus in the grave because he could not accuse Jesus of sin. Jesus was the first to defeat death and His victory made eternal life possible for both Jews and Gentiles. We have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was obedient unto death on the cross because of His love for the Father. In fact, Jesus came to this earth so that He could die for our sins knowing that the Father would raise Him from the dead because He was satisfied with the payment that Jesus made. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the Father was satisfied with the payment of Jesus because He was without sin. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this wonderful news to others.

Jesus Explained How to Bear Much Fruit

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to teach us all things. We also saw that Satan could not hold Jesus in death because Satan had no sin of which he could accuse Jesus. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained to the disciples as they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane how they and all future followers can be fruitful in their spiritual lives.

John 14 concluded with Jesus saying it was time for them to leave the Last Supper. As a result, Jesus and the disciples were walking from Jerusalem to the Garden as Jesus explained to the disciples the lessons given in John 15 and 16. A vineyard of grapevines along the road from Jerusalem to the Garden probably provided the illustration that Jesus used in John 15 to explain to the disciples how to bear spiritual fruit. Jesus began this illustration by another "I AM." Jesus said that He is the true vine. His Father is the One who cares for the vineyard. In the Old Testament, a vine was often used to describe the nation of Israel. Israel had often been an unfruitful vine. In contrast, Jesus made it clear here that He is the One who is the true vine (John 15:1-4).

Jesus went on to describe two types of branches on the vine. Some branches do not bear fruit while others are fruitful and some even bear much fruit. Jesus began by talking about the branches that do not bear fruit. Jesus said that the Father takes away the branches that do not bear fruit. John 15:6 tells us what happens to those branches, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned." This judgment will include all non-Christians, including those who are professing Christians who have never experienced true repentance and faith. Jesus compared such professing believers to tares. Matthew 13:30 says, "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" Here, we see the judgment of those who are not genuine.

In contrast, we see what the Father does in the lives of all genuine believers. We see that the Father prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it may bring forth more fruit. When a vine or a tree is pruned, it means that small pieces of the branch are removed because they will hinder the development of fruit on that branch. In the same way, sin in our lives will hinder the bearing of spiritual fruit. As a result, God works in our lives to transform our lives as we yield to Him. At times, this happens when God speaks to us as we examine our own lives. That is why 1 Corinthians 11:28 says, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." Here, we see that as we prepare for a communion service we are to examine our own lives and confess anything that hinders fruit bearing. When we fail to examine our own lives, God will use loving discipline to cleanse our lives. Hebrews 12:11 says, "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." God wants us to bear fruit.

Jesus told the disciples that their lives had been made clean by the very fact that they had placed their faith in Jesus. John 13:10-11 says, "Jesus said to him, 'He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, 'You are not all clean.'" Judas was still in the room at that time and Jesus showed that He knew the condition of the heart of Judas. Our sins are blotted out at the moment of salvation and we are clean. However, we continue to sin and so

we need cleansing moment by moment so that our lives can be fruitful. That is why 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We need that continuous cleansing as Christians so that our lives can become fruitful. That is why it is so important to continually abide in Jesus. We will not bear fruit through our own efforts. That is why Jesus reminded the disciples that they would not bear fruit unless they were continuing to abide in Him. The same thing is true for each of us.

Jesus then went on to explain in John 15:5-6. “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.” The word translated “abide” means *to continue to be* and is used 120 times in the New Testament. In fact, it is used eight of those times in just verses 4-16 in this chapter to show that we are to continue to abide in Jesus moment by moment if we want to see our lives bear fruit. Jesus promised that if we are learning to continue to abide in Him our lives will bear more fruit. However, Jesus also told the disciples that if they tried to serve the Lord in their own strength that their lives would bear nothing. That is why Jesus told the disciples in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

We are also given a wonderful promise if we will continue to share our lives with Jesus so that He abides in us and we abide in Him. Jesus said that then we will bear much fruit. In this passage, we see three levels of fruit bearing: fruit, more fruit and much fruit. Jesus wants our lives to be very fruitful so that He will have many things for which to reward us when we stand in His presence. Those who bear no fruit are taken away because they lack spiritual life. Every person who has spiritual life will bear fruit. However, God will prune our lives so that we can bear more fruit. Here, we see that when we make the choice to abide in Jesus He promises that we will bear much fruit. Nothing of eternal value can be accomplished through our own efforts.

We also see the judgment of those who do not put their faith in Jesus. Jesus said that such a person is like a branch that is cast out and is withered. A branch not attached to the vine or tree can only do one thing and that is wither and dry up. In Romans 11, Paul used the illustration of a wild olive branch that is grafted into an olive tree to describe the Gentiles. Once the branch is grafted into the tree, it will be fruitful. In contrast, a branch that is not grafted into a tree will wither because it is already dead since it has no source of life. That is why Jesus warned that the branches that wither will be gathered and cast into the fire and will be burned.

Jesus also gave a wonderful promise about prayer to those who abide in Him and have the things that Jesus taught abiding in them. John 15:7-8 says, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Here, we see that this promise is based on two things. First, we are to continue in Jesus. Second, the teachings of Jesus are to be continually in our thoughts. This results in the process of transformation. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Our thinking determines our actions. As we allow the Word of God to be continually in our minds, we are being transformed in our thinking and the result will be that we begin to act according to our thoughts.

That is why Jesus could tell the disciples that if they were abiding in Him and His words were abiding in them they could ask whatever they desired. Jesus knew that the purpose that they would have for their own lives would be to carry out the will of God because they were meditating on the teaching that Jesus had given them. The same is true in our lives. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an

opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Jesus said in John 14:15, ““If you love Me, keep My commandments.”” As our lives are being transformed by the Word, we have a desire to please Jesus and we want Him to give us His strength to serve one another in love.

We will desire the will of God for our lives so we will ask for the things that will make it possible to carry out the will of God in our lives. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” This desire to carry out the will of God in our lives gives us a purpose for life. As we learn to yield more and more to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit causes our lives to bear fruit. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Love abiding in our lives causes us to be motivated by the love of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, we read, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” We see here that we develop a desire to live for Him who died for us. The result of living for Jesus is that we bring glory to God because of the fact that our lives bear much fruit. Jesus said in John 13:34-35, ““A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”” We want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example that our lives are motivated by the love of Jesus for us. They will see that our lives experience greater and greater peace as we learn to take root in His love with the result that our lives bear even more fruit. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to bring glory to God by bearing much fruit.

Jesus Called His Followers His Friends

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that we will only bear much fruit as we learn to abide in Christ. We also saw that abiding in Christ helps each person to become more like Jesus and that is a major part of the process to help our spiritual lives develop so that they bear much fruit. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus chose to call His followers His friends.

As Jesus walked toward the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples, He told them how to abide in His love. John 15:9-10 says, “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” Jesus told the disciples that He loved them in the same way that the Father loved Him. Jesus had told the disciples in John 5:30 and then again in John 6:38, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me... For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” In both passages, Jesus made it clear that He came to do the will of His Father. Obedience to the Father was one way that Jesus showed His love for the Father.

Now, we see that Jesus told His disciples and all future followers that one way that we can show our love for Him is by our desire to be obedient to Him. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” We will do much more out of love than we will as a result of commandments. That is why Jesus summarized the entire Bible by just three commandments. Matthew 22:37-40 says, “Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is *the* first and great commandment. And the second *is* like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Then, in John 13:34-35 Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” The first two commandments summarized the whole Old Testament and the third commandment summarized the entire New Testament. We are able to respond to the love of Jesus by loving God, by loving our neighbor (every person of any culture), and loving one another (other Christians) as Christ loves us.

Jesus showed us how to love by His love for us. 1 John 4:18-19 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” Then, He gave us the Holy Spirit as our Helper so that we can respond with that same love to Him and to the people around us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are actually able to no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us and rose again. As we depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to love, we will continue to abide in the love of Jesus. Jesus showed us how to practice that love by obeying the Father and abiding in His love.

Jesus promised His disciples and all future believers that we will experience a life of joy as we abide in Him. John 15:11-14 says, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” Here, we see that as we

obey Jesus, our lives will be filled with joy and His joy will remain in us. This is lasting joy rather than just temporary happiness.

It is very important to understand the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness depends on the things that are happening around a person and that can change in an instant. In contrast, joy depends on our relationship with the Lord and what is happening within. James 1:2-3 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” The joy of Jesus can remain within us even during difficult times in our lives because we are enjoying fellowship with the Lord even in difficult situations. In fact, Jesus said that our joy can be full. The word translated “might be full” means *to be filled up to the brim or to be complete*.

Jesus explained the way that the disciples and all future Christians can experience that full joy in our daily lives. The way to experience that full joy is to remember and obey the new commandment that Jesus gave. We will experience that full joy in our lives as we ask the Lord to give us His strength so that we can obey the new commandment and love one another as He has loved us. Then, Jesus explained how He would show that love to the disciples in just a few hours. Jesus said that there is no greater love than for a person to lay down his life for his friends. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” As a result, we see that Jesus treated every person as a friend.

That was true even of Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus. Matthew 26:49-50 says, “Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.” At the very moment of betrayal, Jesus called Judas a friend. In contrast, Judas had not treated Jesus as a friend because at that very moment Judas had just betrayed Jesus. Jesus explained to the disciples how they could treat Him as a friend. Jesus said that they would show that they were His genuine friends by doing the things that he commanded them to do because then they would be showing that same love.

Jesus went on to explain to the disciples how He had shown them by His actions that they were His friends. John 15:15-17 says, “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.” Here, we see that Jesus went on to explain the difference between a servant and a friend. The word translated “servant” is the word for a bonds slave. In the time of the New Testament, about half of the people were slaves.

A bonds slave did not normally know the plans of his master because his master never talked to the bonds slave about his plans. This was one of the ways that masters maintained control over their slaves. In fact, keeping people in ignorance is still one of the ways that those in power try to control the people they lead. In contrast, Jesus said that He had called the disciples His friends. Jesus said that He had passed on to the disciples all of the things that He had heard from the Father. Jesus also led the writers of the New Testament to write down the things that Jesus taught so that we also can know the plans of the Father and Jesus. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Jesus treats every follower as a friend because Jesus promised in John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Jesus then explained that He was the One who chose to develop this friendship with the disciples and all believers. However, Jesus did more than just choose us to be His friends. We also see that Jesus appointed us to go and bear fruit. There are several kinds of fruit in the New Testament. Paul prayed for the Philippians in Philippians 1:11, “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Here, we see that Jesus makes it possible for us to be filled with the fruits of righteousness. As we yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment, Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Then, Hebrews 13:15 says, “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.” Here, we see that the fruit of our lips is praise to God. These are all the result of yielding so that each member of the Trinity is able to make it possible for our lives to be fruitful.

However, one form of fruit in our lives is the result of our obedience to God. Paul said in Romans 1:13, “Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.” Then, Paul explained how we can bear this fruit in our lives in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” We explain the Gospel to others and God blesses our prayer and witness by drawing others to Christ. This fruit will remain for eternity and will never perish.

Jesus said that as our lives are bearing fruit, the Father will also answer our prayers. 1 John 5:14-15 says, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” We can know that the Father will always answer our prayers as we pray according to the will of God. Then, Jesus explained one of the things that is the will of God and commanded us to do it by saying, “These things I command you, that you love one another.” Love shows itself by serving others. We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to carry out this command by the love that we show to other Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to bear spiritual fruit in their lives.

Jesus Explained Why the World May Hate Us

We saw in our last topic that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to carry out the command of Jesus by learning to show the love of Christ to other Christians. We saw that will only happen as we show our children by example what it means to yield our lives to the Lord. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus went on to explain to the disciples why it is possible that the world may hate us.

Jesus wanted the disciples to understand why the world would hate them (John 15:18-20). We also need to understand this hatred of the world in our own lives. Jesus warned the disciples that the world would hate them. However, Jesus said that the world hated Jesus before it hated them. As Christians, we can expect to experience opposition and even persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12-13 says, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” We see that evil men and false religious leaders have been deceived by Satan and will pass that same deception on to others. Jesus explained in John 8:44, “‘You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.’” Evil men and false teachers have been deceived by Satan.

In contrast, Jesus told the disciples that if they were a part of the world that the world would love them because the world loves its own. Psalm 1:1 says, “Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.” This verse tells us three things about the people of the world: they are controlled by the counsel of the ungodly; they walk in the path of sinners; they may begin to mock with the scornful because they have rejected the Lord and His Word. Jesus said that the reason that the world would hate His followers is due to the fact that we have been chosen out of the world and no longer follow the way of the world.

Jesus had taught the disciples that the people of the world would treat them the same way that they treated Jesus. Jesus had said earlier that evening in John 13:16, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.’” Now, Jesus repeated that same thought a second time. Jesus wanted all followers to understand how the world will treat us. If people persecuted Jesus, they will also persecute us. If they attend carefully to the teachings of Jesus and obey them, they will respond in the same way to us as we teach the Word of God. Those who listen to the Word of God will also listen to us.

However, Jesus went on to speak more about those who were rejecting Him. John 15:21-25 says, “‘But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, “They hated Me without a cause.’”” In these verses, we see that the real problem of those who hate Jesus is unbelief.

Jesus explained the real key to understanding the hatred of those who reject Jesus. Jesus said that this hatred is based on the fact that those who hate do not know the Father who sent Him.

Jesus had told the Pharisees in John 8:43-45, ““Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.”” The Pharisees were not able to hear the Word with understanding because they did not know the Father. This is explained by 1 Corinthians 2:14 which says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” Those without Christ in their lives cannot understand spiritual truth.

Jesus said that the Jewish religious leaders had no excuse for their unbelief because of the fact that He had come and spoken to them personally. This is a key to understanding the rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders. Throughout history, people have rejected God. However, John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The difference between these Jewish religious leaders and people throughout history was the fact that they had heard and seen Jesus personally and had still chosen to reject Him. In fact, the particular event that caused them to begin to plot the death of Jesus was the resurrection of Lazarus. Right after his resurrection, John 11:47 says, “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.’” A few minutes after the council gathered, John 11:53 says, “Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” That is why they had no excuse for their sin. They were forced to see that Jesus was God but chose to reject Him anyway.

Jesus said that the hatred of the religious leaders toward Him was also a hatred of His Father as well. Jesus had shown that He was God by doing the works that no other man in history had done. John 20:30-31 says, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Many of these signs were seen by the religious leaders as well as the disciples. However, each time that Jesus performed another sign, the religious leaders became more determined to destroy Him. These works showed that Jesus is God and so the religious leaders showed their hatred for both Jesus and the Father.

This was actually a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Psalm 35:19 says, “Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies; nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause.” Then, Psalm 69:4 says, “Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they are mighty who would destroy me, *being* my enemies wrongfully; though I have stolen nothing, I *still* must restore *it*.” In both of these passages, David wrote about the hatred that He experienced. However, we see that God allowed David to experience this hatred in his own life because it was the plan of God to show an even greater fulfillment in the life of Jesus as He experienced the hatred of the religious leaders. Jesus was the promised descendent of David and He experienced a much greater hatred than David had ever faced and that hatred included the Father.

Jesus knew that the disciples and many later followers would experience a similar hatred against them because this hatred would really be against Jesus and the Father. As a result, Jesus gave a wonderful promise in John 15:26-27, ““But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”” Jesus had mentioned to the disciples earlier that evening that He was going to send the Holy Spirit to be their Helper. Here, we see that Jesus explained to the disciples how He would help them

when they experienced hatred.

Jesus reminded the disciples that He had promised that He would send the Helper to them and to all Christians from the Father. We see a very important ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to hatred in these verses. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and will testify of Jesus. Jesus explained this statement more fully just a few minutes later. John 16:8-11 says, ““And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit convicts and convinces those who are not Christians of three things.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would help us to be witnesses of Jesus. First, the Holy Spirit convinces the world of the sin of unbelief. Second, the Spirit of truth convinces those who have not repented and placed their faith in Jesus yet that Jesus is the One who is righteous and without sin. This is very important because of the fact that Jesus is in heaven and the world cannot see Him. However, the Holy Spirit convinces the world of the fact that Jesus is the Righteous One who could and did pay the penalty for sin because He is the One who is without sin. Third, the Holy Spirit convinces the world of the fact that Satan was judged by the payment of Jesus for sin and that those who continue to follow Satan will also share in that judgment.

This means that we need to learn how we work with the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit is able to convince the world of these things. Romans 10:17 says, ““So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”” We work with the Holy Spirit by sharing the Word of God and that allows Him to convince people still lacking repentance and faith of their sin of unbelief, of the fact that Jesus is the Righteous One, and of the fact that those who continue to follow Satan will share in his judgment. We want to help our physical and spiritual children come to a full understanding of the fact that the Holy Spirit convicts as we share the Word. John 6:44 tells us that the Father draws as we share the Word of God. Jesus said that He came to seek and to save the lost. We want to show our children the importance of sharing the Word and not our own opinions. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children these things by your example.

Jesus Explained the Ministry of the Holy Spirit to Unbelievers

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus warned that the world may hate us. We also saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share the Word of God and not their own opinions as they are obedient to Jesus and witness about Him to the world. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus explained more fully the ministry of the Holy Spirit as our Helper when we bear witness about Jesus to those who are not Christians.

Jesus did not want the disciples to stumble when they were rejected by the world. John 16:1-4 says, ““These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”” The word translated “stumble” means *to put a stumbling block in the way, to fall away or to offend*.

Jesus knew that the disciples would stumble that night but He wanted to prepare them for the future so that they would not stumble as they witnessed about Jesus in future days and years. In fact, Jesus told them in Mark 14:27, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”’” We see how Peter answered. Mark 14:29 says, “Peter said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be*.’” Jesus then told Peter that he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed twice.

Jesus went on to describe some of the things that would happen to the disciples in the future. Jesus said that they would be put out of the synagogues. Earlier, Jesus had healed a man that was born blind and he was put out of the synagogue. The parents of the man refused to tell the Jews how their son had been healed. John 9:22 says, “His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that He was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.” The man that had been born blind was then questioned by some of the same religious leaders that later condemned Jesus to death. He said in John 9:32-34, ““Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.’” They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’ And they cast him out.” Here, we see that to be put out of the synagogue made a Jew a social outcast.

Jesus also told the disciples that people would later think they were serving God by killing the disciples. Jesus said that the real reason they would do these things was due to the fact that they did not know either the Father or Jesus. Then, Jesus explained why He had told the disciples in advance. Jesus said that they would remember when the time came that they were treated in this way. Jesus understood that it was very important to prepare His followers for coming tribulation. Paul did the same thing to help those who became followers of Jesus. Acts 14:22 says, “Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” Here, we see that in addition to strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith, Paul also prepared them for much tribulation. We also need to prepare new Christians for opposition from others. Jesus had not told the disciples earlier because of the fact that He was with them.

Then, Jesus went on to explain to the disciples that it was to their advantage for Him to return to the Father. John 16:5-7 says, “‘But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.’” Jesus said that He was returning to the One who had sent Him. Instead of asking any questions at this time, the disciples were immediately filled with sorrow. Jesus quickly responded to encourage the disciples in their sorrow.

Jesus chose to encourage the disciples by explaining why it was to the advantage of the disciples for Him to return to the Father. Jesus said that it was to their advantage because He would send the Helper to be with them. Earlier that evening Jesus had explained a very key lesson about the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-18 says, “‘And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.’” Here, we see that Jesus had explained that the Holy Spirit would abide in the life of each disciple. While Jesus was on the earth, the disciples could only experience the presence of Jesus when they were together.

In contrast, Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would be in the disciples at all times. Romans 8:16 says, “‘The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.’” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit came into our human spirit at the moment of salvation and bears witness to the fact that we are the children of God. As a result, we are never alone but our Helper is always within us. As we yield to Him, we are able to act in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:31 says, “‘And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.’” In this verse, we see that the evidence of the Holy Spirit living within us is that He gives us power to speak the Word of God with boldness at every moment that we are yielding to the Spirit.

The fact that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to live within our lives and give us boldness to witness was very important for each of the disciples as well as for all future Christians. Jesus then went on to tell the disciples how the Holy Spirit that would live within each of their lives would convict the world. John 16:8-11 tells us what the Holy Spirit does for those who are not yet Christians, “‘And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.’” Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will convict and convince the people of the world of three things.

First, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin. There are many sins. However, this verse makes it clear that there is only one sin that will cause a person to face eternal judgment. That is the sin of unbelief. That was the sin that Adam and Eve committed. In Genesis 2:16-17, we read, “‘And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Then, in Genesis 3:4, Satan said, “‘Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’ Adam and Eve had to either believe the LORD God or believe Satan. John 8:24 says, “‘Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.’” Jesus had said earlier in John 8:12, “‘Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” All people have to believe in the LORD Jesus Christ or they will die in their sins.

Second, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will convince the world of righteousness (or the fact that Jesus is the Righteous One). Hebrews 9:13-14 says, “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” In these verses, we are reminded that Jesus was without spot. Then, Romans 3:25-26 adds, “Whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” The word “righteous” means *innocent, faultless or guiltless*. Jesus is the Righteous One who is able to justify each person who comes to Him in repentance and faith.

Third, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will convince the world of judgment. Jesus gave a cry of victory in John 19:30. That verse says, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” That cry of victory meant that the payment for sin was complete and no more payment would ever be necessary. However, that cry also meant that Satan had been judged and that he would one day receive the penalty for his sin. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Revelation 20:10 adds, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

The Holy Spirit convinces those who continue to follow Satan that they will also share in that eternal judgment. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to work with the Holy Spirit as they share the Gospel with those who are not Christians by sharing the Word of God in love. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the message of salvation from sin in love.

Jesus Explained the Ministry of the Holy Spirit for All Believers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the ministry of the Holy Spirit to those who are not Christians. We saw that the Holy Spirit convicts unbelievers of the sin of unbelief. He also convinces them that Jesus Christ is the Righteous One. Then,, He convinces them that Satan has already been judged. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus went on to explain more to the disciples about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to all who are true Christians.

Jesus knew that there were many things that the disciples still needed to understand. As a result, Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. John 16:12-15 says, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.” Jesus told the disciples that He would not explain those things to the disciples right now because they were not prepared to understand them.

Then,, Jesus began to explain how the Holy Spirit would help them to understand. Jesus reminded the disciples He had said that He would send the Spirit of truth. Jesus had said in John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” Then,, Jesus told them how the Holy Spirit would teach the disciples. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would not speak from His own authority. Jesus had said a similar thing about Himself in John 6:38 which says, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Jesus did the will of the Father and Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would speak the words that the Father tells Him to speak. This is a reminder of the fact that the Trinity always works together in unity.

This helps us to be able to explain why the Spirit of truth is one of the names for the Holy Spirit. He speaks the words that He hears from the Father. Jesus said that one of the things about which the Holy Spirit will speak will be the things to come. The word translated “things to come” means *to come to a place, to appear, to come into being or to be established*. Jesus had taught the disciples about many things. Some of those things He just introduced, but He promised in these verses that the Holy Spirit would help the disciples to understand them more fully when the Holy Spirit came to teach them all things. Peter explained in 2 Peter 3:15-16, “And consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.” In these verses, Peter explained that some of the things taught to Paul by the Spirit were hard to understand.

Jesus also said that the Holy Spirit would glorify Jesus. The Holy Spirit did this by revealing that Jesus is the Christ and that the whole New Testament reveals Christ. We see that everything that belongs to the father also belongs to Jesus. Jesus had told the disciples earlier that evening in John 14:9, “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?’” Since the teaching of the Father and Jesus are the same, the disciples were to

realize that everything that the Holy Spirit taught them came from the Trinity. Jesus would be glorified by this teaching by the Holy Spirit.

Then, Jesus went on to explain to the disciples again that He was going to the Father. John 16:16-18 says, “‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.’ Then, *some* of His disciples said among themselves, ‘What is this that He says to us, “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me”; and, “because I go to the Father”?’ They said therefore, ‘What is this that He says, “A little while”? We do not know what He is saying.’” Jesus was going to die on the cross just a few hours later. Then, He was buried and the disciples did not see Him for a little while. During that time, their hearts were filled with sorrow. However, Jesus rose on the third day and they saw Him again. Then, they saw Jesus ascend up to the Father. Luke 24:50-53 says, “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.”

The disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying. As a result, some of them began to talk among themselves as they walked toward the Garden of Gethsemane. They were asking each other what Jesus meant by what He had just said. They could not understand why they would not see Jesus for a little while and then they would see Him again. They could not understand what He meant when He said “because I go to the Father.” Jesus knew that the disciples did not understand and that some of them were having this side discussion among themselves.

As a result, Jesus explained to the disciples that their sorrow would be turned into joy. John 16:19-22 says, “Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, ‘Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me”? Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.’” Jesus knew that the disciples wanted to ask Him what He meant.

Jesus then spoke to the disciples who were questioning among themselves. He began His explanation of what He had just said by asking them if they were trying to figure out what He had meant. Jesus then gave them an illustration to help them understand what they were going to experience in the next few days. Jesus told the disciples that they would weep and lament. The word “lament” means *to grieve with great sorrow*. John 20:19 says, “Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” The disciples did have great sorrow as they mourned the death of Jesus. In addition, that sorrow had great fear mixed with it because they disciples were afraid of what the Jews might try to do to them.

In contrast, Jesus said that the world would rejoice. The religious leaders rejoiced because of the fact that they thought that Jesus was dead and no longer a threat to their power and control over the rest of the people. We see that people that are in rebellion against God rejoice when they think that they have stopped those who speak for God. Revelation 11:9-10 is an example where we read, “Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those

who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.” Here, we see that in the seven-year tribulation, the only time that the people will rejoice is when they kill the two witnesses. In the same way, Jesus said that His killers would rejoice when He was dead.

Jesus then gave the disciples a wonderful promise. He told them that their sorrow would be turned to joy. Jesus did this by giving an illustration of the way that great sorrow can be quickly turned into great joy. When a woman is in labor just before the birth of a child, she usually experiences great suffering and pain. Sometimes, the pain can be so severe that a woman may wonder if she is even going to survive. Then, suddenly the baby is born and the labor pains are done. As soon as the mother is given that newborn baby and she holds the new baby in her arms, all of the pain and suffering are quickly forgotten because the mother is rejoicing in the birth of that new baby.

Jesus used that illustration to describe the sorrow that the disciples would experience over the next few days. They did not believe that Jesus would rise from the dead even when the women told them that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Luke 24:11 says, “And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.” The disciples did not believe the women and so they were still in the upper room with the door locked because of their fear and unbelief when Jesus appeared to them.

Then, when Jesus appeared to the disciples, their hearts were filled with joy. The two disciples to whom Jesus talked on the road to Emmaus described their joy in Luke 24:32 where we read, “And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’” We mentioned above the joy that the rest of the disciples felt after they saw Jesus as He ascended up to the Father. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the joy that can fill their lives as they think about the fact that Jesus is with the Father in heaven. Romans 8:34 says, “Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” We want our children to be able to rejoice because Jesus is interceding for us. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the joy that this assurance gives.

Jesus Said He Taught the Disciples so that They Would Have Peace

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus warned the disciples that they would have great sorrow for a short period of time but that then their sorrow would be turned to joy. We are going to see in our topic today that Jesus went on to explain to the disciples that He had come from the Father and would soon return to the Father.

Jesus had told the disciples that they would not see Him for a little while and then they would see Him again. Then, Jesus said He would return to the Father. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that they could pray to the Father in His name when He returned to the Father. John 16:23-24 says, “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” When Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples could no longer make a direct request to Jesus. However, Jesus did want them to know that they would be able to pray to the Father in His name. Jesus also wanted the disciples to know that the Father would answer the prayers they asked in the name of Jesus.

Romans 8:26-27 explains in more detail how the whole Trinity is involved in the answer of our prayers. Those verses say, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.” We pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us because we often do not know how to pray according to the will of God. Christ and the Holy Spirit then take our prayers and make intercession for us according to the will of God. The Father who searches the hearts knows the mind of the Spirit. As a result, the Father then answers our prayers according to the will of God.

Jesus said that the disciples had asked the Father nothing in His name. There had been no need for the disciples to ask anything of the Father in the name of Jesus up to that point because Jesus was with the disciples and they were able to ask Him directly. Jesus had told them that He was returning to the Father so that was why He was now telling them to ask the Father in His name. Jesus gave the disciples a wonderful promise. Jesus said to ask and they would receive. This would cause their joy to be full. Many years later John wrote and told us how this promise applies to all Christians in 1 John 5:14-15 where we read, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” We can trust the Lord to hear and answer our prayers when we pray according to the will of God.

Jesus went on to say in John 16:25-28, “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” Some of the things that Jesus had just spoken to the disciples would not be clear until after the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus said that the time was coming when He would speak to them plainly.

The night of the resurrection Luke 24:44-48 says, “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’” Both the Father and Jesus loved the disciples and wanted them to have a clear understanding of all things. However, many things could not be understood clearly until after the resurrection. Other things could not be understood until after the return of Jesus to heaven and Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would make those things clear to the disciples also.

We also see that Jesus assured the disciples of both the love of the Father for them and His love for them. Then, Jesus explained to the disciples two very important reasons why the Father had a special love for the disciples. First, the Father had a special love for the disciples because they had loved Jesus. John wrote many years later in 1 John 4:19, “We love Him because He first loved us.” In this verse, we see that John said that the disciples had responded to the love of Jesus for them. Earlier in the book of 1 John, John had spoken about the love of the Father for them. 1 John 3:1-2 says, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Second, the Father had a special love for the disciples because they believed that Jesus came forth from the Father. Peter had said back in John 6:68-69, “But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!’” Earlier that evening, Jesus had told the disciples in John 14:23, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’” Here, we see that the Father has a special love for all those who obey the Word that Jesus has spoken.

Jesus then told the disciples that He had come from the Father and that He would soon leave the world to return to the Father. Then, the disciples told Jesus that He was speaking plainly and that they understood Him. John 16:29-33 says, “His disciples said to Him, ‘See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’” This time, the disciples said that they understood what Jesus was saying.

The disciples recognized that Jesus knew all things. That was additional evidence to the disciples that Jesus came from the Father. John wrote in 1 John 1:1-2, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—.” The disciples had heard Jesus; they had seen Him with their eyes, they had gazed upon Him; and they had even touched Him. In addition, they recognized that He knew all things because He had spoken of the thoughts of people many times before those people had spoken. Jesus now spoke plainly about the fact that He would soon return to the

Father and Jesus verified this fact by His return to heaven as the disciples watched in Acts 1:9

Jesus showed that He knew what was going to happen that night. As a result, Jesus also warned the disciples in advance what they would do that very night. Jesus said that they would be scattered. Mark 14:27 says, "Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."'" This quote was taken from Zechariah 13:7. Then, Mark 14:50 says, "Then they all forsook Him and fled." As these verses show, it was only a very few hours later that the disciples did forsake Jesus and flee. Jesus assured the disciples that He would not be alone because the Father would be with Him.

Jesus finished the walk to the Garden of Gethsemane by telling the disciples that He had told them these things so that they could have peace. Jesus had shared many things that could have caused the disciples to become very troubled and fearful. As a result, Jesus said that He had explained the things that would happen so that the disciples could have peace when they happened. The disciples could either have a godly reverence and fear of God or they would have a worldly fear of man. Jesus wanted the disciples to experience that godly reverence when these things came to pass. Ephesians 2:14-15 says, "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace." Jesus made it possible for all of His followers to have peace with God. That is why we can be filled with peace because Jesus defeated the world and sin.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to experience the peace that Jesus provided through His death and resurrection. That will happen in their lives as they learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment and experience the peace of God guarding their hearts and minds. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to experience the peace of God in their lives.

Jesus Said He Revealed the Glory of the Father

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus wanted to help His disciples learn to experience the peace of God in their lives. That peace was possible because of the fact that Jesus has overcome the world. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to experience this same peace. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus had finished His discussion with His disciples and began His prayer to the Father.

Jesus had spent many hours sharing with His disciples that last night before He went to the cross. In this chapter, we see that Jesus also wanted to spend time with the Father to prepare for the separation the next day when all of our sins would be placed on Him. John 17:1-3 says, “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.’” Jesus began His prayer by stating that the hour had come when He would die for the sins of the world. This was the most important reason why Jesus had come to this earth, so that He could pay for our sins.

The Father has certainly glorified Jesus because of His death. Every single person that has repented of their sin of unbelief and come to the Father through faith in Jesus has brought glory to Jesus. The fact that the death of Jesus for our sins is the thing that makes it possible for us to have eternal life means that Jesus brought glory to the Father by His obedience. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Jesus was willing to endure the shame of the cross with joy in order to provide salvation and make it possible for us to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Jesus also brought glory to the Father by His choice to go to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. That was why the Father gave all authority to Jesus. John 3:35 says, “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.” Jesus had such joy to do the will of the Father that even as He was just hours from the cross He could look beyond the cross to the fact that the Father had given Him authority over all flesh so that He could give eternal life to all that the Father would draw to Him. In Matthew 28:18, after His resurrection, Jesus said, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Jesus received this authority because He did the will of the Father. Psalm 40:7-8 says, “Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book *it is* written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law *is* within my heart.’” Jesus came to give eternal life to us.

As Jesus prayed, He said that eternal life is to know the Father and the Son whom the Father has sent. The word translated “know” means *to learn and come to a full understanding*. Paul said in Philippians 3:10, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” John wrote in 1 John 3:16, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.” In these verses, we see that that it was truly through the sufferings and death of Jesus that we can begin to understand the greatness of His love and the love of the Father for us.

Jesus went on to pray in John 17:4-5, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself,

with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Jesus had brought glory to the Father throughout the time of His ministry on this earth. As a result, Jesus said that He had finished the work that the Father had given to Him. The word translated “finished” in this verse means *to carry through completely or to bring to an end*. His work of preparing the disciples to carry on the ministry when He returned to heaven was completed. Jesus used another word that is translated “finished” in John 19:30 when He said, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” This word translated, “It is finished” means *to end or to pay in full*. In just a few hours, Jesus would say that the penalty for sin was paid in full.

Once the disciples were prepared to carry on His work and the penalty for sin had been paid in full, Jesus could then enjoy again the glory that He had with the Father before the world was even created. As a result, Jesus was filled with joy for the fact that He would then return to the Father and take again the glory that He had laid aside when He came to this earth. This was the glory that John 12:41 says that Isaiah had seen when that verse says, “These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.” Isaiah described that glory in Isaiah 6:1-3 where we read, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; the whole earth *is* full of His glory!’” This is the glory that we will also see when we enter heaven and see Jesus face to face.

Then, Jesus began to pray for the disciples that He had trained to carry the Gospel to the world when He returned to heaven. John 17:6-8 says, “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.” The word translated “manifested” means *to make visible or known what has been hidden*.

Here, we see that Jesus had revealed the Father to the disciples. In fact, Jesus had answered the question of Philip earlier that evening in John 14:8-10, “Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?’ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.” In these verses, we see that Jesus had told the disciples that to see Him was to see the Father.

Jesus went on to explain that the Father had given Him these disciples. Ephesians 1:3-4 explains, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” The Father chose all who would believe in Christ before He ever created the world. Jesus said that the disciples had belonged to the Father. It was the Father who gave Jesus the disciples who would be the witnesses of His resurrection.

Jesus said that the disciples had kept the Word of the Father. The word translated “they have kept” means *to attend carefully, to guard or to obey*. In John 14:15, Jesus had said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Then, in John 15:10, Jesus said, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” Now, Jesus told the Father that the disciples had kept the word of the

Father. Jesus said that the disciples also recognized that all of the things that had been given to Jesus came from the Father. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” This verse reminds us of the fact that the Father is the One who has given Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth.

Jesus also told the Father that He had given the disciples the words that the Father had given to Him. In John 15:15, Jesus had told the disciples, “‘No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.’” Now, we see that Jesus told the Father that He had carried out the will of the Father by passing these words on to the disciples. Jesus also told the Father about the response of the disciples as He had taught them. Jesus told the Father that the disciples had received those words. The word translated “received” means *to take to one’s self*. The eleven disciples had believed the words that Jesus taught them and they would soon begin to teach those same words to others.

Jesus also told the Father that the eleven believed that He had come from the Father. Here, we see that Jesus said that they had made true decisions to believe in Him and follow Him. Peter had spoken for the eleven when He had said in John 6:68-69, “But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” Jesus told the Father that the men that He had given Him had believed that the Father had sent Him.

We also want to be able to tell the Father that our physical and spiritual children have believed that He sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. That means that we want to explain this important fact to them until they can clearly explain it to others. Then, they will be equipped to bring glory to both the Father and Jesus as they share that message with others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others that the Father sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

Jesus Prayed for His Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that it was the Father who sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. We also saw that as Jesus prayed to the Father He told Him that the disciples He had given to Him had received Him. In our topic today, we will see that as Jesus prepared to go to the cross, He prayed several things for His disciples.

We see that much of the prayer that Jesus prayed to the Father just before He was betrayed was for His disciples. Jesus prayed that the Father would cause the disciples to be one. John 17:9-12 says, “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We *are*. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” Jesus showed His great love for the disciples as He prayed for them.

At this critical time in His life, Jesus chose to pray for His disciples in contrast to praying for the world. Instead, Jesus wanted to focus His prayer on the disciples that the Father had given to Him. In this prayer, we see that Jesus mentioned several things about this relationship with the disciples. The disciples had been given to Jesus by the Father. The disciples belonged to the Father. All that belonged to Jesus also belonged to the Father. In the same way, all that belonged to the Father belonged to Jesus. Jesus said that He was glorified in the disciples. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 says, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you.” Jesus is glorified as His Word is shared and works in the lives of others.

Jesus then prayed for the disciples because they would be left in the world when Jesus returned to the Father. Jesus asked the Father to keep through His name those that He had given to Jesus. Jesus had told the disciples earlier that evening in John 15:18, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.” Jesus prayed for the disciples because He knew that the hatred that the world would direct toward Him that night would be directed toward the disciples when He returned to heaven. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on* You, because he trusts in You.” Jesus wanted the disciples to experience that perfect peace. That is why Jesus had also said earlier that evening in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Jesus wanted the disciples to experience His peace.

Jesus then prayed that the disciples would be one even as He and the Father are one. Jesus had told the disciples in John 10:30, “I and *My* Father are one.” Now Jesus prayed that the disciples would experience this same unity in their relationship with one another. A few moments later, Jesus prayed that same thing for all who would believe in Him in the future. John 17:20-23 says, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Jesus had told the disciples earlier that evening in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” In these verses, we see that it is this love and oneness that causes the world to recognize that we are disciples of Jesus. This also brings glory to Jesus when the world sees that oneness.

Jesus said that He had kept the disciples in the Father while He was in the world. John 6:39 says, “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.” Jesus had said that it was the will of the Father that He would lose nothing. That is also why Jesus said in John 6:70-71, “Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” Now Jesus told the Father that He had kept all those that the Father had given Him. Although Judas was one of the twelve to fulfill the Scripture, he was not one of the ones that the Father had given to Jesus because he had a devil.

Jesus went on to say in John 17:13-16, “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” Jesus was returning to the Father. However, Jesus wanted His joy to be fulfilled in the disciples. Jesus prayed that the disciples would experience this joy because He knew that the disciples would soon experience much hatred from the very men that would condemn Jesus that night. The disciples did experience that joy because Acts 5:41 says, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Truly, that prayer of Jesus was answered.

Jesus had spent much of His public ministry teaching the disciples. Even when He spoke to the crowds, the disciples were with Him and were learning how to teach that same message from the example of Jesus. Jesus had given them the Word and that is why the disciples would soon experience the hatred of the world as they taught the things that Jesus had taught them. That would happen because the disciples were no longer of the world. Peter later wrote in 1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” Like the disciples, all true followers of Jesus have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light and are no longer of the world.

Jesus did not pray that the Father would take the disciples out of the world. Instead, Jesus asked the Father to protect the disciples from the evil one while they were in the world. The disciples would be in the world but would not be of the world. Peter went on to explain this fact in 1 Peter 2:11-12 where we read, “Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” Once we become Christians, we temporarily continue to live in the world but our eternal home is in heaven. At the same time, we have been set free from the bondage of sin and so we are no longer to live like the world. That is why we are not of the world and its sinful lusts.

Then, Jesus prayed for the disciples in John 17:17-19, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” The word translat-

ed “sanctify” means *to set apart from evil and dedicate to God*. Here, we see in His prayer that Jesus asked the Father to separate the disciples from evil by helping them learn to put the Word of God into practice in their lives moment-by-moment. Jesus also said that the Word of God is truth. This is a key for our own lives. As we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment, we will see that the Holy Spirit will give us understanding and wisdom from the Word of God so that the Word also sanctifies and transforms our lives.

Christ said that the Father had sent Him into the world. Jesus was now sending His disciples into the world to share the Word that He had both taught them and showed them how to obey, as they imitated Him. Jesus looked forward to the fact that His disciples and other followers would bring about transformation in the lives of people throughout the world. Acts 17:6 says, “But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’ Those who were not Christians recognized that the Christians were turning their world upside down.

Jesus had provided the disciples with a perfect example because of the fact that He was without sin and was fully dedicated to doing the will of the Father. The disciples had the same desire for their lives. The apostles told the Jewish religious leaders in Acts 5:29, “But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’” The apostles had been so transformed by the example and teaching of Jesus that they were bold as they spoke to the very men who had condemned Jesus to death. This was possible because they were depending on the power of the Holy Spirit and not their own strength as they spoke to these religious leaders.

We also want to see our physical and spiritual children transformed as they apply the Word of God to their lives and depend on the Holy Spirit to give them the power to speak the Word of God with boldness and follow the example of Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to develop transformed lives.

Jesus Prayed for All Believers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how the Word of God can transform their lives as they learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment. The result of such transformation and yielding to the Holy Spirit will give them strength to speak the Word of God with boldness and live holy lives. In our topic today, we see that as Jesus came to the conclusion of His prayer He prayed for all believers.

After praying for Himself and for His disciples, Jesus then began to pray for all who would one day believe in Him. This means at the very time that Jesus was just minutes from being betrayed, condemned and crucified that He thought about you and me and prayed for us. John 17:20-23 says, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” We see that Jesus focused on one thing as He prayed for us.

Here, we see one of the ways that Jesus chose to show His love for us. He thought about us instead of just Himself at the very time that He was facing death. This part of the prayer is for all who would believe as a result of the disciples and those who followed them sharing the Word of God throughout the world. We see that the prayer of Jesus for us is that we would all be one as the Father and Christ are one. This unity became an actual fact when the Holy Spirit came to indwell the life of each believer on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” Here, we see that the early church was of one accord.

However, Ephesians 4:1-3 says, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” In this verse, we see that certain attitudes are necessary for us to keep the unity of the Spirit. Four attitudes are mentioned in these verses that help to make it possible to keep that unity in a local church. First, the word translated “lowliness” means *to have a humble opinion of one’s self*. James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” When we have a humble attitude toward God and submit to Him, He will give us a humble attitude toward others.

Second, the word translated “gentleness” means *to be gentle or mild*. 2 Timothy 2:25 says, “In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” In this verse, the word is translated “humility” and shows that gentleness is the result of humility. Titus 3:2 uses the word when that verse says, “To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Here, the word is also translated “humility”.

Third, the word translated “longsuffering” means *patient endurance or perseverance*. Paul said that Christ provided us with a pattern so that we would know how to show longsuffering by the way that Christ ministered to him. In 1 Timothy 1:16, we read, “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those

who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” Paul wrote in Colossians 3:12-13, “Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.” In these verses, we see that we are to put on longsuffering because that is not our natural human response. Instead, it is only possible for us to show longsuffering as we depend on the strength of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the word translated “bearing with” means *to hold up or to help a person stand firm*. This word is used in Colossians 3:13 and is quoted in the previous paragraph. The word is also used in 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 where we read, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.” In this verse, the word is translated “endure.” As Christians, we want to show other Christians how to maintain the unity that we have in Christ by learning to practice these in our relationship with one another.

Jesus prayed that all Christians would reflect the glory that the Father has given to Him by oneness in the body of Christ. Jesus then prayed that we would be made perfect in one. The word translated “perfect” means *to be made complete or brought to an end*. John used this word several times in the book of 1 John. In 1 John 2:5, we read, “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” Then, 1 John 4:12-13 says, “No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” Then, 1 John 4:17-18 says, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” In these verses, we see that oneness is the result of Christians learning to be obedient to the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit so that this perfect love casts out fear in our lives. Then, we can act in love instead of fear.

Jesus went on to pray in John 17:24-26, “‘Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.’” In addition to Jesus praying that we would all be one, we see that Jesus also prayed that we will one day be with Jesus where He is so that we can behold the glory that the Father has given to Jesus.

We will have the opportunity to behold that glory once we are taken to heaven. This means that we will also have the opportunity to see that glory throughout eternity. This is the glory that existed in eternity past and will exist in eternity future. In this prayer, Jesus talked about the relationship of the Father and Jesus in eternity past when Jesus said, “For You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” However, we will do more than just behold that glory. 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 tell us what happened when we became Christians. Those verses say, “Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” We see that as we are being transformed into the image of the Lord while we are here on this earth our lives begin to reflect the glory of Jesus to the

world around us.

This is greatly needed in the world because the world has not known the Father. The word translated “known” means *to understand or to have knowledge of*. This is the same word that Paul used in Philippians 3:10 where he wrote, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” Paul had a great desire to understand Jesus fully. In contrast, we see that Jesus said that the people of the world have no desire to understand Jesus fully. Jesus had told the Pharisees and other religious leaders in John 8:44, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.” Most of the people of the world cannot know God because of the fact that the devil is still their father.

Jesus had been fully faithful to the Father and had made known the name of the Father to the people. True knowledge of God must be revealed by God because 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” Here, we see that the natural person (any person without spiritual life) totally lacks spiritual discernment. Jesus made it clear that He had revealed the Father to those who had true faith and that He would continue to reveal the Father to all future believers.

Jesus said that this truth would cause all future believers to realize the love that the Father had for Jesus can be in the lives of believers as we learn to take root in Him. In Ephesians 3:17-18, Paul prayed, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Jesus wants every Christian to know and have the love that the Father has for the Son dwelling in each of our lives. This will give us that peace and assurance that Jesus is living in our lives. Truly, Jesus was thinking of us as He prayed to the Father and prayed for us. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus loved us so much that He thought about us at the very time that the cross was just hours away. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand this love.

Jesus Was Betrayed by Judas

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the love that Jesus has for us caused Him to pray for us at the very time that He was just hours from His crucifixion. In this topic, we are going to see what took place just a short time after Jesus had finished His prayer for His disciples and for all who would later believe, including each Christian today.

Jesus was not afraid to die. That was the very reason that He had come to this earth. However, He needed to spend time praying to the Father before He was arrested. John 18:1-4 says, “When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, ‘Whom are you seeking?’” In these verses, we see that Jesus went to meet the men who came to arrest Him.

However, we see a very important lesson that is not mentioned in any of the other Gospel. In our last topic, we saw that Jesus prayed for the disciples and for all future followers who have become Christians since that time. Here, we see that the prayer for the disciples happened before Jesus crossed the Brook Kidron to go the Garden to Gethsemane. This means that the disciples had the opportunity to hear this prayer for them and for us before Jesus began His prayer in the Garden. That meant that the disciples heard Jesus tell the Father of the greatness of His love for the disciples and for all future followers. They heard His prayer that we would all be one.

The Brook Kidron was a brook that provided a small valley between the temple just inside the city wall of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Brooks usually only have water in them at the times of seasonal rains. Jesus and the disciples walked across that small valley to the garden on the Mount of Olives on the other side of the brook. We read that Jesus and the disciples often went to this garden when they were in Jerusalem. As a result, Judas knew that this was a place where he could find Jesus as it got later in the evening. Luke 22:3-6 says, “Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.” Solitude was important to Judas because the Jewish religious leaders wanted Judas to betray Jesus to them when none of the multitude was around.

John 13:26 and 30 says, “Jesus answered, ‘It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.’ And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon... Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.” Here, we see that Judas had gone to the chief priests to get men to arrest Jesus. This group included a detachment of Roman soldiers (usually three hundred to six hundred men) and a group of the temple officers sent along with Judas by the chief priests and Pharisees. This large group of men now came across the Brook Kidron with lanterns, torches and weapons. The fact that the religious leaders had asked the Roman commander for such a large group of Roman soldiers showed that the chief priests expected major resistance.

In contrast, we see that Jesus offered no resistance. Instead, Jesus went to meet the soldiers and

men who had come to arrest Him. Jesus then asked those men the question, “Whom are you seeking?” John 18:5-9 says, “They answered Him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am *He*’. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, ‘I am *He*’, they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus answered, ‘I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,’ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, ‘Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.’” Here, we see that Jesus told the soldiers and the men sent by the religious leaders that He was Jesus of Nazareth. There was no attempt to fight by Jesus.

In Mark 14:42-43, we read, “‘Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’ And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.” Jesus came to meet Judas and those who came with him because Jesus was obedient to the Father and was carrying out the plan of the Father. That was why Jesus willingly came to meet this large group of men that had come with Judas. Jesus had come to the earth for the purpose of paying the penalty for sin. As a result, Jesus did not hesitate but told the men that He was Jesus of Nazareth.

We also read that Judas was standing with the group of men who had come to arrest Jesus. Judas had come with these men to show them exactly what one was Jesus so that they would not grab the wrong person in the darkness. However, we see that Judas also identified himself as one of the enemies of Jesus by the fact that he stood with those who had come to arrest Jesus. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “‘The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?’” Here, we see that Judas was showing the true condition of his heart, even though he had pretended to be a true disciple of Jesus.

The soldiers and others who came to arrest Jesus were so surprised by the fact that Jesus came to meet them and said that He was “Jesus of Nazareth” that they drew back and fell to the ground. These men had expected a fight and had brought a large number of Roman troops to help them capture Jesus. Instead, Jesus showed that He was the One who had the real authority. After His resurrection, Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Jesus told Pilate a few hours later in John 19:11, “Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.’” Here, we see that the authority of Jesus caused all of these men to fall to the ground.

Jesus then exercised His authority by telling the men that if they came for Him they should allow the disciples to leave because they were not seeking the disciples. Jesus did this to fulfill the words that He had spoken in John 6:39, “‘This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.’” However, we see that Peter did not understand why Jesus said what He did. John 18:10-11 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?’” Jesus had already spoken the words that would protect the disciples but Peter did not understand and was ready to fight to defend Jesus.

Peter did not ask Jesus what he should do. He just pulled out the sword that he had and began swinging. Malchus must have seen the sword coming toward him and tried to avoid it because Peter only cut off his ear. Peter was probably planning to remove his head. Jesus had just spoken the words needed to protect Peter and the other disciples. Now, Peter had attempted to kill the servant of the high priest. Luke 22:50-51 says, “And one of them struck the servant of

the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, 'Permit even this.' And He touched his ear and healed him." Now, Peter was guilty of a crime that could get him killed. Again, Jesus became involved to protect Peter from his own actions.

Jesus picked up the ear that Peter had cut off and healed the ear. This meant that there was no evidence to convict Peter because Jesus had just destroyed the evidence by restoring the ear to its original condition. Jesus told Peter to put his sword away. Then, Jesus turned and began to speak to the high priest and those with him. As Jesus was speaking to these men, the disciples realized what was going to happen and fled. Mark 14:48-50 says, "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.' Then they all forsook Him and fled." Here, we see that while Jesus was talking to the religious leaders and the soldiers the disciples left Jesus and fled for their lives.

However, before Peter left, Jesus said to him, "Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" Several places in the Old Testament, God used a cup to picture His judgment against sin. Jesus was going to take God's judgment for our sins just a few hours later on the cross. Isaiah 53:10-11 says, "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities." Jesus let Peter know that He was ready to bear the cup of judgment for the sins of the whole world.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus willingly chose to take the wrath of God against sin by bearing our sin on the cross. Jesus willingly did this even though He knew that it would mean being forsaken by the Father as He bore our sins. Jesus was willing to bear that cup for each one of us. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that Jesus bore that cup for them.

Jesus Was Tried before Annas

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand that Jesus willingly chose to bear the wrath of God against sin in order to pay the penalty for each of us. Jesus explained this to Peter after He had just been betrayed by Judas. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus was first tried by Annas who had been the high priest but had been removed by the Roman governor. However, Annas was still recognized by the Jews even though five of his sons plus his son-in-law, Caiaphas, officially held the position of high priest at various times.

Once Judas betrayed Jesus, He was taken by the Jewish religious leaders to Annas. John 18:12-14 says, "Then the detachment *of troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." Here, we see that the troops, along with the captain and the officers of the high priest, arrested Him and bound Him so that from this point they treated Jesus like He was a common criminal.

The first person to whom these men took Jesus was to Annas. He had been the Jewish high priest for ten years but had been removed as the high priest by Valerius Gratus, who had been the Roman governor before Pilate became the governor. Although the Romans did not recognize Annas as the high priest any longer, He still had a great influence among the Jews. Luke 3:2 says, "While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Then, Acts 4:6 says, "As well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem." Even though Annas had been officially removed as high priest by the Roman governor 15 years earlier, Luke shows us that the Jews still considered him as one of two in that office along with his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

John made it clear that Caiaphas was the one that was recognized by the Romans as the high priest. John 11:49-53 shows that Caiaphas was the one who spoke officially as the high priest even though his father-in-law was also recognized as high priest. Those verses say, "And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.' Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death." Caiaphas had a great hatred for Jesus. However, as high priest, he gave a prophecy that came from God, even though he did not realize it.

Meanwhile, we see that other things were happening during the time of the trial before Annas. John 18:15-18 says, "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself." We see that Peter and another disciple had also followed the group to the house of Annas.

The other disciple is not named. John never mentioned his own name in the book of John so this and other things in the book of John would indicate that this was John. John 19:26-27 says, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*." The "disciple whom Jesus loved" is also mentioned in John 13:23. The fact that this disciple from that hour also took Mary to his own home would indicate that John had a home in Jerusalem as well as a home in Galilee. We see here, that this disciple went into the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus.

Meanwhile, Peter had stayed by the door leading from the outside. The disciple that knew the high priest then went to the door to bring Peter into the courtyard where these events were taking place. The servant girl who was at the door knew that the disciple Jesus loved was a disciple of Jesus. As a result, she asked Peter the question, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?" Peter immediately answered, "I am not." Jesus had told Peter earlier in the evening that he would deny Him three times. Peter had been very bold when these men came to arrest Jesus. Mark 14:50 says, "Then they all forsook Him and fled." Then, Luke 22:54 says, "Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance." Here, we see that Peter first fled and then followed at a distance. As long as he was standing beside Jesus, he was ready to take on the whole army. However, once Peter started to depend on his own strength, he immediately began to act out of fear. This also happens in our lives.

We see the next thing that happened in the life of Peter because of the fact that he was depending on his own strength. The servants and officers had built a fire in the courtyard because it was cold that night. Peter also became cold so he stood with the men around the fire and warmed himself. Peter did not realize it but that was actually a dangerous place for him to stand because he was now standing with some of the men who had arrested Jesus just a short time before. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." Peter had earlier said to Jesus in Luke 22:33, "But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.'" Many times, we are like Peter and have good intentions but fail because of the fact that we depend on our own strength instead of being led by the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, while Peter warmed himself by the fire, Jesus was being questioned by the High Priest. John 18:19-23 says, "The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, 'I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.' And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Do You answer the high priest like that?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?'" We see that Annas asked Jesus about two things. First, he asked Jesus about His disciples. Second, he asked Jesus about His doctrine.

The Jewish religious leaders were the most concerned about the teaching of Jesus because they wanted an excuse to accuse Jesus before Pilate, the Roman governor. The Jewish law said that in a formal Jewish hearing it was against the law to question the person on trial to condemn himself. Deuteronomy 17:6 says, "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness." Then, Deuteronomy 19:15 adds, "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established." Later, the religious leaders told Pilate in John 19:7, "The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made

Himself the Son of God.”

Jesus knew their plans and that was why Jesus told Annas that he needed other witnesses. Jesus said that all of His teaching of the multitudes was done in public. Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Then, John 8:20 says, “These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.” Many people had heard Jesus speak either in one of the synagogues or in the temple. Jesus said that Annas should ask those who had heard Him what He taught. Jesus made it clear that He did not do His teaching in secret. Jesus said that they should be questioning witnesses who had heard Him speak. Later, the entire Sanhedrin did call false witnesses in their efforts to condemn Jesus. Matthew 26:59-60a say, “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.”

A Jewish officer immediately struck Jesus with the palm of his hand and said, “Do You answer the high priest like that?” This officer knew that Jesus was rebuking the high priest because Annas was breaking the commandments given in Deuteronomy. This officer also broke the law by striking Jesus with his hand. Jesus then answered the officer, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?” These two men made it very clear by their actions that they did not intend to give Jesus a fair trial. It was also illegal for them to have a trial at night. However, they were determined to condemn Jesus to death and did not care how many laws they broke in order to condemn Jesus. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the religious leaders were willing to do whatever was necessary in order to condemn Jesus even if it meant that they had to break the law. Here, we see a real example of the rebellion of mankind against God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the sinful rebellion of mankind.

Jesus Was Accused by the Jewish Religious Leaders to Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how the religious leaders who condemned Jesus gave a real example of the rebellion of sinful mankind against God. In this topic, we are going to see that the Jewish religious leaders condemned Jesus and then sent Him to Pilate.

Jesus endured several trials during the night. Jesus had rebuked Annas for breaking the Old Testament law. As a result, we see that Annas stopped his questioning. John 18:24-27 says, "Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, 'You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not!' One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?' Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed." Here, we see that Annas now sent Jesus to Caiaphas who was the official high priest recognized by the Roman government. This was necessary in order to bring Jesus to Pilate.

John does not tell us anything about the trial before Caiaphas since John wrote the book of John many years after Matthew, Mark and Luke were written. The trial before Caiaphas is recorded in Matthew 26:57-75, Mark 14:53-72 and Luke 22:53-71. This includes the part of the trial where Jesus was mocked, beaten and condemned to death. We read about Him being condemned to death in Matthew 26:63-67 says, "But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, '*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.' Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands."

It was after Jesus was sent to Caiaphas that the final two denials of Peter happened. Peter stood and warmed himself by the fire that the men had started in the courtyard by the palace of the high priest. It was while Peter was warming himself by this fire that he made one of the denials. Luke 22:56-57 says, "And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, 'This man was also with Him.' But he denied Him, saying, 'Woman, I do not know Him.'" Here, we see that this was also a servant girl, so two of the three that questioned Peter that night were servant girls.

The third time Peter denied Jesus was to one of the servants of the high priest. John says that this servant was a relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off. This servant asked the question, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" We read that this time when Peter denied the rooster immediately crowed. Luke 22:60-62 says, "But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are saying!' Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly." Although Jesus was on trial for His life, He still had time to look at Peter. It was probably both a look of love and a look of sadness because the only thing that Peter could do was go out and cry bitterly. After the resurrection in John 21, we will see that Jesus personally took time to restore Peter.

We see that the next trial of Jesus happened before Pilate, the Roman governor. John 18:28-29 says, “Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, ‘What accusation do you bring against this Man?’” The Praetorium was the fortress or military headquarters of the Romans in the city of Jerusalem and was located next to the courtyard of the temple. Pilate normally lived in Caesarea. However, during the time of the Jewish feasts, Pilate usually came to Jerusalem so that he could give direct orders to the Roman centurions in case there were any riots or other problems from the Jews during the time of those feasts. When in Jerusalem, Pilate used the Praetorium as his headquarters.

The Jews led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. We see that the Jewish religious leaders refused to go into the Praetorium because they wanted to eat the Passover later that day and did not want to make themselves unclean by going into the Praetorium. Jesus had said just a few days earlier in Matthew 23:23-24, “‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!’” The religious leaders were concerned about remaining clean for the Passover at the very time that they were trying to murder Jesus. Pilate went out and asked the Jews, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”

The Jewish religious leaders wanted Jesus condemned and placed on a cross before most of the Jews even realized what was happening. The Jewish religious leaders accused Jesus of various crimes that they thought would cause Pilate to agree to crucify Jesus. Luke 23:2 says, “And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’” Here, we see that they tried to use charges that they thought might cause Pilate to put Jesus to death. The religious leaders first accused Jesus of perverting the nation. The word translated “perverting” means *to turn aside from the right path*.

The second charge was designed even more to try and convince Pilate that Jesus should be crucified as they accused Jesus of refusing to pay taxes. This was to suggest that Jesus was trying to lead a rebellion against the Roman government. The religious leaders knew that this accusation was a direct lie because Jesus had said just a few days earlier in Luke 20:25-26 as the Herodians tried to trap Jesus, “And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.” This was one of the last questions that the Jews had asked Jesus as they tried to trap Him in His words. The religious leaders knew that they were lying and so they tried to cover up the guilt in their hearts.

That is why they went on to say to Pilate in John 18:30-32, “They answered and said to him, ‘If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.’ Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,’ that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.” The word translated “evildoer” is only used five times in the New Testament and the other four are all found in 1 Peter. In 1 Peter 2:12, we read, “Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” Peter and John had both carefully observed Jesus and knew that His behavior was honorable. Many of the religious leaders also had seen that the behavior of Jesus was honorable but they wanted Jesus killed because they saw Him as a threat to their power.

The religious leaders were the real evildoers but they were trying to cover their own sins by accusing Jesus of the very sin that they were committing. Pilate also knew the truth about why the religious leaders had brought Jesus to him. Mark 15:9-10 says, "But Pilate answered them, saying, 'Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy." During the course of the trial before Pilate, we see that Pilate said several times to the religious leaders, "I find no fault in Him." Finally, the Jews had to give the real reason that they wanted Jesus killed. In John 19:7-8, we read, "The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.' Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid." Here, we see that his fear was the real reason why Pilate finally agreed to crucify Jesus.

Pilate tried at first to avoid making any judgment about Jesus. We see that Pilate told the religious leaders, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." The Romans had direct rule over the land of Judea and that meant that the Jews did not have the right to condemn prisoners to death because that was one of the responsibilities that had been taken away from the Jews and given to the Roman governor. As a result, they knew that they could not carry out the death penalty, especially after bringing Jesus to Pilate. That was why the religious leaders said that it was not lawful for them to put anyone to death.

However, of much more importance was the fact that Jesus was going to die in a way that fulfilled the statement that Jesus had made to Nicodemus about three years earlier. John 3:14-15 says, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." The Jewish form of death would have been stoning. However, Jesus had said that He would be lifted up on a cross. As a result, to fulfill that statement of Jesus meant that He had to be crucified by the Romans instead of being stoned by the Jews. We want to help our physical and spiritual children see that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy that had been spoken about Him including both those by the prophets and those that He had made Himself. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy that was written about Him in the Scriptures.

Jesus Explained His Kingdom to Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy that had been spoken about Him including both the prophecies of the prophets and those that Jesus, Himself, had made. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained to Pilate the nature of His kingdom.

We saw in our last topic that the Jews would not enter the Praetorium due to the fact that they did not want to become unclean. They wanted to murder Jesus but they also wanted to remain ceremonially clean so that they could eat the Passover. We saw in the last topic that the Praetorium was the fortress or military headquarters of the Romans in the city of Jerusalem and was located next to the courtyard of the temple. As a result, Pilate had gone out to the Jews to ask them what accusations they had against Jesus. Now we see that Pilate came back into the Praetorium to question Jesus. John 18:33-35 says, “Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’” Here, we see that Pilate wanted to find out why the Jews had brought Jesus to him.

We see that Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Instead of answering the question of Pilate, Jesus asked Pilate a question. Jesus asked, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?” Jesus knew what Pilate would answer. However, Jesus wanted to cause Pilate to think. This was often the reason why Jesus asked people questions. This question to Pilate forced Pilate to think about the fact that he was actually stating the opinion of the religious leaders and not anything that he had learned from any evidence that the Jews had presented. We will see later that Pilate was forced to come to the conclusion that Jesus was totally innocent.

Pilate responded by saying, “Am I a Jew?” Pilate said that it was the nation of Israel and the chief priests in particular that had delivered Jesus to him. Then, Pilate asked a simple question for his own information. Pilate said, “What have You done?” Jesus then answered Pilate in John 18:36-38, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all.’” Jesus had done nothing wrong. As a result, Jesus chose to explain to Pilate the nature of His kingdom.

Jesus explained that His kingdom was not a kingdom like the kingdoms of the world. The kingdoms of the world are based on political power. In fact, the first kingdom was based on rebellion against God. God told Noah in Genesis 9:1 after he came off the ark, “So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’” In direct rebellion to this command, the people said in Genesis 11:4, “And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’” Human government developed as a direct rebellion to this command of God to, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” As a result, human governments became part of the evil world system.

Jesus explained that if His kingdom was a part of the evil world system His servants would fight so that He would not be delivered to the Jews. However, Jesus went on to explain that His kingdom was not a part of the evil world system because of the fact that His kingdom was not from the earth. Suddenly, Pilate was forced to realize Jesus was no threat to the Roman government because His kingdom was not a part of the world system. This forced Pilate to ask a new question so he asked Jesus, "Are You a king then?" The answer that Jesus gave to this question would convince Pilate that Jesus was not a threat to the Roman government. It would also cause Pilate to see that he had to examine his own life in order to determine whether he would believe the truth.

Jesus told Pilate that he was right and that Jesus was a king. However, Jesus had just said that His kingdom was not of this world. Then, Jesus began to explain the nature of His kingdom. Matthew 27:11-14 says, "Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, '*It is as you say.*' And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly." From the book of Matthew, we see that Jesus just said that He was the King of the Jews and then He became silent. Jesus did not even try to answer the false accusations that the chief priests and elders were bringing against Him. Pilate was amazed at the silence of Jesus and he was forced to recognize that something very unusual was happening.

Finally, Jesus went on to explain that His kingdom was a spiritual kingdom based on truth. Jesus said that this spiritual kingdom was the very cause for which He had been born. It was the reason why He had come into the world. This spiritual kingdom is for all who receive spiritual life by repenting of their sin of unbelief and placing their faith in Jesus. Jesus said in John 5:24, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." In this verse, Jesus said all those who enter into that spiritual kingdom will have everlasting life.

Then, Jesus made a statement which forced Pilate to have to think about his own life when Jesus said, "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Jesus had said in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." Those who are of the truth hear the voice of Jesus and come to Jesus in repentance and faith. Suddenly, Pilate had to face the question of whether he was going to believe in the One who is truth or reject that One.

We see that Pilate immediately made his choice. Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" Jesus had said in John 8:32, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Now, Pilate was face to face with the One who is the Truth. Pilate chose to remain in his bondage to sin. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." We will see in our next topic that the bondage and fear that controlled the life of Pilate drove him to deliver Jesus for crucifixion after saying several times, "I find no fault in Him at all."

In fact, after Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?", we see that He immediately went out and spoke to the Jews. His words to the Jews were the first of several times that Pilate would say, "I find no fault in Him at all." Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. Mark 15:10 says, "For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy." As a result, we will see that Pilate chose to kill Jesus, even though he knew that Jesus was innocent, because of his fear

that the chief priests would complain to the Roman emperor and cause him to lose his power.

As a result, we see that Pilate first tried to appease the chief priests and religious leaders. John 18:39-40 tells us what Pilate then told the Jews and how they responded. Those verses say, ““But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.” Here, we see one of the ways that Pilate tried to appease the Jews. The Jews were given the choice to release Jesus or to release Barabbas. Matthew 27:16-17 says, “And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’” Barabbas was a very dangerous man.

In addition to the fact that he was a robber, Luke 23:18-19 says, “And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this *Man*, and release to us Barabbas’— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.” In these verses, we also see that Barabbas was guilty of rebellion and murder. Pilate probably thought that the Jews would never choose such a dangerous man to be released because of their fear that he might commit additional murders.

The chief priests and elders were very willing to commit murder to maintain their power. Matthew 27:20 says, “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.” The chief priests and elders made the choice that day to release a robber and murderer and kill the One without sin to maintain their control and power. We want to help our physical and spiritual children to understand the way that sin can control the heart of any person who chooses to reject Christ. Today, many people are making that same choice even though they know that their choice has eternal consequences. However, we are to continue to present that choice. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this choice to others.

Jesus Experienced the Fear of Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others the consequences when they make the choice to reject Jesus as the Lord and Savior of their lives. Today, we are going to see that Pilate acted out of fear when the chief priests told him that the real reason they wanted Jesus to die was due to the fact that Jesus said that He is the Son of God and the leaders were unwilling to believe Him.

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent so he chose to give Jesus a beating in his attempts to satisfy the Jews. John 19:1-4 says, “So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him*. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, ‘Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.’” Here, we see that Pilate made his first statement that he found no fault in Jesus.

We see that Pilate was acting out of fear of the Jews because he was willing to do anything to try and please the Jews so that the Roman emperor would not take away his power. We see that the first thing that Pilate did was order the scourging of Jesus. A scourging was a beating given by several Roman soldiers taking turns. The whip usually had several leather thongs with pieces of metal or bones at the end of each leather thong. This beating actually fulfilled a prophecy made hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 53:5 says, “But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, He *was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” Here, we see that Jesus was given that beating for our sins.

The soldiers also worked together to mock and bring shame to Jesus. They made a crown of thorns to put on His head. The thorns of a date palm can be several inches long and very sharp. Mark 15:16-19 says, “Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head*, and began to salute Him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him.” Here, we see that all of the soldiers gathered for this time to mock Jesus. We also see that they struck Him on the head which would drive the sharp thorns into His head. They put a purple robe on Jesus, which was the color normally worn by a king. Then they pretended to worship Jesus by bowing down to Him and saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

By the time the Romans had finished the beating and crowned Jesus with the thorns, His body would have had large wounds covering it, which even exposed the bones and muscles. Then, Pilate led Jesus out to the Jews to show them that Jesus had suffered greatly. Pilate probably thought that this would satisfy the Jews. However, Pilate also mocked Jesus in his own way by saying, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.” To make such a statement after Pilate had just allowed the soldiers to greatly mistreat Jesus was actually a form of mocking, which he had allowed because of his fear of the Jews and his desire to satisfy them.

John 19:5-7 says, “Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, ‘Behold the Man!’ Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify *Him*, crucify *Him*!’ Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and

according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Here, we see that Pilate brought Jesus out of the Praetorium so that the Jews could see how savagely the Roman soldiers had beaten Him. The Jews had called Jesus an evil man. Now, they could see that He had received a severe beating. So Pilate said, “Behold the Man!” Pilate hoped that the Jews would be satisfied.

Instead, the Jews immediately began to cry out, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” This was not what Pilate had expected. Here, we see that when people try to do evil to please others, those they are trying to please only want more evil to be done. Then, Pilate tried to shift the responsibility back to the Jews by saying, “You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.” The Jews would normally stone a person to death because crucifixion was a Roman form of death. Here, we see that Pilate told the Jews that they could crucify Jesus if they wanted to kill Him. Then, Pilate said for a second time that he did not find any fault in Jesus.

The Jews quickly changed the charges that they had made against Jesus and gave the real reason why they wanted Jesus put to death in their efforts to get Pilate to condemn Jesus to death. That was why the Jews said, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Leviticus 24:16 says, ““And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of *the LORD*, he shall be put to death.”” They were accusing Jesus of blasphemy because He said that He was the Son of God.

Matthew 26:63-65 says, “But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘*It is* as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!’” Here, we see that the Jews had earlier accused Jesus of blasphemy and condemned Him in the courtyard of the home of Caiaphas. That was why they now told Pilate that Jesus should be put to death for breaking their law.

We see that Pilate became more fearful when He heard that Jesus was from God. John 19:8-12 says, “Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.’ From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, ‘If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.’” These verses show us that Pilate had become controlled by fear and was no longer in control.

Pilate immediately went back into the Praetorium and asked Jesus where He was from. Jesus had already told Pilate that His kingdom was not from this world but that He was a king. Jesus had also said that He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Pilate was forced to recognize that Jesus’ authority was not from this world. Now, Pilate had to face the fact that the Jews said that Jesus claimed that He came from God. Pilate had just had his soldiers scourge Jesus. The fact that the Jews said that Jesus claimed to be God caused Pilate to be filled with fear because Pilate realized that if that claim was true, Jesus had supernatural power. Pilate knew that meant that Jesus could kill and destroy him.

As a result, Pilate was anxious to hear if Jesus came from God or from the Evil One. Jesus

chose not to answer the question of Pilate and kept silent. Then, Pilate began to threaten Jesus in order to try and get an answer from Him. Pilate asked Jesus why He was refusing to speak to him. Then, Pilate began to boast about his own power. He said that he had power to crucify Jesus. He also said that he had the power to release Jesus. Here, we see that in his fear, Pilate tried to convince Jesus that he also had power.

Then, Jesus revealed to Pilate the source of His supernatural power. Jesus told Pilate that He could have no power against Jesus unless that power had been given to him from above. 1 John 4:4 says, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” John pointed out in this verse that each of those who have placed their faith in Christ have already overcome the Evil One that is in the world. Jesus told the disciples after His resurrection in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Pilate had a good reason to fear Jesus.

Then, Jesus told Pilate, “Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” Caiaphas, the high priest, knew that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead and had done many other miracles that proved that He is God and he had delivered Jesus to Pilate. In contrast, Pilate had heard little about Jesus. In Luke 12:48, Jesus had said, “‘But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.’” Jesus said Caiaphas would face a greater judgment than Pilate. From that time on,⁸ Pilate began to try to release Jesus. As a result, the Jews then chose to cause even greater fear by using the threat of his greatest fear that Caesar would take away his power and position.

As we look at Pilate, we see that he provides an example of the power that fear has over a person. We can use his example to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be led by the love of Christ instead of becoming controlled by the fear of people. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the results of fear.

Jesus Was Condemned to Death by Pilate

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Pilate gives us an example of how people will react when they are controlled by the fear of people instead of being led by the Lord. In this topic, we will see that this fear so controlled Pilate that he was willing to condemn Jesus to death in order to please the Jews.

Pilate was very concerned to win the favor of the Jewish religious leaders because of his fear that they would complain to the Roman government. He had done several things that had stirred up the anger of the Jews and so he knew that his job was in danger. John 19:13-15 says, “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’ But they cried out, ‘Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’” Here, we see that Pilate now made the choice to please the Jews.

The place where Pilate gave his official judgments was at the judgment seat. As a result, he now brought Jesus out to the place where the judgment seat was set. The judgment seat was in a place called *The Pavement* because it was paved with stones. John used Roman time in this passage and Roman time began at midnight. As a result, the sixth hour is about six o’clock in the morning. One of the very important things that John mentioned was that it was the Preparation Day for the Passover. That meant that this was about the very time that many of the people were getting ready to kill the Passover Lamb. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 we read, “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” Here, we see that God chose the very time that the Passover lamb was normally killed as the time when Jesus would be condemned to become our Passover, which made it possible for the Father to pass over the sins of all who repent.

Pilate also told the Jews, “Behold your King!” Although this may have been said by Pilate to mock the Jews, this forced the Jewish religious leaders to clearly show the condition of their hearts. Jesus had earlier said in Matthew 15:18-20, ““But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”” As a result of this statement, the religious leaders showed how defiled their hearts were. They cried out, “Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!” The statement of Pilate showed that their hearts were filled with evil thoughts and murder. Their whole goal was to destroy Jesus.

Then, Pilate answered, “Shall I crucify your King?” This question forced the religious leaders to reveal something else about their hearts. They answered, “We have no king but Caesar!” The Jews hated Caesar. However, they hated Jesus even more. These men had made their choice. They said that they would choose Caesar instead of Jesus. Pilate then showed his own heart by granting the choice of the Jews to them. John 19:16-19 says, “Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led *Him* away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

The word translated “delivered” is the same word that is translated “betrayed”. It is the word that Jesus had used the previous evening when He said in John 13:21, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’” The same word is translated “have delivered Him” up in John 18:30 where we read, “They answered and said to him, ‘If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.’” This was the word that these religious leaders used of their own actions when they delivered Jesus to Pilate. By the very word that both Pilate and the Jewish religious leaders used, they showed that they were just as guilty as Judas had been when he betrayed Jesus.

As they left the place of the trial Jesus was forced to carry His own cross. As they were on their way to the place where Jesus would be crucified, Mark 15:21-22 says, “Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.” Matthew, Mark and Luke all mention the fact that Simon of Cyrene, a city located in North Africa, was commanded to carry the cross of Jesus. Mark mentioned this happened as Simon was coming from the country so he probably met them near the city gate. The fact that Mark also mentioned the two sons of Simon would indicate that many of the Christians became acquainted with this family. This would indicate that God used this event to draw that entire family to Christ for salvation. This may even be the Rufus mentioned in Romans 16:13 where we read, “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.”

The place where Jesus was crucified was called the Place of the Skull or Golgotha in the Hebrew language. We see that two other men were also crucified with Jesus and Jesus was placed in the center between the two other men. Luke tells us that later that day these men both made a choice. Luke 23:39-43 says, “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” We see that the first criminal chose to blaspheme Jesus and receive eternal judgment just as the religious leaders did. The second criminal made the choice to believe and he received eternal life. I will never forget the day a young three year old boy saw a picture of this event and turned to his grandfather and asked him, “Grandpa, on which side of the cross are you?”

Pilate also used this time to try and remind the Jews that he was still in charge as he put a sign on the cross which said, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” We see the response of the religious leaders in John 19:20-22 where we read, “Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate ‘Do not write, “The King of the Jews,”’ but, ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews.”’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written, I have written.’” The Jewish religious leaders got what they wanted because Jesus was crucified. In contrast, all Pilate could do was to try to remind the religious leaders that he was still in charge.

The place where Jesus was crucified was very close to the city of Jerusalem. As a result, we see that many Jews came to see Jesus as He hung on the cross. This provided all who came to the place an opportunity to read what Pilate had written. The common practice of the Romans was to put a sign over the head of each person crucified to tell all who came to the place of the crucifixion the crime or crimes for which a person was guilty. Pilate caused the sign to be written in Hebrew so that the Jews could read it. The sign was also in Greek because that was

the common second language throughout most of the Roman Empire. Then, the sign was also written in Latin, which was the official language of the Romans.

In John 18:33-35, we read, “Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’” Jesus had explained to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. Pilate had then said at least three times that he found no fault in Jesus. There was no crime that he could write to place over the head of Jesus. As a result, he chose to write the original charge that the Jews had made against Jesus.

However, the Jewish religious leaders were still unhappy at the sign that Pilate had placed over the head of Jesus as He hung on the cross. They wanted Pilate to change the sign to say, “He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’” Here, we see again the total rejection of the Jewish religious leaders of the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. They wanted to make it very clear that they refused to recognize Him as their King. At the same time, Pilate saw this as an opportunity to get even with the religious leaders for forcing him to crucify Jesus even though he had said at least three times that he did not find any fault in Jesus.

In actual fact, God was the One who was in control. It was His desire to give all who read the sign that day an opportunity to make a personal choice about whether they would personally accept or reject Jesus as their King. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to give each person an opportunity to make that same choice. This is why we want to help our children learn to clearly explain to others that Jesus is the Christ and also the Eternal King. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this truth to others.

Jesus Cared for His Mother in Death

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that Jesus is the Christ and also the Eternal King. In this topic, we are going to see how to help our children learn to explain some of the other things that happened that day as Jesus was crucified on the cross.

Once the soldiers had placed Jesus on the cross, they then decided what to do with His clothes. They did not realize that the choice they made actually fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. John 19:23-24 says, “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’ that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’ Therefore the soldiers did these things.” Once the soldiers had Jesus and the other two men on the crosses, their job was to keep watch until the three were dead.

It was the custom of the Romans to give the clothes of those who were put to death to the soldiers who put them to death. We see that the soldiers took the clothes of Jesus and divided them into four parts. This would indicate that there were four soldiers who carried out their assigned responsibility to crucify Jesus. The tunic had been woven from the top to the bottom without any seams so that it was one piece of material. As a result, the soldiers decided to cast lots to see which of them would get the tunic. Psalm 22 makes several prophecies about the death of Jesus. Psalm 22:18 says, “They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” Here, we see that the soldiers fulfilled a prophecy that had been written by David about one thousand years earlier. The soldiers had no idea that they were fulfilling Biblical prophecy.

There are many prophecies that were given by God to the various writers of the Old Testament. Some of those prophecies were written hundreds of years apart. Jesus fulfilled various ones of these prophecies throughout the time that He was here on this earth. However, on the day that Jesus was crucified, more than 30 Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in one day. More than thirty years after the resurrection, Peter wrote about the way that the Holy Spirit had guided these writers. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” These Old Testament writers had been guided by the Holy Spirit to write each of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled.

Other things also happened while Jesus was on the cross. As the oldest son of Mary, Jesus made provision for the care of his mother in her older years. John 19:25-27 says, “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.” Mary and several of the other women who had ministered to Jesus were standing near the cross watching as Jesus was being crucified. This must have been a very difficult day for all of those women but especially for Mary.

In Matthew 27:55-56, we read, “And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.” In these verses, we see that one of the women there that day was the mother of James and John. We also see that Mary the mother of James and Joses was there. This James is the disciple that is known as James the Less according to Mark 15:40-41 where we read, “There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.” The woman named Salome may be the one that John called the sister of Mary. These women had a close relationship with each other as well as with Jesus.

We see that John called himself the disciple that Jesus loved. He knew that Jesus loved him and so that is how he chose to describe himself. Jesus also loves each of us with the same love that He loved John. Both John and the mother of Jesus were standing close enough to the cross so that Jesus could speak to them. Jesus first spoke to Mary and said, “Woman, behold your son!” Jesus had used this same title for Mary in John 2:4 where we read, “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’” Jesus had a very great love and respect for His mother. However, once He began His public ministry, He made it clear that He came to minister to all people and so He put distance between Himself and His family. We see that Jesus also did this in Matthew 12:48-50 where we read, “But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.’”

However, Jesus did not forget His responsibility to care for His mother as her oldest son. Jesus then spoke to John and said, “Behold your mother!” We read that from that hour that disciple took Mary to his own home. This would indicate that John probably had a home in Jerusalem as well as in Galilee. This would soon become very important for John since once Jesus returned to heaven the church would begin in Jerusalem and not in Galilee. The important lesson that we see in this verse is the love that Jesus showed to His mother by providing the care that she would need in her older years. Jesus gave us a great example for our own lives.

We go on to read that Jesus completed the payment of the penalty for our sins. John 19:28-30 says, “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” We see again that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy that had been written about His sufferings and death. Psalm 69:21 says, “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” In order for this passage to be fulfilled, we see that one of the things that Jesus said on the cross was, “I thirst!”

Near the cross was a container that was filled with sour wine (vinegar). Mark 15:36 tells us, “Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.’” This container of sour wine was set there to make it possible to prolong the lives of the men on the crosses as they suffered. The Romans enjoyed making their prisoners suffer as long as possible. We see that the person who got the sour wine filled a sponge with the wine and put the sponge on a stick from a hyssop bush so that it would reach the mouth of Jesus. Instead of the sour wine prolonging the life of Jesus, we see that something else happened.

We see that Jesus then said, “It is finished!” Matthew 27:50 says, “And Jesus cried out again

with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.” Here, we see a very key lesson about the death of Jesus. We see that He cried with a loud voice. This meant that Jesus did not die from weakness and lack of strength. His voice was still loud and strong. Jesus also did not say, “I am finished!” Instead, Jesus said, “It is finished!” Jesus had come to this earth to pay the penalty for our sins and die in our place. He had now finished that payment for our sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Jesus had our sins and the sins of every person that ever lived or will live placed on Him as He hung on that cross. Jesus became sin for us and died for us. That payment was now paid in full.

John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” This verse says we become the children of God at the moment that we believe. However, 2 Corinthians 5:21 also says that we become the righteousness of God in Christ at that moment. From that moment on, as the Father looks at us, He sees us through the blood of Jesus. Instead of seeing our sin, He sees the righteousness of Jesus. As a result, no true believer in Christ ever needs to fear losing his or her salvation because that would require the Father to reject the blood of Jesus. 1 John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*, so the Father is satisfied with the payment that Jesus made.

Once Jesus had finished paying the penalty for our sins, there was no need to suffer any longer. That is why we are told that Jesus gave up His spirit. Jesus voluntarily gave up His life and no one took His life from Him. In this way, Jesus fulfilled the words He had spoken in John 10:18 which says, “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” We want to help our children be able to explain why Jesus died. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this.

Jesus Was Buried in a New Tomb

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand what Jesus meant when He said, “It is finished.” At that moment, the payment for our sins and for the sins of the whole world was completed. That means that all mankind can choose either to accept the payment that Jesus made or reject that payment and then pay for their own sins for all eternity. In our topic today, we are going to see where the body of Jesus was buried after He gave up His spirit.

The Jews did not want the three men left on the crosses overnight because it was the Preparation Day. John 19:31-32 says, “Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.” The Preparation Day was the day before the Sabbath so this verse is one of the ways that we know that Jesus was crucified on Friday.

In the Old Testament law, in Deuteronomy 21:22-23, the Jews were told, “‘If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.’” This law told the Jews that they were not to allow a person that was hanged or on a cross to remain hanging overnight. As a result, the Jews wanted Pilate to break the legs of the men to cause death so that they could no longer push down on the nails in their feet to make it possible for their lungs to get air. This would bring immediate death. They then could take the bodies off the crosses.

However, these verses from Deuteronomy also teach us another lesson about Jesus. These verses said that one who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God. Galatians 3:13 says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’).” Jesus became a curse for us. That is why all those who have repented of their sin of unbelief and received Jesus are no longer under the curse of the law.

The soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals that had been crucified with Jesus. However, John 19:33-37 says, “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They shall look on Him whom they pierced.’” The soldiers saw that Jesus was already dead when they came to Him. One of the soldiers then pushed his spear into the side of Jesus. Since Jesus was hanging above him on the cross, this spear went under the ribs of Jesus and ripped through the chest cavity, and possibly even pierced the heart.

Immediately, blood and water began to flow out of the hole where the spear had pierced the side of Jesus. This meant that the spear had either hit the heart or a very main artery for the blood and water to come flowing out. The fact that blood and water began to flow out also meant that Jesus was dead because the blood was already beginning to separate. John was there and was able to give eyewitness testimony of what happened when the spear was thrust into the

body of Jesus. John said that the reason he gave this true personal testimony was so that all who read could know and believe that Jesus had died.

We see that these events after the death of Jesus also fulfilled two other Old Testament prophecies. The original Passover lamb that Israel ate in Egypt was to be a picture of the fact that Jesus would be our Passover. As a result, Exodus 12:46 says, “In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.” This was repeated again to Israel in Number 9:12 which says, “They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.” As a result, John told us that the fact that the legs of Jesus were not broken by the soldiers fulfilled the Scripture that had been given to Israel in the Old Testament.

One day in the future, the people of Israel will, as a whole, turn to Jesus and recognize Him as the One that the Father sent to pay for their sins. Zechariah 12:10 prophesied, “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” This prophecy says that the Jews will finally recognize the One that they pierced. Of course, in order for the Jews to recognize Jesus in the future as the One that they pierced, it was necessary for Jesus to be pierced in order to make the fulfillment of this prophecy possible. God used a Roman soldier to fulfill this prophecy.

We also learn about the burial of Jesus after He died. John 19:38-42 says, “After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews’ Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.”

Suddenly, as we come to the burial of Jesus, we learn about two influential leaders of the Jews who had become followers of Jesus. The first is Joseph of Arimathea and he is mentioned as the one who buried Jesus by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Luke 23:50 says, “Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man.” In this verse, we see that he was a member of the council (Sanhedrin), the group that had condemned Jesus to death. Mark 15:43 says, “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” In this verse, in addition to being a prominent member of the council, we also see that he was waiting for the kingdom of God. This meant that he was one of the very few council members that had a true faith and he recognized that Jesus was the Messiah.

We also see that the death of Jesus caused Joseph to take courage and go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus. Matthew 27:57 says, “Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.” This action meant that Joseph was no longer a secret disciple of Jesus. Instead, he gave a bold witness to the men of the council that he had become a follower of Jesus. We see that he was also a rich man. Matthew 27:59-60 say, “When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.” In these verses, we see that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was the tomb that Joseph had prepared for his own burial so it had never been

used. This fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9 which says, “And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.” By the use of this tomb, Jesus was buried with the rich.

We also see that a large stone was placed against the door of the tomb, which will be important when we come to the resurrection of Jesus. John also mentioned one additional fact that was not mentioned by the other three writers. John 19:39 says, “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.” This verse mentioned that Nicodemus also helped Joseph bury Jesus. We were first introduced to Nicodemus in John 3 when Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus by night. Here, we see that he had also become a follower of Jesus, so two of the seventy men on the Sanhedrin did not agree when the other religious leaders condemned Jesus to death. Nicodemus brought about a hundred pounds of spices to place on the body of Jesus as they wrapped the body of Jesus for burial.

We also read that this tomb was near the place where Jesus had been crucified so these two men were able to get the body off the cross and into the tomb quickly. This was important because this was the Preparation Day and this had to be done before six p.m. We also learn from Luke that the women watched to see where Jesus was buried. Luke 23:55 says, “And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.” Here, we see that the women followed Joseph and Nicodemus to the tomb where they buried Jesus so that was why the women knew where to come on the morning of the resurrection.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand that not all of the Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. Here, we see that there were at least two of the men that were a part of the Sanhedrin that did not agree with the others to put Jesus to death. Instead, that very death caused them to become bold witnesses for Jesus by causing them to go to Pilate and ask for permission to bury the body of Jesus. Here, we see that these men had also developed a great love for Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to also become bold witnesses for Jesus.

Jesus Rose from the Dead

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that not all of the Jewish religious leaders wanted Jesus to be put to death. We saw that at least two, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, did not agree with the actions of the other religious leaders. In fact, this caused them to become bold witnesses for Jesus who had the courage to bury Jesus after His death. In our topic today, we are going to see what happened at the tomb on the first day of the week.

John 20:1-2 says, “Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’” In these verses, we see that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb very early on Sunday morning.

However, Mary Magdalene did not come alone. Mark 16:1 says, “Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.” Then, Luke 24:1 adds, “Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.” The book of John was written many years after the three other Gospels were written. We will see in the next topic why John focused on the life of Mary Magdalene that morning.

On the way to the tomb, Mary and the other women asked one another how they were going to move the stone. They arrived and saw that the Lord sent an angel to move the stone out of the way from the door of the tomb. Matthew 28:2-4 says, “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*.” The angel both moved the stone and caused the guards to be filled with fear.

Mary Magdalene quickly ran to tell Peter and John. We see that Mary and the other women thought that someone had stolen the body of Jesus. That concern had been a major concern of the religious leaders. That is why Matthew 27:62-66 says, “On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, ‘Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him *away*, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.’ Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how.’ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.” We see that guards were placed and the tomb was sealed to prevent this possibility. However, they became so controlled by fear that they became like dead men.

Mary saw the stone rolled away and the empty tomb and she and the other women immediately ran to tell the disciples what they had seen. The disciples did not believe the words of the women. Luke 24:11 says, “And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.” Jesus had told the disciples quite a number of times that He would die and rise again from the dead on the third day. Matthew 16:21 says, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” Jesus repeated the message of

His coming death and resurrection to the disciples on other occasions as well. However, they were looking for Jesus to set up His kingdom and so it was like they never really listened when He talked about His coming death and resurrection.

When Mary told the disciples that the tomb was empty, we see that two of the disciples went to see. John 20:3-7 says, “Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.” John is not named, but we see that Peter and John immediately began to run to the tomb when they heard the words of Mary Magdalene. Both were in a great hurry to get to the tomb.

Peter and John both ran together to get to the tomb. John was able to run faster than Peter and he arrived first. However, we see that the two disciples did very different things once they got to the tomb. John bent down and looked into the tomb. He saw the way that the linen clothes were laying in the tomb. Because Jesus had a resurrection body, He was able to pass through the graveclothes and leave them in the tomb in the shape of a human body. That was in great contrast to the resurrection of Lazarus a few weeks earlier. John 11:44 says, “And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’” Here, we see that Lazarus had to have someone help him get out of the graveclothes by unwrapping them. His graveclothes could not be left in the shape of a body as the graveclothes of Jesus were left. John continued to observe from the outside.

However, when Peter arrived, he went right into the tomb. He also saw the linen graveclothes laying there. He also noticed something else as he looked. He saw that the handkerchief that had been around the face of Jesus was not lying with the linen cloths. Instead, the handkerchief had been folded and laid in a separate place. The fact that it was folded meant that Jesus had stopped to take time to fold it before He left the tomb. Here, we see that Jesus had not left the tomb in a hurry. John mentioned this particular thing that he had noticed that morning because of a false story that the Jewish religious leaders had paid the soldiers to tell to try to deny that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Matthew 28:12-15 says, “When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” If the disciples had taken the body, they would not have brought the linen cloths back. They certainly would not have taken the time to fold the handkerchief that had been wrapped around the face of Jesus.

John 20:8-10 says, “Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.” We see that John then went into the tomb after Peter was inside. Although John does not mention his own name, he does tell how the evidence affected him. We read that he saw and believed. This is an important statement because the disciples had not had any thought about stealing the body of Jesus.

Later, we see that Peter and John were both very willing to suffer for what they saw and believed. Acts 5:40-41 says, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them

go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” It was the same religious leaders that had paid the soldiers a large sum of money that ordered the beating of the disciples in Acts 5. They certainly would not have continued to witness and suffer shame for the name of Jesus if they had not believed.

We read that at the time, Peter and John went to the tomb, they did not understand the Scripture about the fact that Jesus would die and rise again. However, by the day of Pentecost, Peter understood what the Old Testament taught. Acts 2:25-28 says, “‘For David says concerning Him: “I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’”” This quote came from Psalm 16:8-11. That was one of the passages Jesus explained to them that evening.

In Luke 24:44-48, it says, “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’” Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples that night so they could explain what the Old Testament Scriptures taught about the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what both the Old and New Testament teach about His death and resurrection. May the Lord richly bless you as you teach your children to explain the Scriptures about His death and resurrection.

Jesus Appeared to Mary

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what both the Old and New Testament teach about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus took the time after His resurrection to open the understanding of the disciples so that they could explain His death and resurrection from the Scriptures and we want to do the same thing for our children. In this topic, we will see that Jesus took time to minister to Mary Magdalene because she was filled with sorrow.

After Mary had told Peter and John that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, she returned to the tomb. John 20:11-13 says, “But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’” Mary and the other women had gone and told the disciples that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb. Then, Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb to weep because of her great sorrow.

In these verses, we see that Mary was crying as she stood outside the tomb. Then, with her eyes filled with tears she bent down and looked into the tomb. She saw that the tomb was not empty. Instead, she saw that there were two angels sitting there in white. They were sitting where the body of Jesus had been laid when Joseph and Nicodemus placed the body in the tomb. One of the angels was sitting at the spot where the head of Jesus had been. The other angel was sitting at the place where the feet of Jesus had been. Here, we see that God had sent these angels to minister to Mary in her sorrow.

The angels asked Mary the question, “Woman, why are you weeping?” The two angels had earlier appeared to all of the women. Luke 24:4-9 say, “And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” And they remembered His words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.” The women had heard this message and had even gone and told the other disciples.

However, we see that Mary did not really understand the message that she and the other women had given to the disciples. Her mind was so confused that she spoke and acted as though Jesus was still dead. Mary shows her confusion and lack of understanding by the words that she then spoke to the two angels. Mary said to the angels, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” Mary showed by her statement that she thought that the religious leaders, the gardener or some other people had taken away the body of Jesus and that was why the tomb was empty. She was especially sorrowful because now she had no idea of where the body had been taken. Once she finished speaking to the angels, she turned away from the tomb.

Through her tears, Mary saw someone standing there as she turned away from the tomb. John 20:14-15 says, “Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, ‘Sir, if You have carried

Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Mary did not recognize that the person standing there was Jesus. Two other disciples had that same experience that day as they walked from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus. Luke 24:15-16 says, “So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.” The word translated “restrained” means *to have power or to hold*. The Lord had used His power to prevent these two disciples from recognizing Him. The same thing may have happened to Mary Magdalene.

Jesus had asked Mary two questions. The first question was, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Of course, Jesus knew why she was weeping but Jesus often asked questions to help people learn to think and understand. The second question was, “Whom are you seeking?” Her answer really expressed her sorrow and grief over the fact that the body of Jesus was not there but her answer did not actually answer either question. She also made the assumption that the person speaking to her was the gardener. Here, we see that when people are in great sorrow it is easy to get many things confused. Since Mary assumed she was talking to the gardener, she also thought that the gardener might be the person that had removed the body from the tomb. She wanted to know where the body had been taken so that she could take the body away and at least know where it was.

One lesson that we can learn from Mary Magdalene is that many individuals who have just experienced the death of one that is loved very greatly may be quick to try and blame someone or something for the death. This was true of both Mary and Martha when their brother, Lazarus, died. Both sisters said the same thing when they first saw Jesus. John 11:21 says, “Now Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” Then, John 11:32 says, “Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” In both cases, the sisters said that if Jesus would have been there that their brother would not have died. Since Mary Magdalene did not know what happened to Jesus, she immediately assumed that someone had taken away the body of Jesus. Blame does not heal but only causes greater grief.

Jesus then revealed who He was to Mary by speaking her name. John 20:16-18 says, “Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to* My God and your God.’”” Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her.” When Jesus said her name, we see that Mary immediately recognized that it was Jesus speaking to her. Suddenly, the message that she had delivered to the disciples made sense. Now, she knew that Jesus was actually alive.

Mary immediately turned to Jesus and called Him “Rabboni”, which means *Teacher*. It was a title of honor and spoke of the great love that Mary had for Jesus. Jesus had earlier set this Mary free from the torment of demon possession. Mark 16:9 says, “Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.” Here, we see that she had the privilege of being the first to see Jesus after His resurrection.

The first response of Mary was to cling to Jesus. In contrast, Jesus had to explain His first priority to her. Hebrews 9:23-26 says, “*Therefore it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that

He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Here, we see that the first priority of Jesus was to appear in the presence of God to put away sin for us. The “us” would have included Mary, so His ascension to the Father was also for her sake. Christ was the One who was the sacrifice once for all time so that there was no longer any need for earthly sacrifices to provide a covering for sin.

Jesus also had a very important responsibility for Mary at this time. She was told to go and tell His brethren that He was ascending to the Father. In John 15:15, Jesus had told the disciples, “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” Before His crucifixion, Jesus could change His relationship with the disciples from servants to friends because He had taught them all that the things that He had heard from His Father. Now, Jesus was able to change their and our relationship to Him to brethren. Romans 8:14-15 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” Through His death and resurrection, Jesus made it possible for all who believe to become the children of the Father and joint heirs with Jesus.

Mary Magdalene was obedient and went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord. She also told them the things that Jesus had spoken to her. Mary understood what Jesus had done for her and for all who place their faith in Jesus. We see that she was eager to be obedient to the Lord and go and share how Jesus had made it possible for them to become children of God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand exactly how important it is for each person to hear how to become a child of God. We want to show them by our example the importance of sharing that message with others. As we teach them and as they see the example that we give, they will also be encouraged to follow that example. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the good news so that others will know how to become the children of God.

Jesus Appeared to the Disciples in Jerusalem

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to share with others the message that they can become children of God. That message, shared in love, will result in an eternal impact in the lives of some of those with whom they share. In our topic today, we want to see what happened when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection.

Jesus made several appearances on the day of His resurrection. John wrote about two of these appearances. Our last topic talked about His appearance to Mary Magdalene. In this topic, we will learn about his appearance to ten of the disciples. John 20:19-23 says, “Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace *be* with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.’” Here, we see that the disciples were meeting together in a room where the doors were shut because of their fear of the Jews.

Suddenly, Jesus was standing in the middle of the room with them. Then, He spoke and said, “Peace be with you.” Luke 24:37-39 tells us about the reaction of the disciples when Jesus suddenly appeared. Those verses say, “But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’” Jesus immediately took away their fear by His actions. We read that Jesus showed the disciples His hands and His side. This way, they were able to see where the nails had gone through His hands and where the spear had entered His side as He hung on the cross. Immediately, their fear turned to great joy.

Christ again told the disciples to have peace and then Jesus gave them a commission. Jesus had said to His Father in John 17:18, “‘As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.’” Now, Jesus told the disciples that just as the Father had sent Him into the world, He was sending them into the world. Many Christians have isolated themselves from the world instead of obeying this command that Jesus gave. Mark 16:15 says, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” This verse tells us what all Christians are to do as we are sent into the world. We are all to be faithful by sharing the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus and that He died to pay the penalty for our sins.

Jesus also explained to the disciples how they would have the power to share the message of His death and resurrection with boldness. Jesus then breathed on the disciples and told them how they would have boldness to share that message when He said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Those who believe and receive that message will have their sins forgiven. In contrast, those who reject that message will die in their sins and will experience eternal judgment. We are to deliver that message with love so that the Holy Spirit can convict and the Father can draw because the Son is seeking and will save all who come to Him.

However, Thomas was not there that night. John 20:24-29 says, “Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of

the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.’” Here, we see that Thomas did not experience that peace for a whole week because he did not believe.

The religious leaders had heard the words of Jesus and feared that He would rise from the dead. In contrast, the disciples heard the words but never understood the message. As a result, they had to be convinced of the resurrection. That is why the first thing that Jesus did for the ten was to show them His hands and His side. Thomas also said that He would not be convinced until he saw that same evidence. The evidence was important for each of the disciples and it was important that each one be fully convinced by evidence. When choosing a replacement for Judas, Acts 1:21-22 says, “‘Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.’” The key ministry of the apostles was to be witnesses of the resurrection. Jesus wanted to make sure that each of the apostles had been careful witnesses of His resurrection.

Thomas had to wait a week before he was given that eyewitness evidence that would be necessary for him to fulfill his ministry as an apostle. The disciples were gathered again a week later. This time, Thomas was there with the other disciples. The doors were shut as they had been the first time that Jesus appeared. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there in the middle of the disciples. Jesus spoke the same words that He had spoken the previous week, “Peace to you!” Jesus wanted each of the disciples to experience inner peace in their lives and He wants the same for each of us in our lives. Philippians 4 tells us how to experience peace and then Philippians 4:7 says, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” That was the peace that Jesus wanted Thomas and the other disciples to have.

As a result, Jesus immediately turned to Thomas and said, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’” Here, we see that Jesus wanted Thomas to have all the evidence that He would need in order to be an effective witness of the resurrection. As we saw, Thomas had said, “‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’” Jesus made sure that Thomas would not need to depend on just his sight. Jesus made certain that everything Thomas said the previous week happened. Jesus invited Thomas to put his finger where the nail prints were in His hands. Thomas was invited to place his hand in the hole in the side of Jesus where the spear had pierced Him. By the way, this shows that this was a rather large hole so Thomas also understood why the blood and water had poured out of the hole in His side.

We see that the desire of Jesus was for Thomas to be fully convinced of the resurrection since he would be an official witness of it. We see the response of Thomas as He said, “My Lord and my God!” 1 Corinthians 15:6 says, “After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.” Jesus knew that there would be more than five hundred witness of His resurrection. However, He also knew that most people would have to accept the testimony of official witnesses. That was why Jesus gave each apostle the opportunity to feel the nail holes in His hands and put their hands in the hole in His side. The apostles were so convinced after this that they devoted the rest of their lives to telling others. They willingly died for that belief because they were so convinced.

Although we did not personally see Jesus after His resurrection, Jesus also wants each one of us to be fully convinced. That is why John wrote the book of John. In John 20:30-31, we read, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Jesus did many other miracles (signs) that are not written in the book of John. The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke had already been written for many years by the time the book of John was written and they had recorded many other miracles. However, the miracles that were written in this book were written so that we could believe the same things that Thomas and the other apostles had believed. Thomas has said after he saw Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” John wrote so that we also have the signs as evidence of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

Every person, who believes and receives Jesus as Thomas did, is also given the promise in these verses. Because of their belief, they will have life in His name. John 1:12-13 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” We received physical life at the time of our physical birth. Spiritual birth is very different from physical birth. John made it clear that spiritual birth is even more important than physical birth because spiritual life is the result of the will of God. It is this spiritual life that gives each person that receives Jesus eternal life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that they can also receive eternal life if they believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Lord has promised to give that life to all who will believe He is the Son of God and receive Him into their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this life-changing message.

Jesus Appeared to Seven Disciples at the at the Sea of Galilee

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others how they can receive the eternal life that Jesus offers to all who will believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and receive Him into their lives. In our topic today, we are going to see another of the appearances of Jesus to the disciples after He had risen from the dead. This appearance will happen in Galilee, which is about eighty miles north of the city of Jerusalem where Jesus had previously appeared.

Several of the disciples had been fishermen before they were called to become the disciples of Jesus. Mark 1:16-20 tells about Jesus calling some of these disciples while they were fishing. Mark 1:20 says, “And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.” Here, we see that the disciples left their boats with their families so they still had access to those fishing boats. Jesus had given the disciples instructions to meet Him in Galilee after His resurrection. Matthew 28:16 says, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.” We have seen that it was more than a week before they followed these instructions to go to Galilee. We see that when the disciples went to Galilee, Peter and six others decided to go fishing. (John 21:1-3) The place where they went fishing was the Sea of Galilee because John 6:1 says, “After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.”

It is possible that Peter decided to go back to fishing because he had failed and denied Jesus three times. Jesus told Peter in Luke 22:31-34, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’ But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’ Then He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.’” During the night, Peter did deny Jesus three times. After the third time, Luke 22:61-62 says, “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” Peter may have felt like such a failure that he thought that Jesus could not use him.

When Peter said he was going fishing, six other disciples decided to join him. They went immediately but that night they did not catch a single fish. Peter had experienced a similar night the night before Jesus called him as a disciple. Luke 5:1-11 talks about that night. In that case, Jesus told them what to do and then rewarded their obedience by filling two boats with fish. At that time, Luke 5:8-11 says, “When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.” Here, we see that Peter went back to the fishing that he had left about two years earlier. They got the same result as they had at that earlier time. They fished all night and caught nothing.

John 21:4-6 tells us what happened early that morning, “But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Children, have you any food?’ They answered Him, ‘No.’ And He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*.’ So they cast, and now they were

not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.” Jesus had chosen this moment for His meeting with the disciples in Galilee. We see what Jesus said as He called to the fishermen out in the boat. Jesus called to them from the shore, “Children, have you any food?” They answered that they had nothing because they had not even caught a single fish that they could cook for their breakfast. That was the thing that had happened to Peter the night before Jesus called him to become a fisher of men. Jesus just gave them one simple instruction. He said, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” In addition to speaking the words that had created the heavens and the earth, Jesus had also created everything else including the fish. As a result, Jesus showed the disciples that morning that He knew all things including the exact spot where they would find fish.

They obeyed Jesus and threw their net from the right side of the boat into the water. We see the results when we read verse 6, “So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.” Suddenly, their net was full of fish. Jesus showed the disciples that when they acted in obedience to Him, He could do far beyond what they could ask or even imagine. Paul expressed that thought well when he wrote in Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” The Lord can do great things when we focus on the glory of God instead of our own abilities.

Suddenly, John realized who had just spoken from the shore to them. John 21:7-11 says, “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.’ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.” John recognized that it had to be the Lord speaking from the shore and told the other disciples.

The disciples were given an example of the fact that the Lord can work in unexpected ways when we are obedient to Him. Isaiah 55:8-9 says, “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Peter became very excited when he heard that it was Jesus. Peter had taken off his fisher’s coat as he worked because fishing is hard work and a fisherman can get very warm when he is pulling nets to the boat. He then put that outer garment back on and immediately jumped into the water to swim to shore. Here, we see that Peter was excited to hear that Jesus was there. Perhaps, he was reminded of the time when near this same place Jesus said in Mark 1:17, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” To know that Jesus had come to him at this place must have been a real encouragement to Peter.

Meanwhile, the other disciples were bringing the boat to the land. They did not have very far to come because they were only about three hundred feet from the shore. However, they had a very full net of fish that they had to drag and bring to the shore. When the disciples reached the shore, they saw that Jesus had a fire burning. There were already some fish being cooked by the fire. In addition, there was also some bread prepared and about ready for them to eat. The fish and the bread provided an immediate reminder of the time that Jesus had fed the five thousand with the lunch of a little boy. However, it probably also reminded the disciples of the teaching that Jesus had given the next day. Jesus had said in John 6:51, “‘I am the living bread

which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” This was just two or three weeks after the time when Jesus had given His life for the world. As a result, the disciples had to think about both the physical bread and fish that perish and the spiritual bread this is eternal.

Jesus told the disciples to bring some of the fish that they had caught so that they could be put on the fire to provide them with more physical food once they had eaten the bread and fish that Jesus had prepared. Peter quickly acted in obedience to the Lord. He dragged the net to the land. The disciples saw that the net was full of large fish. They quickly counted the fish that were in the net and realized that Jesus had made it possible for them to catch one hundred and fifty-three fish at one time without the net breaking. Apparently, that was also a miracle for the type of net that they had used to catch the fish.

Jesus showed the disciples a principle that He had shown them many times during the years that they had followed Him. Jesus showed them that He was able to supply their needs in any situation when they were obedient to Him. Paul later wrote about this same principle in Philippians 4:19 where we read, “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The disciples needed to be reminded of this principle because it is a key to effective service for Jesus. As we are obedient to Him, He will supply our needs. Christ had earlier taught in Matthew 6:31-32, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” Jesus now showed this same lesson to the disciples again shortly before His return to heaven. We want to remind our physical and spiritual children of the same lesson by our example as we learn to trust the Lord to supply our needs in every situation. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to depend on the Lord to supply your needs.

Jesus Asked if Peter Loved Him

In our last topic, we see that Jesus reminded the disciples that He was able to supply their needs in any situation. We also want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example that the Lord does supply our needs as we are obedient to Him. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus restored Peter when Peter felt like he was a failure because he had denied Jesus three times.

We saw in our last topic that the Lord filled the net of the disciples with one hundred fifty-three fish when He called to them after they had gone back to fishing. Once they had finished counting the fish, Jesus invited the disciples to come and eat breakfast. John 21:12-13 says, “Jesus said to them, ‘Come *and* eat breakfast.’ Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, ‘Who are You?’—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.” Jesus had the meal prepared for the disciples and just invited them to come and satisfy their hunger.

We read that the disciples did not dare ask who Jesus was because they knew it was the Lord. The word translated “dared” means *to be bold*. Here, we see that none of the disciples had the boldness to ask Jesus if it was really Him. The word translated “knowing” means *to see with the eyes or to know*. The disciples could see that it was Jesus because of the nail prints in His hands. The night Jesus rose from the dead, He had showed them His hands. Luke 24:39-43 says, “‘Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took *it* and ate in their presence.” Here, we see that Jesus showed the disciples in different ways that it was He.

Jesus then brought the bread and the fish to the disciples so that they could eat. Here, we see that Jesus gave the disciples another example of what He had taught them the night before He was crucified. Jesus had said that night in John 13:13-15, “‘You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.’” Here, we see that Jesus had given them another example of serving one another by His example of preparing and serving them breakfast.

John 21:14-15 goes on to say, “This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’” The book of John mentioned that Jesus had appeared to the disciples the night of His resurrection. Then, Jesus had appeared to them again eight days later when Thomas was also present. Those appearances had been in Jerusalem. This third appearance was in Galilee. Jesus waited until after they had finished eating and then He asked Peter a question.

Simon (Peter) had denied that he knew Jesus three times the night that Jesus was being tried by the religious leaders. Now, we are going to see that Jesus uses this time to restore Peter. Jesus began that restoration by asking the question, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” Peter had said that he was willing to die before he would deny Jesus. Just a few hours later, Peter had denied Him. As a result, he had returned to the work of fishing which he had

done before Jesus called him to become a fisher of men. Suddenly, this question spoke to the heart of Peter when Jesus asked him whether he loved Jesus more than he loved those fish.

Just before Jesus told Peter that he would deny Jesus three times, Jesus had given the new commandment recorded in John 13:34-35. Those verses say, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Peter had answered at that time, “I will lay down my life for Your sake.” It was only a few hours later that Peter denied Jesus three times. Luke 22:60-62 says, “But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are saying!’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” Peter felt like a complete failure and needed to be restored for ministry.

The word used for “love” (agapao) in the new commandment is the word that Jesus used as he asked Peter if Peter loved him more than he loved the fish. This is the word that is used to describe God’s love and the love that Jesus had shown on the cross as He gave His life as the sacrifice for our sins. Peter certainly did not feel that he could use that word for love to describe his love for Jesus after his failure. We see that Peter answered Jesus with a different word when he said, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” The word that Peter used for “love” (phileo) is the word that speaks of family love or commitment rather than total sacrifice.

As a result, the answer that Jesus gave to Peter told Peter that if you even love me with a family love you can still, “Feed My lambs.” Jesus let Peter know that a family love was very different than the attitude of the hireling mentioned in John 10:12 where we read, “But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.” A hireling only loves himself and is looking for self-gain. Peter used a word that told Jesus that he had a real commitment to Him even though he had denied Jesus. He had a much greater commitment to Jesus than he had to the fish.

John 21:16-17 goes on to say, “He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’” As Jesus and Peter spoke the second time, Jesus and Peter both used the words for love that each had used in the previous verse. This time, Jesus told Peter that if he had the commitment of family love, He (Jesus) still wanted him (Peter) to tend (shepherd) His sheep.

The third time that Jesus asked Peter the question, Jesus used the word for family love instead of the word that spoke of the sacrifice of God’s love. Immediately, Peter was filled with great sorrow. He had gone out and wept bitterly when he realized that he had denied Jesus three times. He had great sorrow because of that sin. At the same time, he also understood by the answer that Jesus gave to him the greatness of the love that Jesus had for him. This time, Peter answered, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Here, we see that Peter more fully understood the heart of love that Jesus had for him. Jesus had just told him three times (the same number of times that Peter had denied him) that He still had a ministry for him.

Jesus had told Peter something very important the night before He was crucified. Luke 22:31-32 says, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” When Jesus first met Peter, John 1:42 says, “And

he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, A Stone).” Peter had been known as “Simon, son of Jonah.” Jesus promised him that he would become “Cephas”, which means *a Rock*. Jesus had looked at what Simon would become as his life was transformed and he learned to depend on the Holy Spirit instead of his own strength.

This is one of the most important lessons that every Christian needs to learn. This is illustrated so well in Romans chapters 7 and 8. Both chapters talk about Christians. Romans 7:15-25 summarizes what happens when we depend on our own strength. Romans 7:19-20 says, “For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” Even the strongest Christian will fail if that Christian depends on his or her own strength. John 15:5 says, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” We will always fail when we depend on our own strength.

In contrast, Romans 8:38-39 says, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Peter certainly understood in a new way both the love and the ministry that Jesus had for him by the end of John 21:17. The difference between Romans 7 and Romans 8 can be easily summarized by reading the first eight chapters of Romans. In the first seven chapters, the Holy Spirit is only mentioned once. In the eighth chapter of Romans, the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn that we will fail when we depend on our own strength. At the same time, we want them to understand the love of Jesus is unchanging. May the Lord richly bless you as you show this love to them by your example.

Jesus Told What Would Happen to Peter

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how Jesus restored Peter after Peter denied Jesus three times. We also want to help them learn from the example of Jesus how to restore others who have had failures in their lives. In our topic today, we will see what else Jesus said to the disciples as He appeared to them at the Sea of Galilee.

After restoring Peter and telling him to feed and shepherd the sheep of Jesus, we see that Jesus also told Peter what would happen as Peter approached death. John 21:18-19 says, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’” Jesus reminded Peter of what had happened in his past and was still continuing to happen in his life. Jesus told Peter that throughout his life he had done the things that he wanted to do. Jesus said that he would still have this freedom in the years to come.

However, Jesus said that this would change when he became old. More than thirty years later, Paul looked back to this day and wrote in 2 Peter 1:13-14, “‘Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.’” Here, we see that Peter referred to his physical body by calling it a “tent.” He said that he would continue to teach as long as he was in this physical body. However, he also said that Jesus had shown him that the day was soon coming when he would put off this physical tent. Peter wrote the book of 2 Peter while he was a prisoner in Rome waiting for the Romans to put him to death for his faith in Jesus Christ and his ministry for Him.

Jesus was looking forward to that time when Peter would be facing death for his ministry as Jesus spoke to him here in John. Then, Jesus told Peter a very interesting thing about how Peter would die. Jesus said that this was the way he would glorify God. The Bible does not tell about the death of Peter. Church tradition said that Peter was also crucified just as Jesus had been crucified. That tradition also said that he felt he did not deserve the privilege of dying in the same way that Jesus died, so the Roman emperor, Nero, ordered him to be crucified hanging upside down on the cross.

Jesus again made the statement that He had made to Peter when He first called him. Jesus just said, “Follow Me.” In addition to feeling fully forgiven for denying Jesus three times, we see that Peter was also fully restored to the ministry to which Jesus had called him. Jesus had told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, “‘And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” Peter had been sifted as wheat. However, his faith had not failed. Now, Jesus knew that Peter would be able to understand when others were sifted (failed) and he would be able to encourage them because he knew how Jesus had restored him.

Peter then began to wonder what would happen in the lives of the other disciples. John 21:20-23 says, “‘Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, ‘But Lord, what *about* this man?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I will

that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.’ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?’” Peter turned around and saw John standing there.

As a result, Peter asked Jesus what would happen to John in the future. Jesus wanted to make it clear to Peter and the other disciples that He was the One that would choose how each person will glorify God. Jesus explained to Peter that his main concern should be his own obedience to Jesus and not what happened to others. Jesus made it clear that He was not going to tell Peter what would happen to John by His statement, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.” Peter would only receive information about his own future. This is why Jesus said, “You follow Me.” It should also be our concern to make certain that we follow Jesus and do what he has for us to do. Jesus has a different way for each Christian to bring glory to God and we will bring glory to Him as we are obedient to what Jesus calls us and equips us to do.

Meanwhile, the other disciples had heard when Jesus said, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?” Jesus did not explain that statement and so John explained what Jesus meant when he wrote the book of John. Jesus did not say that John would not die. Instead, Jesus had said that it was not important for Peter and the other disciples to know what would happen in the future to the other disciples. The important thing for Peter and every disciple from that time until today is for us to follow the plan that Jesus has for each one of us. Jesus had said in John 15:7-8, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Here, we see that our concern should be to abide in Jesus so that we will bring glory to the Father by bearing much fruit.

Jesus is the One who determines how each person bears that fruit. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*.” We all have the same Holy Spirit but He has given each of us different gifts. We have been given different ministries by Christ but there is only one Christ. We are involved in different activities but God is the one who works through the life of each Christian. We are also to understand that we have all been given the same Holy Spirit but what He does in and through our lives is for the benefit of the whole body so that we will bring glory to God and not seek to glorify self.

As we come to the final verses of the book of John, we see that John concluded the book by saying that he was the writer of the things in this book. John 21:24-25 says, “This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.” Here, we see that John gave personal testimony about the things that are written in the book of John.

The word translated “testimony” is the word that was used to speak of testimony before a judge. As a result, John was saying that the book of John is like an official testimony that would be given in a court of law. John said that he was giving official testimony. He was the one who had written these things down. John could also say that his testimony was true because he had been an eyewitness of nearly all of the things that are written in the entire book. We saw in John 20:31 why John gave official testimony as he wrote the things that are written in this book. That verse says, “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” First, these things were written so that

we would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Second, these things were written so that we could have life in His name. John 3:36 explains, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

As Moses came to the end of his life, he told Israel in Deuteronomy 30:19-20, “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” In a similar way, as John came to the end of his life, he told all who would follow how to choose life. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” John made it clear that the choice he offered by writing this book was not just physical life. Instead, John encourages all to choose eternal life.

John concluded by saying that there were many other things that Jesus did during His life and ministry on this earth. In fact, John said that if every single thing that Jesus did was written down as an individual item, the world itself would not be able to contain all of the books that would need to be written. Here, we see that John wanted to make it very clear that he just wrote a few of the key things that Jesus did to show that He is the Christ, the Son of God. As John 20:30-31 said, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children know that they can share with confidence the things that are written in this book because God chose an eyewitness of these signs to be the writer of the book. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share the message of the book of John with confidence.