

# **UNIT FIVE: KINGDOM GOSPEL WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING**

## **KEY SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR UNIT FIVE**

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." - Mark 16:15-18

## **CLASS 1: GOD'S PASSION FOR SOULS**

*1 Reading, 1 Scripture Worksheet, 2 Exercises*

God spared no expense in giving His Son to buy humanity back for Himself. When we understand God's passion for souls, we will give everything to fulfill His purposes.

## **PRE-TEST: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

## **CLASS 2: GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM**

*1 Reading, 1 Scripture Worksheet, 1 Exercise*

God's eternal Gospel is being proclaimed to all of creation. Do you know what the Gospel is and how to share it with others?

## **CLASS 3: THESE SIGNS WILL FOLLOW**

*1 Reading, 2 Exercises*

We have been given all power and authority to work miracles on the earth to bring glory to God through the name of Jesus Christ, His Son.

## **CLASS 4: IF YOU CONTINUE**

*1 Reading, 2 Scripture Worksheets, 1 Evaluation*

Professing repentance and faith is not enough. Maturity calls for endurance all the way to Christ's return.

## **KEY QUESTIONS**

## **GROUP EXERCISES**

## GOD'S PASSION FOR SOULS

God spared no expense for the redemption of the souls of mankind. The good news of Jesus Christ and all of the benefits of His salvation are available to anyone who will hear and believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead. Does this sound too good to be true? Then let us recall for a moment the state that we ourselves were in before we believed Jesus. We were dead in our inherited and ongoing sin, obeying the devil, without hope, outsiders, and excluded from God and His benefits. We were powerless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God. When we ourselves were in this horribly hopeless position, this is when Jesus Christ died for us. When we were in a spiritual state of death, Jesus restored us to right standing with God and gave us life.

*Colossians 1:21-23: Once you **were alienated** from God and **were enemies** in your minds because of your evil behavior. **But now** he **has reconciled** you by Christ's physical body through death **to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation**--if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. **This is the gospel** that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

*Romans 5:6-10: You see, at just the right time, **when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly**. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, **while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!***

*1Timothy 4:10: That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is **the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe**.*

Jesus did not come to judge but to save everyone who will believe. The same salvation that was offered to us is available to every single person that we meet no matter what they have done. Jesus Christ destroyed death, bore our sickness, redeemed us from the curse, cancelled our sin-debt, and destroyed the works of the devil so that we could all be saved, healed, blessed, made holy, reign over the devil, and have eternal life in Him.

### God So Loved that He Gave

God so loved the world that He gave His Son. The Gospel is a **free gift** of salvation and eternal life. The Gospel is **good news to the poor**. Jesus GAVE everything to save the souls of men. Jesus laid down His life so that others could live.

Unfortunately, many called into service for the Lord give way to the pollution of the things of this world, particularly the love of money. What a deadly threat to the message of eternal life! We cannot worship both God and money. Worship is service. Either we are serving for money or we are serving for the Lord. If we are truly serving the Lord, He guarantees that all of our needs will be taken care of. (See Matthew 6:25-33.) The laborer is deserving of food and shelter but the message of the Kingdom must never be perverted with matters of money.

Consider that the Apostle Paul labored as a tent-maker so as to never charge the Corinthians a dime for hearing the Gospel message or become a burden to any of them. He did this until Silas and Timothy arrived with an offering from the believers in Macedonia which freed him up financially to preach the Gospel full time. (See Acts 18:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:9.) Paul was willing to receive offerings from other believers in order to support his work in the mission field but he humbled himself in order to preach the Gospel free of charge to those who did not yet know Jesus.

If we truly understand God's passion for souls we will not possibly see ministry as an opportunity for gain but a holy calling of pouring our lives out and sparing no expense so that just one more soul can come to know God and be saved. When we know what Jesus has done for us, we are not ashamed of our crucified King but are ready to be like Him. His love compels us to give of ourselves completely.

*2 Corinthians 5:14-19: **For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.***

*Romans 1:16-17: **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed--a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."***

When we truly understand what God has done for us and what Jesus has commissioned us to, we will be willing to GO so that the world can KNOW Jesus for themselves and be saved.

*Romans 10:14-15: **How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"***

## **My Witnesses**

Ever since Adam's error, God has employed witnesses to testify about who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in times to come. Adam and Eve, eyewitnesses to Eden, testified about God, being in relationship with Him, and about the promise of a Son who would crush the head of the serpent. Noah was a preacher of righteousness who built an ark because of what he believed God had told him about the judgment that was to come. Later, when it seemed that all hope was lost and no one in the world worshipped or acknowledged God, God called upon Abraham to live a life of faith as a witness and testament of redemption by faith in the one true God. When God led the nation of Israel out of slavery, the story of His great miracle power spread throughout the earth that the God of Heaven had chosen a people for Himself. This said, God's original design for Israel was not outreach and evangelism. His intent was that through Israel's obedience to His righteousness, the nations would come to know the wisdom, power, and justice of the God who created heaven and earth. God designed His people to be a light to the nations so that all the earth would know that He is God and there is none other. They were to be His witnesses, testifying of His greatness and power, telling the stories of His redemption and holiness, and living according to His ways so as to demonstrate reverence for Him and represent Him on the earth.

But when Jesus came and established the New Covenant, He commissioned His disciples to go to the ends of the earth as His witnesses to tell of what God has done by sending His Son and to teach all peoples to obey Him until He returns. The only reason God has not yet sent Jesus to judge the earth with fire is to give more people time to repent, come to know Him, and be saved. (See 2 Peter 3:9.) We are His witnesses. We are called to testify of the great and wonderful salvation that God has made available to us through Jesus Christ. We are called to live lives of holy reverence for God, freedom from religious legalism and the curse of the law, miracle power and mostly, mercy and love. This is how the world will know that Jesus is King and that everything He said is true and will come to pass – including the day of judgment to come.

Each and every one of us as Christ's disciples have been commissioned by Jesus to declare a message of hope through repentance from sin and believing in Jesus so that everyone can hear the word of Christ and believe. We have a responsibility to deliver God's message and, significantly, Jesus will not return until we have accomplished our task as His witnesses to the ends of the earth.

*Matthew 24:14: And this **gospel of the kingdom will be preached** in the whole world **as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.***

The world needs to know about the love of God. The world needs to know that the day of His wrath is coming. The world needs to know that God has made a way to be saved from this wrath. We know the love of God because He gave His Son. The world will know the love of God when we spare no expense and give our all for them to know Him.



## THIS IS HOW WE KNOW – 1 JOHN

### Scripture List & Worksheet

1 John 2:5-6: But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. **This is how we know we are in him:** Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

1 John 2:18: Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. **This is how we know it is the last hour.**

1 John 3:7-11: Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. **This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are:** Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister. For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1 John 3:16: **This is how we know what love is:** Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 John 3:19-24: **This is how we know that we belong to the truth** and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. **And this is how we know that he lives in us:** We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1 John 4:1-3: Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God:** Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

1 John 4:6: We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. **This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.**

1 John 4:9: **This is how God showed his love among us:** He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:13: **This is how we know that we live in him and he in us:** He has given us of his Spirit.

1 John 4:17: **This is how love is made complete among us** so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

1 John 5:2: **This is how we know that we love the children of God:** by loving God and carrying out his commands.

**Practical Application:**

**How do these Scriptures reveal the love of God for us?**

**List three misconceptions about what the love of God is or is not.**

1.

2.

3.

**How do these Scriptures help you to identify a true Gospel from a false Gospel?**

**How do these Scriptures help you to identify a true believer from one who only professes faith?**

**How is God asking you to personally respond to these Scriptures in your own life?**

## FREELY GIVE

Matthew 5:38-42 NIV - "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

### DESCRIPTION

When Jesus sent His disciples out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, He reminded them that they had received from Him without cost. As such, they must give the gift of salvation and all of its benefits like healing, deliverance, and cleansing from sin for free. God so loved the world that He GAVE His Son. Jesus so loved the world that He GAVE His life. Giving is not just about money. We can be generous with our time, service, counsel, forgiveness, and all of our possessions. Giving can be a powerful way of connecting with people who do not yet know Jesus. However, when we charge for ministry or evangelism the integrity of the Gospel message is compromised.

Practicing Freely Give is about revealing the character of God through generosity so that others can come to know Jesus.

### CONSIDERATIONS

How does giving gifts draw people to us and give us the opportunity to tell them about Jesus?

How does generosity reflect the character of God?

Why is it important not to dilute the Gospel message with requests for money? How could appealing for money contradict or distort the Gospel?

Do you have an internal resistance to giving to the poor? What is it? How does this NOT fit with the Gospel message?



### PURPOSE:

To share generously in practical ways in order to reveal Christ.

To be a demonstration of the love of God.

### SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Selfless, giving, love.

Increased willingness to share with others.

Greater confidence in sharing Jesus and the truth of His Kingdom with others.

Increase in being the light of the world to those who are in darkness.

## PRAYER

Father, thank you that you gave your best and most valuable gift for me. Help me to give open-handedly to everyone who asks of me so that I can show your generosity and so that others may come to know you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PRACTICE

1. Ask the Lord highlight to you someone who has recently asked you for something. As you do, consider:
  - What did they ask you for?
  - Did you give it to them? Why or why not?
  - Are you willing to give it to them now? Why or why not?
  - What is God asking you to do for them? How could this open up a conversation about Jesus with them?
2. Ask the Lord highlight to you a person you would like to share Christ with. As you do, keep the following in mind:
  - What are their goals in life? How can you contribute to them in a godly way?
  - Is there anything they have asked of you? Have you done it? Are you willing to do it for God?
  - What is God asking you to do for them? How could this open up a conversation about Jesus with them?
3. Ask the Lord to highlight to you a person in need or a homeless person who is asking for help.
  - What do you have that you can give to them?
  - What things other than money can you give? (i.e. water bottle, sandwich, winter coat, blanket, etc.)
  - What is God asking you to do for them? How could this open up a conversation about Jesus with them?

4. Do whatever the Lord tells you to do. Take the time to share Jesus with the people you are freely giving to.

## NOTES:

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### ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:8
- Luke 6:30
- 1 Corinthians 9:11
- 1 Corinthians 9:18
- Isaiah 55:1-2
- Acts 8:20
- Revelation 21:6
- Revelation 22:17
- 2 Corinthians 8:9
- Deuteronomy 15:7, 10



## GOD AND MONEY

Luke 16:13 NIV - No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

### DESCRIPTION

Everything we have is from God including our ability to make money. But somehow, money competes for our attention and affection. God delights to bless us as His children and to share His abundance with us. At the same time, He deserves to be the only one we worship and serve – not money.

Jesus was not afraid to talk about money and the potential hazards it can create for our walk of faith. If we turn our attention to money, it can choke out the work of God in our lives and create unneeded conflict. Money matters can stir up anxiety, fear, shame, and other wrong mindsets that Jesus desires to replace with certainty, joy, and freedom.

God desires to lead us into His abundance. We have to take steps to trust Him with our money. Therefore, the practice of God and Money is about trusting God with every aspect of our financial lives so that we worship and serve Him only.

### TALK WITH GOD

In what ways have you based life decisions on money matters rather than obedience to God's guidance? Do you find it difficult to include God in your finances? Your expenses? Your debts? Your hard-earned cash? Do you believe God desires abundance for you?

### PRAYER

Father, I worship you alone. Forgive me for the times I have made decisions based on finances rather than your guidance. Help me now to consecrate what I have to you and to trust you to guide me into your purposes and abundance. In Jesus' name, Amen.



### PURPOSE:

To grow in trusting God in our finances.

To discern and align our priorities with God and His purposes.

To turn our financial decisions over to God.

### SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Repentance from self-reliance and the love of money.

Proper stewardship of the resources God has given us.

Increased trust in God's provision for our needs.

### PRACTICE

1. Consecrate your finances to God. Present to Him your bank accounts, assets, expenses, debts, needs, and desires, etc.
  - As an act of faith, dedicate all you have to the Lord. Say, "God, I dedicate all I have to you. What's mine is yours."
  - As an act of faith, put God in control of your finances.
  - From now on, **your money is God's money** and your finances are God's responsibility.

2. As you present your finances to God, take note of any fears, shame, guilt, or condemnation that arises in you.
  - Tell the Lord how you feel and why you feel this way.
  - Ask the Lord to reveal to you any wrong beliefs you have about money. Take note of what He says and talk with Him about it.
  - Ask the Lord to set you free from financial sin, bondage to money, pain or shame linked with your financial history, and any ungodly patterns or cycles of curse and blessing.
  - Ask the Lord to renew your mind about finances with His stability, abundance, joy, freedom, and blessing.

3. Every day, **before you spend** any money on anything, **ask** the Lord for His permission to spend **His money** on it. Obey what He tells you.
  - For one week (at least) journal daily about how God led you to spend. Is there anything that surprises you?
  - Take note of any resistance, rebellion, anger, or selfishness rises up in you as you do this. Ask the Lord to help you submit to His guidance and to deepen your trust in Him.
4. From now on, let God guide all of your financial decisions.
  - Continue to obey Him daily in all your spending.
  - Trust Him to guide you in managing your accounts, assets, debts, needs, and desires. (Remember that He manages the whole world, so He knows how to do this.)

### NOTES:

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### ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- Matthew 13:22
- 1 Timothy 6:9-10
- Matthew 6:19-21
- Luke 12:13-21
- Deuteronomy 8:17-18
- Matthew 7:9-11
- Philippians 4:11-19
- Hebrews 13:5
- 2 Corinthians 8:7
- 1 Kings 18:21
- Proverbs 18:11
- Proverbs 23:4
- Proverbs 28:20
- Proverbs 22:2
- Proverbs 18:23

# WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

## Pre-Test

Answer the following questions. Examine what you know and believe about the Gospel.

<b>What is the eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ? (In your own words.)</b>		
<b>What are some key elements of the Gospel? Why are they important?</b>		
<b>What is an erroneous version of the Gospel you have heard? Why is it a wrong Gospel?</b>		

## GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand! The kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God are at war with each other. God's chosen King came to conquer the prince of this world – and triumphed. The ruler of this world knows that his time is short and works tirelessly to deceive all nations into worshipping him through worshipping themselves, indulging in pleasure, and denying God's existence and authority. The true and rightful King of all creation will return to judge all nations and people in the ultimate battle between the forces of good and evil and truth and lies.

The whole world stands condemned by God because of sin. Anyone who does not believe Jesus is still in their sins and will be subject to judgment, eternal condemnation, and the fires of hell. Jesus is coming back to avenge all evil. Until then, we have been given the keys to His Kingdom – making it accessible to anyone who will believe that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead. Jesus is the only way to receive eternal life and salvation from the wrath of God. It is available to everyone who will repent and put their faith in Jesus.

### The Eternal Gospel

The Gospel is the power of God for salvation, deliverance, healing, and sustenance to be received by FAITH. The Gospel is the wisdom of God which conquers every scheme of the evil one and the wisdom of this world. The Gospel is the good news of how Jesus, God's Son and anointed one, took the wrath of God upon Himself to crush the head of the serpent and conquer death to share eternal life with all who will believe and set themselves apart unto Him.

*Revelation 14:6-12: Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the **eternal gospel** to proclaim to those who live on the earth--to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "**Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.**" A second angel followed and said, "**Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,**" which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "**If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.**" **This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.***

The focus of the Gospel is on eternal life – life with God forever and the life of God made accessible. This is the life that Adam lost when he sold humanity into slavery to the evil one. God's promise to Eve was that one of her descendants would crush the head of the serpent forever. God's promise to Abraham was that his descendants would fill the earth, inherit the world, and be blessed. The purpose of the Laws God gave through Moses were to direct His people into righteousness so that they could attain eternal life and merit the world to come. When scribes and religious leaders approached Jesus, their questions were centered on the issue of how to attain eternal life. But Jesus came so that we might have eternal

life – and life to the full measure. (See John 10:10.)

The Gospel is NOT about getting to heaven and going to the good place when you die. That is part of it but more so, the Gospel is the way God has made for us to have eternal life NOW dwelling inside of us. Jesus is LIFE. Jesus gives us the hope of eternal life and the indwelling life-power of God to strengthen us to resist the schemes of the evil one until Jesus returns to spend eternity with us in the world to come.

### **A Quick Synopsis of the Gospel**

Throughout history, the Gospel has been perverted and distorted in various ways but the Gospel has not changed. Paul exhorted Timothy to remember the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, the anointed King of Israel.

*2 Timothy 2:8: Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. **This is my gospel.***

Therefore, here is a quick synopsis of the Gospel.

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit into the lineage of King David of Israel. Israel was the only nation on earth that had a covenant relationship with the one and only true God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, and they were earnestly awaiting the Messiah or King that God promised them who would establish His Kingdom and set things right in the world. They were also the only people on earth with God's Law and standard of justice and righteousness which, if upheld, led to blessing, eternal life of fellowship with God, and inheriting all creation. Unfortunately, no man on earth has ever been able to live up to this standard of purity and godliness. As a consequence, all of mankind since the first man Adam has been separated from God because of falling short of perfect obedience to God's instructions. That is, until Jesus came along.

Because Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born with the divine nature of God, His Father. He was simultaneously fully God and fully man, the exact image of His Father, and a full demonstration and incarnation of God in the flesh. Because Jesus followed the inclinations of His indwelling divine nature and not those of His flesh, He lived His life completely without sin according to the Law of God. His motives and actions always stemmed from God's perfect love, mercy, and justice so that He was completely righteous by God's standard. Additionally, God confirmed Jesus as His Son and the promised Messiah with power from heaven by enabling Jesus to supernaturally heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, and work various other miracles, signs, and wonders.

However, instead of being accepted as a righteous man, the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, and the Lord and King of all the earth, the religious leaders of Israel and the governmental authorities of this world unanimously mocked, rejected, and sentenced Jesus to death like a criminal, acting on behalf of all people. Jesus knew all of this in advance and willingly allowed Himself to be whipped and scourged, and to shed His blood, until He was ultimately nailed to a cross and crucified until He was dead. He was buried in a tomb and thought to be thoroughly defeated. In fact, for three days, it appeared that Jesus was the world's biggest failure and that He had horribly deceived all of His followers.

But God, with resurrection power by His Spirit, raised Jesus from the dead on the third day before His body had experienced decay. Jesus walked out of the grave in an imperishable resurrection body, having conquered death. For forty days, He revealed Himself to His disciples as proof that He is, indeed, alive from the dead and the Son of God who fulfills the prophecies concerning the Messiah of Israel.

After forty days of resurrection appearances, Jesus ascended in the clouds from Jerusalem to His Father in heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God, the position of all power and authority over all creation. At the appointed time, Jesus is coming back to judge the living and the dead, avenge all evil, abolish death, establish total dominion, restore all things, and hand the Kingdom back to His Father as He fulfills the remaining prophecies concerning Himself.

Until He returns, after Jesus ascended to heaven, He poured out the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all of us who believe in Him so that God's divine nature now dwells in us by faith. This means that we have Christ inside of us just like Jesus had God inside of Him when He was on the earth in the flesh. With Christ in us, we are empowered to live like Jesus lived, to love like He loved, and do the things that He did while we are still here on earth in these bodies. We are citizens of heaven and children of God, serving as His ambassadors with a message of His Kingdom, His goodness, and His love.

Therefore, we go to all nations to tell everyone everywhere that Jesus is Lord and that the way of salvation has been made for them.

### **Jesus' Kingdom Parables (Matthew 13)**

Jesus' primary message everywhere He went was, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" Like Jonah calling for Nineveh's repentance because judgment was imminent, Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was about to overthrow the kingdoms of the entire world. According to the Scriptures, all of Israel was awaiting the arrival of the Messiah who would shatter the kingdoms of this world and establish the eternal Kingdom of God for His holy ones. (See Daniel 2, 7.) However, when they saw Jesus working miracles for sinners and having dinner with outcasts rather than endorsing the religious leaders, they accused Him of working for the devil. Jesus rebuked their error and misunderstanding of God's Kingdom and, later that same day, sat down to share some of His primary parables about the Kingdom of God.

Jesus did not proclaim the Gospel the way Paul did. Jesus spoke in parables about His Kingdom. He did this deliberately so that only those with spiritual ears to hear would be able to understand His message and be drawn into His Kingdom. He only explained these parables to His disciples so that they would also be equipped to proclaim His Kingdom to the world.

In the parables of the soils, Jesus revealed that the Kingdom of God is not of this world, but it is a matter of the heart. The seed is the Word of God that is scattered about into all kinds of soils of the hearts of mankind. Some seeds become food for the birds as the enemy snatches the word out of a person's life. Some seeds do not take root and fall away when trial or difficulty comes. Some seeds take root but are choked by the thorns of the cares of this world and the love of money. But some receive the word of God with an open heart that understands. These ones will go on to produce a harvest for God and receive eternal life.

In the parable of the wheat and tares, Jesus made plain that good and evil will continue to dwell and grow together until the time of harvest comes. He did not come to judge the nations but to save them. Jesus did not come the first time to overthrow evil because that would disrupt the righteousness He desires to see growing in the fields of this world among the nations. But when He returns, the sickle will swing and the tares will be thrown into the eternal fire.

In the parable of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and the net, Jesus explained that the Kingdom of God will be found by people who are not looking for it (Gentiles) in addition to those who have been searching for it for a long time (Jews) and that anyone who recognizes the value of the Kingdom of God will willingly give up everything they have to obtain it. The good news of God's Kingdom has been made available to everyone – a broad net has been cast into the sea. At the close of the age, the good from the bad will be divided and judged.

Therefore, let us fully understand the battle we are in and be strengthened with endurance until Jesus returns. Let us never compromise or water down the Gospel with worldliness or filth because upon such things the wrath of God is coming. Let us proclaim the real Jesus, descended from David, the King of Israel, and Savior of the whole world. And let us be wise in how we speak to outsiders, knowing that only those who have ears to hear will hear and know the truth and be saved.



## BIBLICAL GOSPELS

### Scripture List & Worksheet

**Peter on the Day of Pentecost:** Acts 2:14-47: Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him: " 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' " "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**Peter to Onlookers After Healing at the Temple:** Acts 3:11-26: While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see. "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.' "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Stephen's Proclamation: Acts 7:1-53: Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?" To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.' "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. God spoke to him in this way: 'For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.' Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs. "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace. "Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money. "As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. Then 'a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.' He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die. "At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action. "When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' "But the man who was mistreating the other

pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons. "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. "Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.' "This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness. "This is the Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.' He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us. "But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt--we don't know what has happened to him!' That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: " 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel? You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon. "Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: " 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?' "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him-- you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."

**Philip Expounds the Scriptures:** Acts 8:30-35: Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

**Peter to Gentiles:** Acts 10:36-43: You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. "We are witnesses of everything he

did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

**Paul in a Synagogue:** Acts 13:16-41: Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.' "Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: " 'You are my son; today I have become your father.' God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said, " 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is also stated elsewhere: " 'You will not let your holy one see decay.' "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: " 'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.'"

**Paul to Gentiles, after healing a man:** Acts 14:15-17: "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

**Paul to Gentiles:** Acts 17:22-31: Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship--and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life

and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

**Practical Application:**

<b>List three things these Biblical Gospels have in common.</b>
1.
2.
3.
<b>How are these ways of telling the Gospel different than the way you have heard the Gospel told?</b>
<b>How will this change the way you share the Gospel with others?</b>



## SPEAKING IN PARABLES

Matthew 13:34-35 NIV - Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world." (Quoting Psalm 78:1.)

### DESCRIPTION

Jesus spoke in parables. Particularly when He spoke to "outsiders." He used parables to relate spiritual realities by comparing them to earthly subjects, objects, tasks, or stories. Jesus used parables when speaking to the masses, teaching in synagogues, or talking at dinner parties. Those with ears to hear realized that He was communicating spiritual truth.

As we share Jesus and His Kingdom with others, the Holy Spirit is able to guide us into sharing parables that the people we are speaking to can easily understand. As an evangelism tool, we can use parables to point to the eternal work of Jesus, to transition conversation from worldly things to the Kingdom of God, or to expose a problem without bringing condemnation. These metaphors are useful for bringing Kingdom perspective into almost any situation. Practicing Speaking in Parables is about relating to others using examples from real life so that they can hear the Word of the Kingdom and turn to Jesus.

### CONSIDERATIONS

How does a parable make things easier for people to understand? Particularly those not yet following Jesus? Why do you think Jesus taught in parables rather than explaining the Scriptures or giving rules to follow?

### PRAYER

Father, thank you that you reveal yourself to people using examples we can understand. Help me to speak in parables the way Jesus speaks so that others may come to know you. In Jesus' name. Amen.



### PURPOSE:

To speak the way that Jesus spoke.

To share truths of Jesus and His Kingdom.

To communicate spiritual realities using practical examples from real life.

### SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Better communication with all kinds of people at any stage of life or faith.

Greater confidence in sharing Jesus and the truth of His Kingdom with others.

Increase in being the light of the world to those who are in darkness.

## PRACTICE

1. Ask the Lord help you create parables in one or more of the categories below. As you do, keep the following in mind:
  - What is the parable? What are you comparing?
  - What point, truth, or principle are you trying to convey?
  - What is the desired result, conviction, or action you desire the hearer to take from the parable?

2. Ask the Lord to help you share the parables in a way that:
  - Starts the comparison without unnecessary complexity.
  - Boldly but gently delivers the point, truth, or principle.
  - Brings conviction to the heart and motivates right action.
  - Glorifies God and points the hearers back to Jesus.

Parables for Kingdom truth: Consider one aspect of life with Jesus, what He did/does for us, or what it means for mankind.

- Ask the Lord to help you relate this aspect to something from normal life, something found in nature, or a made up story to express the point you want to convey. (Examples in Scripture include: light/darkness, Shepherd with sheep, Bride and Bridegroom, slavery/freedom, etc.)

Parable as segue to salvation: As you participate in everyday conversation with people, take note of the topic of discussion.

- In one word, what is the topic/theme of conversation?
- Ask the Lord to help you see how this topic/theme could become an analogy for explaining a Kingdom truth. (Examples: Topic/Theme=War: Analogy=War for our soul; Topic=Marriage: Analogy=Marriage of the Lamb; etc.)

Parable to expose a problem: When you listen to the troubles of others, try to pinpoint the problem from God's perspective.

- Ask the Lord to identify the real issue or problem.
- Ask the Lord to help you relate the real issue to something from normal life, something found in nature, or a made up story that exposes the problem. (Note: This is different than sharing a similar story from our own life.)

### NOTES:

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### ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 13, 26

Luke 14, 15, 16

Psalms 78

Psalms 42:1-2

2 Samuel 12:1-4

Isaiah 5:1-7

2 Samuel 14:1-11

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Galatians 4:21-31

## THESE SIGNS WILL FOLLOW

When Solomon prayed and dedicated the Temple of God in Jerusalem, his prayer reveals something about the heart of God for His people and for the people of the nations. Solomon prayed extensively for God's mercy and forgiveness when His own people when they fell into sin and error resulting in sickness, oppression, or enemy defeat. But when Solomon prayed for the foreigners who would come to the Temple to pray and seek the God of Israel, he asked God to grant whatever the foreigner asked. Through this, all the nations of the earth would know and exalt the name of the one true God. (See 1 Kings 8:41-43.)

God desires to make Himself known. He is willing to do just about anything to demonstrate the redemptive power of heaven in order to introduce Himself to those who do not know Him. The purpose of miracles is to demonstrate the power of God to the world so that they can see and believe and be saved. Jesus did not come to condemn, to judge, or to oppress but to forgive, show mercy, and set free.

*John 3:17: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but **to save the world through Him.***

*John 12:47: "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but **to save the world.**"*

With this same intent and purpose, Jesus bestowed upon His followers all power and authority to work miracles in His name to accompany the proclamation of His Kingdom. In fact, He said that miraculous signs would follow all who believe Him.

*John 14:12-13: Very truly I tell you, **whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these,** because I am going to the Father. **And I will do whatever you ask in My name,** so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

### The Miracles of Jesus

In order to do the works that Jesus did in the way that He did them, let us examine Jesus' ministry on earth to see what He did and how He did it. Jesus demonstrated the will of God to forgive, to heal, to deliver from oppression, and even to deliver from death – all revealing His purpose to save. Jesus' goodwill towards people was not hindered by their sins or anything that they had done. He did not inquire of anyone's worthiness or piety before healing or delivering them, and He did not go on religious sin-hunts to prove that the sufferer was suffering because of something that they had done to deserve it. Jesus knew that His sacrifice was totally sufficient to cover anything they may have done or not done and therefore, no matter what the problem was, when someone came to Him in faith, Jesus was moved with compassion and was willing and able to bring to earth for them. He did not drone on with long flowery prayers quoting a lot of Scripture to be impressive. Rather, He freely and succinctly forgave even blatant sin without condemnation, and He exercised His *power and authority* over sickness, demons, creation, and even over death.

*Luke 7:48: Then Jesus said to her, "**Your sins are forgiven.**" (Jesus forgives immoral people.)*

*John 8:11: "No one, sir," she said. "**Then neither do I condemn you,**" Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (Jesus forgives even egregious sin.)*

Luke 4:39: **So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.** She got up at once and began to wait on them. (Jesus commands sickness to leave.)

John 9:3: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but **this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.** (Jesus heals without blaming the sufferer.)

Luke 5:12-13: While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "**Lord, if you are willing,** you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "**I am willing,**" he said. "**Be clean! [healed]**" And immediately the leprosy left him. (Jesus is willing.)

Mark 9:22-23 NLT: The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and **help us, if you can.**" "**What do you mean, 'if I can'?**" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes." (Jesus is able.)

Matthew 20:34: **Jesus had compassion on them** and touched their eyes. Immediately **they received their sight** and followed him. (Jesus has compassion on the afflicted.)

Matthew 8:31-32: The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." **He said to them, "Go!"** So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. (Jesus commands demons with a single word.)

Mark 4:39: He got up, **rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"** Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. (Jesus commands creation.)

John 11:25: Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;** (Jesus raises the dead.)

Jesus did all of this to demonstrate His power and authority from God and reveal His identity as God's anointed one who has power over all the forces of evil – including death. But Jesus was not limited to these miracles. In fact, these examples are just the highlights that the writers of the Gospels chose to write about for our edification. However, these writers also made it definitively clear that Jesus healed ALL diseases for those who came to Him in faith.

Matthew 4:23-24: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, **and healing every disease and sickness among the people.** News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him **all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and He healed them.**

Matthew 9:35: Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and **healing every disease and sickness.**

Matthew 12:15: Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed Him, and **He healed all who were ill.**

Matthew 14:35-36: And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought **all their sick** to Him and begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and **all who touched it were healed.**

Matthew 15:30-31: Great crowds came to Him, bringing **the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at His feet; and He healed them.** The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Mark 1:32-34, 39: That evening after sunset the people brought to **Jesus all the sick and**



**demon-possessed.** The whole town gathered at the door, and **Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons,** but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was. ... So He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and **driving out demons.**

Mark 6:54-56: As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. And wherever He went--into villages, towns or countryside--they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and **all who touched it were healed.**

Luke 4:40-41: At sunset, the people brought to Jesus **all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying His hands on each one, He healed them.** Moreover, **demons came out of many people,** shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the Messiah.

Luke 6:17-19: He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. **Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.**

John 6:2: ...And a great crowd of people followed Him because they saw **the signs He had performed by healing the sick.**

These healings and other miracles Jesus performed served as a sign to confirm Him as God's Son and the Messiah promised to Israel who is the Savior promised for all mankind. He did not work miracles for amusement or to pridefully put His power on display. He worked miracles to reveal His identity so that people might come to know Him, repent of their ways, and be saved.

### **Doing the Works that Jesus Did**

Jesus shared His authority with His disciples while He was still with them to demonstrate to them beyond a doubt that it is His and God's will for the sick to be healed through faith in His name. Before His suffering, death, and resurrection, when the Lord had sent out His twelve disciples and later the seventy-two, He gave them authority over every disease, unclean spirits, and the power of the evil one.

Matthew 10:1, 7-8: Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and **gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness...** As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.** Freely you have received; freely give.

Luke 10:17, 19: The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us **in Your name** ... I have given you **authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.**

Now after His resurrection, Jesus sends His disciples out with ALL authority in heaven and on earth **in His name** to continue the work of bringing His Kingdom to earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:17-18: And these signs will accompany those who believe: **In My name** they will **drive out demons;** they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will **place their hands**

**on sick people, and they will get well.**

When the first disciples set out to obey Jesus' command after His ascension to , they continued to do the things Jesus had done during His ministry and what they had done when He previously shared His authority with them. They healed the sick, raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, and cast out demons with the same approach, authority, and power of God that Jesus would use if He was there in person. All the while, they pointed to Jesus as the one and only Messiah and Savior sent by God and the One who was truly responsible for all of the miracles and told people to repent so that they could be saved from the wrath of God to come.

*Acts 3:6-8, 16: Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.**" Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ... **By faith in the name of Jesus**, this man whom you see and know was made strong. **It is Jesus' name** and the faith that comes through Him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."*

*Acts 8:6-7, 12: When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, **impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.** ... But when they believed Philip as he **proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women.*

*Acts 9:34: "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "**Jesus Christ heals you.** Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.*

*Acts 16:18: She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "**In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!**" At that moment the [demonic] spirit left her.*

Practically speaking, in order to do the works that Jesus did in the way that He did them, we cannot simply imitate what He did. We must do what He did. It is impossible to replicate the works of Jesus by any formula because He never did anything the same way twice. For example, in different episodes of giving sight to the blind, Jesus touched their eyes, spit on their eyes, or made mud to put on their eyes. In spite of these different methods, each one received sight. In every miracle that Jesus did, He did what He saw God doing, acted on God's command, and said what God said.

In the same way, as Jesus sends us out to do the works that He did, He shows us or tells us through the Holy Spirit exactly what we are supposed to do with the person right in front of us. We will lay hands on the sick, we will command body parts to be healed, and we will command unclean spirits to flee in Jesus' name. As we wait for His spiritual direction, in our mind's eye we may see ourselves doing something such as laying hands on a person in a particular place, or we may experience a physical sensation somewhere in our bodies as an indication of where their pain is. In other instances, we may hear the Holy Spirit from our inmost being whispering to us, "foot pain" or, "anxiety," or we may experience a momentary onset of emotion to indicate how the person is feeling. As the Holy Spirit guides us, we may hear Jesus whispering things like, "Tell her I love her," or, "Tell her I am not ashamed of her." When we watch and listen for Jesus' instructions and step out to obey His promptings, we do only what we see Him doing and say what He says. We will do the things that He did in the way that He did them.

We who believe have been made citizens of heaven, even though we are still on the earth. We are sent by Christ as His ambassadors to do His will on earth, the way it is in heaven. In heaven, there is no lack, only abundance; there is no sickness, only health; there is no oppression, only freedom; there is no rejection, only acceptance; there is no depression, only joy; there is no stress, only peace. In heaven,

there is no death, mourning, crying, or pain. In order to bring heaven to earth, we must keep our minds in heaven and do only what we see Jesus doing.

### **Resistance, Unbelief, & Demands**

When Jesus walked on the earth and people did not believe in Him, He never defended Himself. He simply pointed to His miracles as proof that He had God's approval.

Jesus encountered people who did not believe Him and could not receive heaven on earth from Him. For example, in Nazareth, Jesus' boyhood hometown, people doubted His power. They scoffed, believing that He was just like everybody else, and they were deeply offended by Him. I imagine that they believed things such as this is the way things are in the world, and we get what we deserve, and Jesus is a good guy, but He is not able fix me, or my situation is too hard or impossible for Him. Jesus could not do many miracles in Nazareth because they could not receive from Him.

On the other hand, the religious leaders of the day had issues with Jesus' authority. They questioned if Jesus' authority came from God and accused Him of working for the devil. Other times, they demanded a miraculous sign from Jesus in order to prove that His authority was from God. When they did this, they were treating God like their servant and refused to believe Jesus unless they received what they wanted, the way they wanted it. Jesus did nothing for them.

Similarly, as we set out to do the works that Jesus did in the way that He did them, we will also encounter resistance from people who resist God's miracle working power or do not believe God still works miracles today the way He did in the Book of Acts. Many of these are well-meaning professing believers who have been incorrectly taught or who have had unfortunate experiences with those moving in spiritual power. Their teachings, like the religious leaders in Jesus' day, have a tendency to emphasize character through morality and good works as the demonstration of godliness and Christlikeness. However, Jesus Christ ministered in the power of God. To claim His likeness without His power is not quite like Him at all.

Moreover, the days are coming when the antichrist and the powers of darkness will fill the world with counterfeit signs and lying wonders to deceive all the nations into taking the mark of the beast. Scripture says he will work all manner of miracles including calling fire down from heaven. In the midst of the great apostasy, professing believers will even demand a signs to confirm that someone is working for the real Jesus. But we should take heed to what Jesus said about those who demand a sign.

*Matthew 12:39-40: He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it **except the sign of the prophet Jonah**. For as **Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**. (See also Matthew 16:4; Luke 11:29-30.)*

Therefore, let us press on to the fullness of all Jesus has died to give us – including His miracle power for bringing heaven to earth. But let us not be confused about who is God or who works for whom. We are the servants, Jesus is the King.

The works that Jesus did as the Son of God are the very same works that we are commissioned, authorized, and empowered to do as God's sons and daughters in Christ. The anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus is the same anointing He has now shared with us. Jesus came to save. We go to save. Let's go!

*Luke 4:18-19 **The Spirit of the Lord is on ME**, because he has **anointed ME to proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent **ME to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor**. (emphasis added for personal prayer)*

## SPIRIT UPON ME

Luke 4:18-19 NIV - The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

### DESCRIPTION

In order to do the works that Jesus did, we need the Holy Spirit to come upon us. There are numerous examples from the Old Testament of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon normal people to give them supernatural power to fulfill God's work.

Now that the Holy Spirit has been poured out from heaven, the Spirit of the Lord comes to dwell inside of us when we believe Jesus. This is the internal anointing. When the Holy Spirit comes upon us at certain times in powerful ways to aid us in the works of God's Kingdom, it is the external anointing. Both the internal and external anointing are the Spirit of the Lord but they function in different ways for God's purposes. It is by the Spirit coming upon us believers that they proclaimed the Gospel, prophesied, spoke in other tongues, healed the sick, cast out demons, and raised the dead. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon us today for the same purposes and more. This said, God's power is not to be used for the fulfillment of our own personal aims or for the manipulation of events. It is for the work of God and glorifying the name of Jesus. Practicing Spirit upon Me is about engaging with the external anointing of God by inviting the Holy Spirit to come upon us as we fulfill God's purposes in the earth.

### PRAYER

Father, I believe that you have anointed me to work the works of Jesus with your power from heaven. Allow me to experience your Spirit coming upon me so that I may move in your power and purposes. In Jesus' name, Amen.



### PURPOSE:

To understand and experience the Spirit of the Lord coming upon us. To work the works of Jesus by His guidance and power.

### SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Power of the Holy Spirit. Increased faith and power for miracles. Deeper experience of God's work for us and through us.

## CONSIDERATIONS

In your life with the Holy Spirit, have you experienced more of God's internal power or His external power?

In what ways have you experienced the power of God coming upon you? What was this like for you?

In what ways do you think approaching the Holy Spirit **only** for internal power could be beneficial? Lacking?

In what ways do you think approaching the Holy Spirit **only** for external power could be beneficial? Lacking?

What do you think is the right approach to fulfilling God's purposes in cooperation with both the internal and external power? How will this affect your approach to the Holy Spirit?

### PRACTICE

1. Read through the list of Additional Scriptures.
  - Take note that the power of God did not come upon anyone to fulfill their own selfish desires but to fulfill God's purposes.

2. Ask God to reveal to you a situation in your life in which He desires to pour His Spirit upon you to help you.
  - For example, living by faith in His salvation, deliverance, healing, miracles, or any other situation in your life.
  - Ask the Lord to give you one or two Scriptures for this area. (Note: Using only one or two will focus your faith.)
3. In your times of prayer, invite the Holy Spirit to come upon you. Say, "Holy Spirit, clothe me with power from heaven."
  - Briefly wait for anything the Lord may do or say before you begin to enter into prayer.
  - As you pray, alternate between speaking your Scriptures, singing your Scriptures, and speaking/singing in tongues until you sense the presence or power of God.
4. Once you sense the Spirit of the Lord upon you, listen to the Holy Spirit and do whatever you sense He tells you to do.
  - Praise God for what He does! To Him be all glory!

### NOTES:

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### ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Acts 1:8  
Acts 2:1-13  
Acts 4:8, 31  
Acts 9:17  
Acts 10:38  
Luke 11:13

### Old Testament

#### Examples:

Judges 3:10,  
6:34, 11:29,  
13:25, 14:6, 19,  
15:14  
1 Samuel  
10:1, 6:9, 11:6,  
16:13  
Numbers 11:14-30



## HEAL THE SICK

Matthew 4:23-24 NIV - Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and He healed them.

### DESCRIPTION

When Jesus died on the cross and said, "It is finished," His finished work included healing from all diseases and infirmities. By conquering sin by His blood and redeeming us from the curse of the Law through His death, we are made righteous by faith. The blessing of the righteous is health and healing from all sickness. Jesus also gave His disciples authority over sickness and every infirmity. When He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, He also commanded them to demonstrate the benefits and blessings of the Kingdom by healing the sick in Jesus' name. Therefore, to practicing Heal the Sick Demons is about aligning ourselves with God's will for us to be well and ministering healing to other people so that they can know the love of God for them in Christ Jesus.

### TALK TO GOD

Do you believe that God still heals today? Have you ever been miraculously healed by God? Do you know someone who has?

What does Jesus' ministry reveal about God's will for healing?

In what ways have you turned to remedies other than believing God for your healing or wellness? Ask the Lord what He wants you to do about this.

How do you need to engage your faith to receive healing for yourself and minister healing to others?



### PURPOSE:

To take authority over sickness in our own lives and in the lives of others.

To receive healing in Jesus' name.

To minister healing in Jesus' name.

### SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Deeper revelation of God's will to heal.

Greater functioning in God's authority for us as His children.

Deeper experience of God's ways and work on our behalf.

Deeper understanding and experience of God's healing power.

## PRAYER

Father, thank you that you paid for my healing at the cross and have granted me authority in Jesus' name to heal the sick. Help me to believe and grant me power from heaven to be healed and heal for your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PRACTICE - RECEIVING

1. Read through the Scriptures listed in the Additional Scriptures column.
  - Write down what you hear the Holy Spirit highlighting to you from these scriptures.
  - How do these prove that it is God's will to heal you?
2. Identify any kind of sickness, infirmity, weakness, or pain in your own body.
  - Believe in your heart that it is God's will for you to be well.
  - Open your heart to receive healing from God as a free gift.
  - Resist any unbelief with the Word of God, knowing you are the righteousness of God in Christ.
3. Praise God for your healing! Give Him all glory!

## PRACTICE - MINISTERING

1. Identify sickness, infirmity, pain, and health issues in others.
  - Share with them that Jesus paid for their healing on the cross. Use the Scriptures and or testimonies of healing to build their faith.
2. If they are willing, pray healing for them the way Jesus did.
  - Don't ask God to heal it, command the sickness like this "In the name of Jesus, be healed," or "[Name of body part] be healed," or [Name of sickness] go, in Jesus' name.
3. Have them put their faith into practice by attempting to do something they previously could not do. For example, "take up your mat and walk..."
4. Praise God for their healing! Give Him all glory!

## NOTES:

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## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- Matthew 8:1-4  
 Mark 3:1-6  
 Luke 7:11-17  
 John 5:1-9  
 Luke 14:1-6  
 Acts 9:32-35  
 Acts 3:1-10  
 Mark 10:46-52  
 Matthew 9:1-8  
 Matthew 10:1-8  
 Isaiah 53:1-12  
 1 Peter 2:24

## IF YOU CONTINUE

Professing to repent of your sins and believe Jesus is not a free pass to eternity. Actual repentance and belief is demonstrated by what we do. It is true that salvation is a free gift through faith in Christ. But it will also cost you everything you own if you truly know the value of the Kingdom that has been given to you. Our comprehension of the worth of Jesus is revealed when our faith is put to the test through trials and we stand the test through perseverance and faithfulness to Christ.

When Jesus told His disciples about the tribulation to come before His return, He made it explicitly clear that only those who endure to the very end will be saved. He also made clear that the tribulation before His return is going to be so terrible that nobody would be saved if the days were not shortened.

This is an absolute contradiction to the "salvation prayer" and "once saved, always saved" gospel that is being proclaimed today. The apostles did not believe or proclaim a pre-tribulation rapture. The argument has been made that Jesus said that no one can snatch any of us from His hand. This is true. (See John 10:28.) No one can snatch us out of God's hand but we at retain our free will to believe and to follow Jesus or to deny and renounce Him.

*2 Timothy 2:11-13, 19: Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. **If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself...** Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, **"Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."***

Our faith will be put to the test. God knows our hearts.

### **A Real Change of Heart**

In the Book of John, there are two examples of Jesus putting to the proof those who had already professed faith in Him and were following Him.

After Jesus had fed the five thousand, a large crowd followed Him. But Jesus knew their hearts were not truly with Him. He openly rebuked them for following Him only because He had put food in their bellies. Their following of Jesus was actually service to a different god – their own stomach. Jesus challenged them by teaching that the real bread of life was His own body and real drink was His own blood. This was too disturbing for them. They did not truly grasp who Jesus was or what He was talking about. And so they abandoned Him, stopped following Him, and no longer believed Him to be the Messiah. Only the twelve remained with Him. (See John 6.)

A little later on, Jesus had pardoned the woman caught in adultery. Then, He proclaimed that He did not come to judge anyone and that they would die in their sins if they did not believe Him and so, many believed in Him. Simple enough. But Jesus turned to them and told them that they needed to abide or remain in Him and in His word to truly be His disciples – otherwise they were slaves. They immediately denied ever being enslaved to anyone. But Jesus pointed out that they were enslaved to sin and to lies. Instead of being the seed of the faithful Abraham, they were the offspring of the devil who is the father of lies. At this, their belief in Jesus abruptly ended, they accused Him of being a half-breed Samaritan and

tried to stone Him to death. (See John 8.) They liked the message of freedom and forgiveness but were unable to see their own need for it.

Receiving a miracle and following Jesus because it meets our needs is immature belief. A profession of faith without a change of heart is not a real salvation. We must actually repent of our sins and live our lives for God in genuine repentance out of gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice.

### **The Example of Scripture**

The example of Israel being delivered out of Egypt is an allegory for our deliverance from sin through the blood of Jesus. This said, within a few days of the Israelites walking through the Red Sea on dry ground, they grumbled out of hunger and thirst in unbelief that God was able to provide for them in the wilderness. They loathed this halfway state between the slavery of Egypt and the Promised Land and wanted to return to Egypt. It was these same people who had seen God's miracles in Egypt who did not believe that God was able to fulfill ALL of His promises to them. And so, they did not receive what was promised because of their own unbelief. Once we are saved, we have only just begun to walk with God and to have our faith shaped, developed, and tested through various trials and challenges that will come our way. The Israelites serve as our example so that we might be strengthened to stand the test of faith and receive all that Jesus died to give us.

*Hebrews 3:14-19: We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." **Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.***

*1 Corinthians 10:1-13: For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were **all under the cloud** and that they **all passed through** the sea. They were **all baptized** into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They **all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink**; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. **Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.***

***Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel. **These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.***

*So, **if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!** No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

The letter of Hebrews was written to emphasize the supremacy of Christ and the life of true faithfulness. It was written to Jewish believers who had put their faith in Jesus as Messiah. For their faith in Jesus, they had been brutally rejected, disowned, and plundered by their families as heretics and blasphemers. (See Hebrews 10.) They had tasted the goodness of God, been indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and had already

withstood much hardship for Christ. It's just that they had not anticipated just how long this persecution would continue before Christ's return. According to their own Scriptures, they expected His return at any moment to establish His Kingdom. But after ten years of hardship, they were worn out and considering returning to Judaism just to put an end to their earthly struggles. Therefore, the writer of Hebrews consistently encouraged these believers to stand firm until the very end. If they turned their backs on Christ they would not be able to return again. Their eternal souls were on the line.

*Hebrews 6:4-8: It is impossible for those **who have once been enlightened**, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age **and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance**. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.*

Teachers who claim "once saved, always saved" refute this verse by saying that anyone who falls away must not have been saved in the first place. However, knowing the full context of the letter of Hebrews, this argument simply does not stand up.

Moreover, Peter also addressed believers who were vulnerable to falling away due to false teachers. He did not assert that the false teachers were never saved. Rather, he made clear that they had come to salvation but were perverting it to suit their own desires. Peter explains that it would have been better for them not to have been saved at all than to have been saved and then turn away. Clearly, this confirms that it is possible to be saved and fall away from the faith.

*2 Peter 2:20-22: **If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs** on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud."*

## **Endure to the End**

As tribulation and wickedness increases on the earth, it will become easier and more justifiable to carnal standards to look out for ourselves rather than pour ourselves out in service to God for the benefit of others. The persecution against Christians of the early church will be dwarfed by the persecution believers have yet to face on a global scale.

*Matthew 24:12-13: Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but **the one who stands firm to the end will be saved**.*

*Revelation 13:10: If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed." **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people**.*

Let us not live carelessly in hopes of being divinely airlifted off the earth before these trials come. Let us press on to know Christ and to continue in faithfulness to Him no matter what happens so that we can endure to the end and be saved.



## IF YOU CONTINUE...

### Scripture List & Worksheet

Colossians 1:21-23: Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--**if you continue in your faith**, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

1Corinthians 15:1-4: Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, **if you hold firmly to the word** I preached to you. **Otherwise, you have believed in vain.** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1Timothy 4:16: Watch your life and doctrine closely. **Persevere in them**, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Romans 11:22: Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, **provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.**

Galatians 3:2-3: I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? **After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?**

Hebrews 3:6, 14: But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, **if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.** ... We have come to share in Christ, **if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.**

Hebrews 4:14: Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.**

Hebrews 6:11: We want each of you to **show this same diligence to the very end**, so that what you hope for may be fully realized.

Hebrews 10:23: Let us **hold unswervingly to the hope we profess**, for he who promised is faithful.

#### Practical Application:

What are three ways the Lord is asking you to respond to these Scriptures?
1.
2.
3.

## WHO WILL & WILL NOT ENTER

### Scripture List & Worksheet

Matthew 5:3, 10, 18-20: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven**. ... Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven**. ... For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called **great in the kingdom of heaven**. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly **not enter the kingdom of heaven**."

Matthew 7:21-23: "**Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven**, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

John 3:3-8: Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, **no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again**." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, **no one can enter the kingdom of God** unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Acts 14:22b: "We must go through **many hardships to enter the kingdom of God**," they said.

Mark 12:33-34a: To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "**You are not far from the kingdom of God**."

Matthew 18:1-4: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the **greatest in the kingdom of heaven**?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, **unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven**. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the **greatest in the kingdom of heaven**."

Matthew 19:23-24: Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich **to enter the kingdom of heaven**. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich **to enter the kingdom of God**."

Matthew 23:13: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! **You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven** in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."

Mark 9:43-48: If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. **It is better for you to enter life [in the Kingdom]** maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into

hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. **It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God** with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where "the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched."

Luke 9:57-62: As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but **you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.**" Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is **fit for service in the kingdom of God.**"

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Or do you not know that wrongdoers **will not inherit the kingdom of God**? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers **will inherit the kingdom of God.** And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 15:48-50: As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man. I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,** nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Galatians 5:19-21: The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Ephesians 5:5-6: For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a person is an idolater--**has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

Colossians 1:12-14: and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us **into the kingdom of the Son he loves,** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5: Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be **counted worthy of the kingdom of God,** for which you are suffering.

James 2:5: Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and **to inherit the kingdom** he promised those who love him?

2 Peter 1:10-11: Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will **receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

Revelation 21:7-8: Those who are **victorious will inherit all this [the Kingdom],** and I will be their God and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Galatians 6:7-8: Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life [in the Kingdom.]

**Practical Application:**

**What do these Scriptures reveal to you about the Kingdom of God?**

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**List three types of people or behaviors that qualify us for the Kingdom of God.**

1.
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2.
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3.
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**List three types of people or behaviors that disqualify us for the Kingdom of God.**

1.
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2.
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3.
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**In what ways does this challenge your concepts about the heart of God and His Kingdom?**

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**How is God asking you to personally respond to these Scriptures in your own life?**

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## SERMON ON THE MOUNT INSPECTION

1 = Needs improvement	2 = In Refining Process	3 = Doing Well for Now
<b>Sermon on the Mount – based on Matthew 5-7, Luke 6</b>		
I know my need for God.	1    2    3	I do not seek the praise of others.
I lament over sin and wickedness.	1    2    3	I give in secret.
I am meek, lowly.	1    2    3	I do not pray on display in public.
I am merciful.	1    2    3	I pray in the secret place of God.
My heart and motives are pure.	1    2    3	I do not heap up phrases in prayer.
I make peace at my own expense.	1    2    3	I forgive others their offenses.
I am persecuted for righteousness.	1    2    3	I do not fast to be seen/noticed.
I am reviled by others for Jesus.	1    2    3	I do not lay up treasures on earth.
I let my light shine before others.	1    2    3	I give generously to the poor.
I do not sin through anger.	1    2    3	I am not anxious about my life.
I quickly settle conflicts.	1    2    3	I do not focus on food & clothing.
I do not commit adultery.	1    2    3	I seek first the Kingdom of God.
I am not lustful in my heart.	1    2    3	I do not judge others.
I pluck out hindrances to eternity.	1    2    3	I take the log out of my own eye.
I do not swear falsely.	1    2    3	I do not throw pearls before pigs.
I do not take oaths.	1    2    3	I ask God in all things.
My yes is yes, my no is no.	1    2    3	I seek God in all things.
I do not resist evil people.	1    2    3	I knock for God for all things.
I turn the other cheek.	1    2    3	I do to others as I want to receive.
I go the extra mile.	1    2    3	I strive to enter by the narrow gate.
I give to everyone who asks of me.	1    2    3	I discern false teachers by fruit.
I do not demand back from takers.	1    2    3	
I love my enemies.	1    2    3	I hear the words of Jesus.
I bless those who curse me.	1    2    3	I DO the words of Jesus.
<i>Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. John 13:17</i>		

## UNIT FIVE – KEY QUESTIONS

### Kingdom Gospel with Signs

Use this worksheet to test your grasp of the material and exercises of Unit Five.

<b>What is the eternal Gospel? (in your own words)</b>	
<b>How does God use witnesses to accomplish His purposes?</b>	<b>Why is it important to preach the Gospel free of charge?</b>
<b>What was Jesus' primary message?</b>	<b>What is God's purpose for miracles?</b>
<b>Does professing belief in Jesus qualify as salvation?</b>	<b>What happens to believers who turn away from Christ?</b>
<b>What is one thing you learned that you did not know before?</b>	<b>What questions do you still have about this subject?</b>

## **UNIT FIVE: GROUP EXERCISES**

### **Option One:**

Using the Speaking in Parables exercise from Class Two, practice speaking to one another in parables about Jesus and His Kingdom. Offer constructive feedback about your parables.

### **AND/OR**

### **Option Two:**

Using the Heal the Sick exercise from Class Three, practice praying healing for one another and for anyone in the group who has any kind of sickness or infirmity.