

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 31, 2019

LESSON 45: GOD PROVIDES FOR OUR NEEDS AND WE ARE THANKFUL

General Concept: As a compassionate God, God provides for our basic needs, like food, shelter and unconditional love.

Biblical References: Joshua 5:11-12; Luke 15: 11-32

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Age-Level Concepts

- God provides for our needs through our own diligence and that of our elders.
- God's unconditional love is shared through our family, friends and community.
- We share God's blessing with others.
- We are ever grateful to God.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Know how God provides for their needs
- Feel God's love through their family, friends and the community
- Thank God for His unconditional love and for giving them strength to secure provisions for their loved ones

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Joshua 5:11-12

Some 40 long years have passed and not much has changed to the life of the Israelites. The band of slaves who fled from Egypt are still trying to survive along Jordan River. It was most likely that the older Israelites have gone and died off in the desert and the new generation of Israelites were left in the hands of the new and young leaders, Caleb and Joshua. In the time of Joshua, the Israelites were still facing threats from enemies and their long-awaited entry to Canaan has been delayed yet again.

The generation of Israelites led by Joshua were far different from their predecessors. They were more faithful to Him and had decided to trust God, no matter what. Joshua himself declared that he would wholeheartedly serve God and follow God's instructions. This kind of faith was manifested upon their entrance in Jericho. While the residents of Jericho waited for the incoming onslaught from their conquerors, the Israelites, as instructed, held a Passover Feast, performed circumcision rituals, and built a monument to God. It was a demonstration of their gratitude to a God who continuously provided for their needs ever since they fled Egypt and wandered in the wilderness; to a God that would care for them even while they wait for the time where they can eat the produce from the Promised Land.

Our text in Joshua 5: 10-11 is a testament to God's unconditional love and faithfulness. God never stops to provide for the needs of His people. God sustains the people till the end of their journey until they can provide for themselves. But even so, the generation of Joshua acknowledged that even the fruits of their labor in Canaan was a manifestation of God's continuing participation in their lives. The Israelites

led by Joshua could do nothing but show their gratitude, faithfulness and obedience to their steadfast God.

Luke 15: 11-32

The collection of stories found only in the gospel of Luke tries to make us understand the intention and character of Jesus' message. On one hand, Jesus gives a harsh warning against those who think highly of themselves or those who see no need for God and refuse to pay the cost of following him. On the other, these are also stories that serve to showcase a God whose love is limitless, unconditional and willing to forgive those who choose to turn back to God.

The Parable of the Lost Son gives us a vivid picture of the character of God. God's love is not just for the righteous but it is also for the sinners. In fact, God's love always seeks the lost and rejoices when they are found. The writer is telling us that such kind of love is being proclaimed and demonstrated in Jesus. He was the perfect example of how God loves his creations. Jesus' life and ministry was a testimony to God's all-compassing and unconditional love. This is just only goes to show that to a faithful person, the task of spreading His word and love is not difficult to do since it was already done by a man named Jesus. It can happen and begin in our ordinary lives and can be manifested in whatever situations we may find ourselves.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "God Will Take Care of You" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 38

Be not dismayed whate'er be tide, God will take care of you,
Beneath God's wings of love abide, God will take care of you.

Refrain: God will take care of you, through every day o'er all the way
God will take care of you, God will take care of you.

All you may need God will provide, God will take care of you,
Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.

Opening Prayer

We are gathered today to worship and praise you, O God, our Sustainer. Abide in us as we study and share our experiences with each other. May our discussions and exchange of thoughts help strengthen our faith. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Let someone read the biblical text in Joshua 5: 10-11. Ask the following questions for discussion:

- What were the basic needs of the Israelites that God had provided for them?
- How did God provide for their needs?
- What affirmations about God can we draw out from the text?

Let someone read the biblical text in Luke 15: 11-32. Ask the following questions for discussion:

- What situations in the story show the father's love?



- What affirmations about God can we draw out from the story?

Lessons Learned

SMALL GROUPS. Divide the class into small groups. Tell them to share their life experiences in relation to the following:

- How did God provide for the needs of their family?
- What are the manifestations of God's provision in the community?
- What are the manifestations of God providing for our needs through the community?
- How can we be of help in God's work of providing for the needs of the people?

Tell the small groups to give a summary of what they have shared within their group.

Applying the Lessons Learned

Collate the responses of the small groups in relation to the question, "How can we be of help in God's work of providing for the needs of the people? Let the learners affirm their responses.

The facilitator may synthesize the discussion by sharing the following points:

- We are grateful that God loves us unconditionally while we are unfaithful and disobedient, that God did not stop showing compassion and love.
- We feel God's unconditional love and provision through the love and care of our family, friends and the community.
- We should not always remain as simply recipients of God's provision and love. We can be God's instrument in providing for the needs of others, especially the least and neglected. As God's people, we are called to participate in God's work.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "Faith in the Service of the People" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 306

Refrain: Faith in the service of the people

Faith in the service of the poor

This is our response to the call of God

Faith in the service of the poor.

People of the church have the vision of kingdom of God on earth
A kingdom of justice and righteousness, a kingdom of joy and love.

Closing Prayer

We believe that You provided for our needs because You love us, Lord. We also believe that Your love will continue to manifest through our family, friends and community. Move us to commit ourselves in Your work of providing for the needs of those who are suffering, deprived and poor. May Your love manifest itself through us and be shared with others. In Jesus' name, Amen..

Fifth Sunday in Lent

April 7, 2019

LESSON 46: GOD DOES GREAT THINGS FOR US AND WE ARE THANKFUL

General Concept: We are thankful for the compassionate deeds God has done for His people.



Biblical References: Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

Age-Level Concepts

- God does compassionate deeds for His people.
- God offers forgiveness for our sins.
- God saves us.
- We are repentant, thankful and hopeful.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Identify some of the compassionate deeds God has done for His people
- Repent for their sins
- Express gratitude to God by participating wholeheartedly in God's mission

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Isaiah 43:16-21

For much of Isaiah's life, he had witnessed and experienced Judah in its prime. Those who live in it pride themselves for being a strong and abundant nation. But, it was later prophesied by prophets that Judah would soon experience devastation and captivity in the hands of Babylon. Jerusalem, which was also considered as the center of the people's worship, now lies in ruins as well. The confident nation that Isaiah once knew suffered so much from the brunt of Babylon's might. Questions were raised as to why God allowed these things to happen; "How can God allow the 'throne of David' be trampled upon?" The people once again needed God's help.

Under these circumstances, the prophets during this period began to change the tone of their messages. We can notice that harsh warnings and predictions of judgments are now gone. Instead, messages of hope and comfort reverberate in their prophecies with the intention of bringing joy and comfort in times of suffering. It also tried to reassure and bring back the people's faith in God. Isaiah pointed three great hopes that would come to the life of the people of the captured people of Judah – three things that the people could look forward to. Firstly, the people will be freed from captivity through Cyrus, a ruler from the east, who will rise and set the Jews free to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. Secondly, the figure of a "servant" will come and suffer in order to rescue the whole world. Thirdly, the prophet looked beyond time to foretell of a time when "the Holy One of Israel" will establish a "new heaven and a new earth".

It is within this hopeful note that our biblical text was written, mentioning the great things that God intends to do for His people despite their unfaithfulness. It talks about a point in time where God will continue to participate in the lives of the people by doing great things so that the people may understand that God did not leave them to suffer but intends to bring them to a new life.

Psalm 126

It is believed that while almost half of the psalms are credited to David, many of the poems were written by other contributors, many of whom were anonymous. The psalms may reflect the varied personalities



and experiences of the different writer, however, the poems, songs and prayers found in the book carry the same theme. Readers of the book may not notice that one psalm was written centuries older than another. Yet, one can appreciate the consistency of the theme in the whole book which is the never changing reality of a strong, loving and caring God.

Psalm 126 reflects a joyous declaration of grateful praise for the “great things’ that God has done for the people. It reflects the experience and struggle of the people who dream of change in their lives. The psalm was written not by a person without faith but by someone whose joy and praises came not from the absence of problems in their lives but from a strong conviction that a great God can overcome them.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn “Ginawaak Manema” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 42

Ginawaak Manema, Ines inged, ines inged

Ginawaak Manema, ines inged, ines inged

Tinged kini igbagayden andas anak den

Kended en pAmen.tuan sa kanden

Dirig,dirig,dirig katatren

Taman sa taman, taman sa taman,

Taman s ataman, taman s ataman

Gihigugma man sa Dios ang kalibutan gayud

Gihigugma man sa Dios ang kalibutan gayud

Busa iyang bugtong nga anak gihatag nya

Nga kinsay motuo kaniya, dili, dili, dili mawala

Sa kahangturan, sa kahangturan

Sa kahangturan, sa kahangturan.

Opening Prayer. Ask a learner to lead the prayer.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

Let someone read the biblical text in Isaiah 43:16-21. Ask the following for discussion:

- How would you describe or characterize the tone of Isaiah’s message?
- What were the great things that God intends to do to show His love towards the people as prophesied by Isaiah?
- How would/did Isaiah’s message affect the life and faith of the people?
- How did the people respond to God’s great deeds?

Let someone read also the biblical text in Psalm 126. Ask the following for discussion:

- What were the great things done by God mentioned in the psalm?
- In your opinion, what kind of life did the people of Judah have when the psalm was written?
- What kind of change did the people ask from God?



Lessons Learned

Revisiting Old Stories. Ask the learners to evaluate the following familiar biblical events/stories:

- The Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt
- The Wilderness Sojourn
- The Conquest of Jericho

Ask the following:

1. What great things did God do during these events?
2. How did the people respond to such great deeds?
3. What do you think was God's intention for doing great deeds for the people?

TESTIMONIES. Ask a volunteer or volunteers from the learners to share their experience of God doing great deeds for them.

1. How did God's great deed affect you as a believer?
2. How were these effects manifested in your everyday life?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Tell the learners to complete the statement, "I will show my gratitude for the great deeds God has done for me by committing myself to _____."

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Song "Great Is Your Faithfulness" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 49

Great is your faithfulness O God Creator
With you no shadow of turning we see
You do not change, your compassion they fail not
All of your goodness forever will be.

Great is your faithfulness, great is your faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed your hands has provided
Great is your faithfulness, God unto me.

Closing Prayer

The stories of Your people affirm the greatness of Your love and compassion despite of their unfaithfulness to You. Forgive us from our sinfulness and unrighteousness. Forgive us when we fail to share Your great deeds to others. As You continue to do great things in the lives of people and the rest of creation, make us worthy participants in Your work for the kingdom; Amen.

Liturgy of the Palms

April 14, 2019

Sixth Sunday in Lent

LESSON 47: GOD SAVES US AND WE ARE THANKFUL

General Concept: God loves us and saves us and we see this in the life of Jesus.

Biblical References: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Luke 19:28-40

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Luke 19:28-40



Age-Level Concepts

- Jesus loves all of us.
- God’s saving acts are manifested in the life of Jesus.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Affirm that Jesus is their Savior and Companion
- Discuss the world’s need for change and salvation
- Commit to be an agent of change

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket

Biblical Background

Luke 19:28-40

Everything about Jesus and his ministry seems to come to an end as soon as he enters the city of Jerusalem. His last days offer a key to understanding his character and purpose. The last days of Jesus include the triumphant scene of his entrance in Jerusalem as a king. People spread their cloaks on the road, praise God in loud voice, and said “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”, “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” The religious leaders like the Pharisees wanted to stop them but Jesus told the Pharisees; “If they keep quite the stones will cry.” The people proclaim who Jesus is. But against the tumultuous background, Jesus silently weeps because he is painfully aware of how hollow these praises are.

Luke records the last days of Jesus on Earth with his disciples and friends. It is full of emotional twists – from the triumph of entering Jerusalem to the painful betrayal of Judas to his capture; from his suffering and death in the hands of his enemies to his coming back to life.

Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem should be understood in the light of God’s bigger salvific design which Jesus had committed himself to fulfill. His manner of entry contradicts all expectations from that of an earthly king and savior just as God’s way of saving the people does not conform to human expectations and plan. As painful as it was, Jesus submitted himself, in faithful obedience, to God’s salvific work and will.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn “All glory, Laud and Honor” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 147

All glory, laud and honor to you O Christ we sing

To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring

The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way

Our praise, and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.

Opening Prayer. Ask an elder to lead the prayer.

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth



Tell the learners to read the biblical text found in Luke 19:28-40. Ask someone to read the part of the narrator, Jesus, the people, and the disciples.

Discussion. Ask the following questions for discussion:

- Why was it necessary for Jesus to enter the city?
- What were the different expectations that the people had when Jesus entered the city?
- What is the significance of Jesus' entrance to the city to the salvific work of God?

Lessons Learned

- What are the conditions of life that people have that they need to be saved from? Enumerate and explain.
- What changes occurred in your life after accepting Jesus as Savior?
- After you have been saved and changed by Christ, did it have an impact or effect in the lives of the people around you? If so, what were these effects?

Applying the Lessons Learned

Tell the learners to write a letter of commitment to be an agent of change at home, in school, church, and community addressed to God
Let the learners read their letter to the class.

Closing Worship

Offertory

Closing Hymn "More About Jesus" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 143
More about Jesus would I know, more of his grace to others show
More of the saving fullness see, more of his love who died for me.

Refrain:

More, more about Jesus; More, more about Jesus
More of his saving fullness see, more of his love who died for me.

More about Jesus let me learn, more of his holy will discern
Spirit of God my teacher be, showing the things of Christ to me.

Closing Prayer

How can we repay you, Lord, for saving us from all forms of captivity and slavery? We praise You for giving us Jesus Christ, our Savior, whose life and work exemplified true service as well as true faith in your love and will. Empower us through the Holy Spirit so that we may live a Christ-like life. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

WE BELIEVE

That the resurrection of Jesus Christ has overcome the power of death, and continues to give assurance of life after death; we look forward to His coming again in all fullness and glory to make all creation new and to gather all the faithful under God's Kingdom. Amen.



Resurrection of the Lord

April 21, 2019

Easter Day

LESSON 48: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

General Concept: The ruling authorities nailed Jesus to the cross, but God raised him from the dead to demonstrate the power of God over the principalities and powers of the world.

Biblical References: John 20:1-18; Acts 10:34-43

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; I Corinthians 15:20-26; John 20:1-18

Age-Level Concepts

- The ruling authorities had Jesus crucified.
- Jesus lives again and has overcome the power of death.
- God raised him from the dead to demonstrate the power of God over the principalities and powers of the world.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Discuss the reasons why Jesus was crucified
- Explain God's purpose of bringing Jesus back to life
- Affirm that Jesus rose from the dead to demonstrate God's power over the principalities and powers of the world
- Believe that Jesus' resurrection overcomes the power of death

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket

Biblical Background

John 20:1-18

People who hear about the resurrection for the first time may need time before they can comprehend this amazing story. Like Mary and the disciples, they may pass through four stages of belief. At first, they may think the story is a fabrication, impossible to believe. Secondly, like Peter, they may check out the facts and still be puzzled about what happened. Thirdly, only when they encounter Jesus personally are they able to accept the fact of the resurrection, and lastly, as they commit themselves to the risen Lord and devote their lives to serving him, they begin to understand fully the reality of his presence within themselves.

Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why? Just as he said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised. Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or imposter, is ruler of God's eternal kingdom. We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus himself was resurrected. Death is not the end – there is a life beyond it. The divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us; with faith, we can bring our spiritually dead selves back to life. The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 1925-1926*)

Acts 10:34-43



The Book of Acts is considered to be the bridge between the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the letters of Paul). One might ask, "By the way, who is Paul?" or "How on earth did the story of Jesus reach Rome?" The Book of Acts puts everything into its place. It connects the stories of Jesus' life and works to how Christianity spread to big cities. The book talks about the works of the apostles and also introduces Paul to the scene of the movement. Jesus himself has given the clue as to how and where the good news will be spread by saying, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." The Book of Acts followed said outline; the first seven chapters talk about the churches in Jerusalem; the following five chapters talk about Judea and Samaria, and the rest of the book talks about the churches that were under Roman rule.

The biblical text mentioned a man named Peter. He was a formidable apostle whose ministry was documented in the 9th to 12th chapters. Here in this text, Peter was invited into the house of a Gentile. Peter tried to remind the Gentile that his presence is against the Law –an indication that Peter represents the conservative Jewish block that has turned Christian. But God showed him a vision that hinted that proclamation and witnessing should reach even the homes of the Gentiles, "not to call anything or any man impure." Peter testified about the life and works of Jesus as well as about his death and resurrection. According to Peter, Jesus was God's appointed as judge over the living and the dead.(10:42) The biblical account is telling us that raising Jesus from the dead is part of the God's grand plan, as seen by Peter in his vision. By reaching out to the uncircumcised or the Gentiles, it may also be understood that the message of Jesus' resurrection can also be made available to anyone who believes.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 233

Opening Prayer (Also pray for the birthday celebrants, if there is any)

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Divide the class into two. Group 1 will read Mark 15:1-32 and Group 2 will read John 20:1-18.
- The teacher/facilitator explains the biblical background of the texts.
- Questions for Discussion:
 - Group 1:
 - What are some of the reasons as to why the religious leaders wanted Jesus to be crucified?
 - What were the effects of Jesus' crucifixion on the people, especially His followers?
 - Group 2
 - What were the reactions of Mary Magdalene, Peter and the other beloved disciples when they learned that Jesus was no longer in the tomb?
 - What became of Mary Magdalene after her encounter with the risen Lord?

Lessons Learned

- When Jesus died on the cross, what message did it bring to the religious authorities and the people?



- What do we mean when we say, “Jesus’ resurrection overcomes the power of death?”
- If Jesus did not die on the cross and rise from the dead, would the powers-that-be during His time believe in His power over death?
- Do you think the religious leaders had realizations after Jesus rose from the dead? What do you think these are?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- What is the impact of Jesus’ death and resurrection to your life?
- As a church, how can we manifest that we are believers of Jesus’ resurrection?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn

Closing Prayer

“He Lives” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 164

**Second Sunday of
Easter**

April 28, 2019

LESSON 49: JESUS CHRIST’S RESURRECTION OVERCOMES THE POWER OF DEATH

General Concept: The resurrection of Jesus has overcome death and gives strength and courage to proclaim the gospel amidst adversities.

Biblical References: Acts 2:22-33; I Corinthians 15:20-25

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Acts 5:27-42; Psalm 118:14-29; Revelation 1:4-8; John 20:19-31

Age- Level Concepts

- Jesus’ resurrection has overcome death.
- Our society is faced with so many adversities.
- The knowledge of Jesus’ resurrection helps us face society’s problems.
- Jesus’ resurrection gives us strength and courage to help solve society’s problems and in proclaiming the gospel.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Explain how the resurrection of Christ overcomes death
- Identify the forces of death in society
- Explain how the resurrection of Christ breaks the forces of death in the society

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Acts 2:22-32

Peter here is preaching to those who were astounded at the coming of the Holy Spirit that rested upon them and empowered them to speak in other tongues. And here, he proclaims the power of God as fully manifested in Jesus Christ and in his resurrection.



Peter began with a public proclamation of Jesus' resurrection during a time when it could be easily verified by many witnesses. This was a powerful statement, because many of the people listening to Peter's words had been in Jerusalem 50 days earlier at Passover and may have seen or heard about the crucifixion and the resurrection of this "great teacher." Jesus' resurrection was the ultimate sign that what he said about himself was true. Without the resurrection, we would have no reason to believe in Jesus.

Verses 25-32 are quoted from Psalm 16:8-11 – a psalm written by David. He explained that David was not writing about himself, because David died and was buried. Instead, he wrote the psalm as a prophet who spoke of the Messiah who would be resurrected. The audience understood "decay" (v. 27) to mean the grave. The emphasis here is that Jesus' body was not left to decay but was in fact resurrected and glorified. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, pp. 1946-1947*).

1 Corinthians 15:20-25

The first of the fruits were the first part of the harvest that faithful Jews brought to the temple as an offering (Lev. 23:10ff). Although Christ was not the first to rise from the dead (he raised Lazarus and others), he was the first to never die again. He is the forerunner who proved that there is eventual resurrection which can lead to eternal life. Death came into the world as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, but in Christ, through his resurrection, all will live again. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 2086*).

By Jesus' resurrection, forgiveness is real and sin is vanquished (v. 21). New and richer ways of life are possible, with all the promise and potency of justice for all mankind, of economic plenty, of social and individual freedom. Sin was defeated and its power is broken. For those who have faith to believe it, one's spirit can be free forever, evidenced when Christ rose from the dead.

After having conquered the supreme enemy which is death, everything that is opposed to the creative purposes of God human rule, such as authority and power, is to be destroyed. Before the final end, there is to be a period designated as the rule of Christ during which he will complete the subjugation of all these opposing forces. (*The Interpreter's Bible Vol. 10, p. 233-237*).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "I Come to the Garden Alone" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 165

Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Divide the class into two groups. Group 1 to read Acts 2:22-32 and Group 2 to Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-25.
- The teacher/facilitator explains the biblical background of the texts.
- Guide questions for discussion:

Group 1:

- Why was Peter so aggressive in proclaiming about the resurrection of Jesus?
- What was Peter trying to emphasize about Jesus?



Group 2:

- Is there a way to be freed from the curse of death due to our relationship with Adam and Eve? How?
- Where and how do we get our key to eternal life?
- Upon Jesus' resurrection, what will become of the kingdoms, its dominion, authority, and power (v. 22)?

Lessons Learned

- What is the greatest enemy that has been conquered by Jesus' resurrection?
- What do we mean by death?
- What are the effects of Jesus' resurrection to the powers that oppose life?
- What are the forces of death that our society is wrestling with at present?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- As a believer of the risen Lord, is there anything you can do to defeat the forces of evil that oppose life? Explain.
- What role should the Church play so that forces of death and decay will be defeated?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory" The New Century Hymnal, 436

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
crown your ancient church's story, bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us, scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation, to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation, be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

Closing Prayer



Third Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2019

LESSON 50: JESUS CHRIST'S RESURRECTION GIVES ASSURANCE OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

General Concept: The resurrection of Jesus calls us to trust that God continues to journey with us in life, in death and beyond.

Biblical References: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; John 11: 17-27

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 30; Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19; Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)

Age-Level Concepts

- Jesus' resurrection gives us reason to trust that God will always be with us throughout life, in death, and beyond.
- Life after death is life with God in all its fullness.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Share their own experiences of having victory over the forces of death
- Keep trusting God throughout our life despite all odds and uncertainties; to be strong even in the face of death

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

John 11:17-27

This story presents a vivid picture of how Jesus showed compassion to those who are experiencing the deepest pain brought on by the loss of a loved one. In reassuring them, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." He emphasized that through Him and in Him, dead souls can and do rise up out of the sleep of death, become alive, grow sensitive, active, purposeful, and endowed with powers they did not have before. Jesus has power over life and death. The raising of Lazarus is a proof to this general and abiding truth. (*The Interpreter's Bible Vol. 8, p. 644*). He who is life can surely restore life. Whoever believes in Christ has a spiritual life that death cannot conquer or diminish in any way. To those of us who believe, what wonderful assurance and certainty we have, "Because I live, you also will live (14:19).

Martha is best known for being too busy to sit down and talk with Jesus (Luke 10:38-42) but here we see her as a woman deep faith. "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." Her statement of faith is exactly the response that Jesus also wants to solicit from us which will prove that we trust Him even in our deepest hurts and pains.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Paul explained to the believers in Corinth that we will have new bodies that will be perfect for our everlasting life or the life that we will attain after death. The Holy Spirit within us is our guarantee that God will give us everlasting bodies during the resurrection. This truth of life after death should give us great courage and patience to endure anything we might experience in our life (*Zondervan, Life*



Application Study Bible, p. 2099), because when we have withstood the test, we will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him (*James 1:12*).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "As the Deer Longingly Looks" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 224

Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Assign two readers to lead in the reading of the two biblical references in John 11:17-27; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
- The teacher/facilitator once again explains the biblical background and emphases of the texts
- Guide questions for further discussion:
 - In the story about the raising of Lazarus, what assurance did Jesus give to Martha and Mary? Can we also hold on to such assurance? How?
 - What kind of life will we experience after our resurrection?
 - Can we have a foretaste of that kind of life after death now? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Lessons Learned

- Has the truth of rising again to a new life – a life everlasting – convinced you to hold on to your faith despite fears and doubts? How do you show that indeed, you are convinced? (Spend some time for the sharing of experiences or testimonies)

Applying the Lessons Learned

- As a Church, how can we inspire people to continue trusting God in these times of deepest pains and uncertainties?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "Yours is the Glory, Resurrected One" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 171

Closing Prayer

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 12, 2019

LESSON 51: WE LOOK FORWARD TO JESUS CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN

General Concept: We await Jesus Christ's return with anticipation and hope while continuing to serve Christ by serving others: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the prisoners.

Biblical References: Acts 1:1-12, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-11

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 23; Acts 9:36-43; John 10:22-30; Revelation 7:9-17



Age-Level Concepts

- Jesus promised that he will come again.
- While anticipating his coming again, we continue to serve him by serving others.
- We will feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit the prisoners, and do other ministries to prepare for Christ's coming again.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Explain the meaning of the affirmation that Christ will come again
- Mention some effects of this belief on the early Christians as well on modern Christians
- Continue to be creative and productive in accordance to God's plan and purpose for their lives until Jesus comes again

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket

Biblical Background

Acts 1:1-12

We read in this account Christ's ascension and his final instructions to his disciples. It is stated that Jesus will be coming again in the same way that he ascended. This is called "*Parousia*" (Greek). One could perhaps imagine the sense of anticipation that people felt; they are thrilled at the idea of something glorious about to happen soon in their lifetimes. For in His return, Jesus will judge and rule over the earth. This is what characterized the actions, attitudes, and lifestyle of the early Christians. (*We Believe in the Resurrection, UCCP Statement of Faith Study Guide for Youth, p. 50*). One should be ready for Jesus' sudden return, not by standing around "looking into the sky," but by working hard to share the gospel so that others will be able to share in God's great blessings

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-11

The Church in Thessalonica was very young, having been established only two or three years before this letter was written. There arose a misunderstanding concerning Christ's coming again for many years had already passed and Christ did not return yet. Some of the early Christian converts began to wonder as to what will happen to their loved ones who have already died and doubt began to grow as they continued to be persecuted. Their anticipation for Jesus' return turned into anxiety. But Paul wanted the Thessalonians to understand that death is not the end of the story. When Christ returns, all believers – dead and alive – will be reunited, never to suffer or die again. He also reminded them of their task to continue living the faith, to continue proclaiming the gospel to all peoples, and to continue being responsible Christians in all areas of life, assuring them that Christ will indeed return. Paul emphasized to them that they can't be effective in sharing their faith to others if they have not lived a life worthy of respect and emulation. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 2174*).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "Great is Your Faithfulness" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 49

Opening Prayer



Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Assign two readers to lead in the reading of the two biblical references.
- The teacher/facilitator will explain the background of the biblical references.
- Guide questions for discussion:
 - What were the effects of the anticipation of Jesus' coming again to the lives of the early Christians?
 - What caused the decline of the early Christians' enthusiasm and eagerness in waiting for the "Parousia"?
 - How did Paul encourage them? What advice did he give to the people of Thessalonica?

Lessons Learned

- As a believer, how will you convince those who are in doubt to believe in Jesus' second coming?
- What should be our primary concern as an individual, as a family, as a church, and as a community while anticipating the second coming of Jesus?
- What are the effects of believing in Christ's coming again to your personal life, your family and community?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- In your own life, how will you show that you believe in the coming again of Jesus?
- As a church, are you preparing your members for the coming of Jesus again? What programs or activities are you doing to prepare the members?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "To the Work, to the Work" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 324

Closing Prayer

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 19, 2019

LESSON 52: JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN IN ALL FULLNESS

General Concept: All creation awaits the return of Jesus Christ in all fullness, the Alpha and the Omega who will come to make everything new for all God's children who have love for one another.

Biblical References: Revelation 21:5-7; 22:1-5; Ephesians 3:19, 4:10-13

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; Revelation 21:5-7; John 13:31-35

Age-Level Concepts

- All creation awaits the return of Jesus Christ in all fullness.
- Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega.
- When Jesus Christ comes, he will make a home with all of us who are God's children.



Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Define the Biblical concept of “fullness”
- Explain the meaning and significance of Jesus as the Alpha and Omega
- Describe the kind of home that Jesus will make when he returns
- Wait with joyful expectancy for Jesus’ return

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket

Biblical Background

Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 22:1-5

The earth as we know it will not last forever, but after God’s great judgment, he will create a new earth. In this new earth, “the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (v. 3). No longer will God be transcendent in heaven, far removed from his worshippers, as he was in the previous age; instead, in this new age He will be immanent, leaving heaven for earth where his divine presence will be eternally with them in the New Jerusalem. In God’s home or dwelling, man will see God face to face, and in His presence, there shall be neither mourning nor crying nor pain. The redeemed are in glorious and everlasting fellowship with the Divine. (*The Interpreter’s Bible Vol. 12, pp. 529-530*)

The mention of Alpha and Omega refers to Jesus. In the Greek alphabet, in which the New Testament was written, **alpha** is the first letter and **omega** is the last. In the Book of Revelation, God says, “I am **Alpha and Omega**, the first and the last,” **meaning** that while God had remained with us from the very beginning of the world, he will also be with us 'till the end of time.

Ephesians 3:19, 4:10-13 (Fullness of Christ)

The fullness of God is fully expressed only in Christ. Through a union with Christ and his empowering Spirit, we are complete. We will have all the fullness of Christ through faith and through prayer as we continue to live for Him. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 2135*).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn “Jesus Shall Reign” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 173

Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Read together the biblical text
- The teacher explains the biblical background of the text
- Guide questions for discussion:
 - What is the significance of Jesus establishing His home or dwelling with people?
 - What is the significance of Jesus as the Alpha and Omega in the home he is establishing?
 - Describe the home that God will establish upon His return.

Lessons Learned



- In God's dwelling, we experience God's fullness. What does it mean?
- Can we experience God's fullness in our time?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- How can we experience or partake in God's fullness?
- As a church, how can we partake in God's fullness?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "Now is the Time Approaching" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 393

Closing Prayer

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 26, 2019

LESSON 53: JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN IN GLORY

General Concept: God is glorified in Christ and Christ in God; God's rule of peace will be welcomed by all peoples when Christ comes again, making a home with them, God's children.

Biblical References: Ephesians 1:15-23

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: [Acts 16:9-15](#); [Psalm 67](#); [Revelation 21:10, 22 - 22:5](#); [John 14:23-29](#)

Age-Level Concepts

- God is glorified in Christ and Christ in God when Christ ascended into heaven.
- All people will welcome God's rule when Christ comes again.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Discuss how God's glory is manifested in Christ
- Discuss how we can partake in God's glory
- Affirm and follow God's rule until Jesus returns

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

The early Christians, through the teachings and testimonies of the apostles, believed in Jesus Christ who came, suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. They continued in their belief that Jesus will come again in all glory and dominion.

Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul prayed that the Ephesians would know this Christ better. Christ is our model and the more we know of him, the more we will be like him, and the more we will experience his glory.

The hope that we can partake of God's glory is not vague – the future will be positive. There is a complete assurance of certain victory through God and this complete certainty comes to us through the Holy Spirit working in us. The world fears the power of the atom, yet, we belong to the God of the universe who not



only created that atomic power we fear but also raised Jesus Christ from the dead. God's incomparably great power is available to all who believe.

Having been raised from the dead, Christ is now the head of the Church, the ultimate authority over the world, the sovereign Lord of all. Jesus is the Messiah, God's Anointed One, the One Israel longed for, and the One who would set the broken world right. As Christians, we can be confident that God has won the final victory and is in control of everything. We need not fear any dictator or nation, or even death or Satan himself, for the God of victory is reigning in all his glory over all nations throughout the whole universe. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, pp. 2131-2132*).

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "Come, O Fount of Every Blessing" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 326

Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Read together the biblical reference
- The teacher/facilitator explains the biblical background of the text.
- Guide for discussion:
 - How is God's glory manifested in all the world?
 - What does it mean to be under God's rule?

Lessons Learned

- As a follower of Christ, do you believe that you can partake of God's glory when he returns? Describe yourself as partaker of God's glory.
- What does it mean to welcome God's rule in your life?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- How can the church partake in God's glory?
- With all the laws and policies, and rules and regulations that the church is creating for itself, do you think the church will be ready to welcome God's rule? Can it set aside the laws it has made for itself? Explain.

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "The Lord's Return" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 394

Closing Prayer

Seventh Sunday of Easter

June 2, 2019

LESSON 54: JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN TO MAKE ALL CREATION NEW

General Concept: Christ will make all creation totally and completely new; we are called to participate in this task of making all things new.



Biblical References: Revelation 21; 22:1-6

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Acts 16:16-34; Psalm 97; [Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21](#); John 17:20-26

Age-Level Concepts

- When Christ comes back, he will make all creation totally and completely new.
- We are called to participate in this task of making all creation new.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Describe the new creation that Christ will bring on His return
- Decide to take part in the task of making all creation new
- Continue to hope for the coming of a new creation

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Revelation 21, 22: 1-6

The Book of Revelation was written by John in A.D. 95 when the people of God were experiencing severe persecution that took place under Emperor Domitian (A.D. 90-95). It seems that the Roman authorities had exiled John to the island of Patmos (off the coast of Asia). John, who had been an eyewitness of the risen Christ, had a vision of the glorified Christ. God also revealed to him what would take place in the future; that there would be judgement and that God would ultimately triumph over evil. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 2295*).

The sea being mentioned in the text was viewed as dangerous and changeable. It was also the source of the beast (13:1) – the symbol of blasphemy and war against the saints. In the new world, the sea is gone, so with the beast. And so, in this new world, God alone is glorified and worshipped and the saints will experience peace, security, and prosperity.

Revelation 21 pictures the new world that Christ will bring and establish in his return. The “Holy City, the new Jerusalem” is described as the place where God will “wipe every tear from their eyes.” Forevermore, in this city, there will be no death, pain, sorrow, or crying. The New Jerusalem is where God lives among his people. Instead of going up to meet him, he comes down to be with us, just as God became man in Jesus Christ and lived among us. And where God reigns, there is peace, security, and love.

The following summarizes the picture of the new world that Christ will establish (as described in Revelation) in contrast with the old world (described in Genesis):

GENESIS

The sun is created
Satan is victorious
Sin enter the human race
People run and hide from God
People are cursed
Tears are shed, with sorrow for sin
The garden and earth are cursed
The fruit from the tree of life is not to be eaten

REVELATION

the sun is not needed
Satan is defeated
Sin is banished
People are invited to live with God forever
the curse is removed
No more sin, no more tears or sorrow
God’s city is glorified, the earth is made new
God’s people may eat from the tree of life



Paradise is lost
People are doomed to death

Paradise is regained
Death is defeated, believers live forever
with God

(Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 2331)

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn "Let Us Sing to the Lord, Our God" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 11

Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Responsively read the biblical reference.
- The teacher/facilitator explains the biblical background of the text.
- The teacher may also share the summary of the comparison the old world in Genesis and the new world in Revelation to the participants.
- Guide for discussion:
 - Describe the kind of world that Jesus will establish upon his return as envisioned by John.
 - Make a contrast of the old world and the new world and explain each contrast.

Lessons Learned

- Our belief says that God will establish the new when he comes again. Are we just going to wait for it? Should we do anything? Explain.
- How would you describe the new creation that Christ will bring in his return?
- If we partake in the establishment of the new world, and we will do it now, what would be the role of Christ when he returns?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- As a church, do you believe that we are called to participate in the establishment of the new world? What programs or activities do you engage in in the pursuit of the establishment of this new world?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "Children of God" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 305

Closing Prayer

Day of Pentecost

June 9, 2019

LESSON 55: JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN TO GATHER ALL THE FAITHFUL UNDER GOD'S KINGDOM

General Concept: All who believe will be gathered together and the Holy Spirit will abide with them in God's kingdom of love, peace and justice, as they do all that Jesus commanded them.

Biblical References: Matthew 25:31-40; Revelation 22:12-17

List of Lectionary Readings for the Week: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:14-17; John 14:8-17, 25-27



Age-Level Concepts

- All who believe will be gathered together as a community.
- The Holy Spirit will be with us in God’s Kingdom of love, peace and justice.
- We commit to follow Jesus.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

- Describe the kind of life that we will live in God’s kingdom
- Await with hope and gladness the gathering of all believers as one community
- Affirm their faith and belief in Christ which can be expressed through trustful obedience to God

Materials Needed: The Holy Bible (preferably use the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]), song chart, offering plate or basket,

Biblical Background

Matthew 25:31-46

When Jesus returns, God will separate his obedient followers from pretenders and unbelievers. The real evidence of our belief is in the way we act. We are called to treat everyone we encounter as if they are Jesus, and this is no easy task. What we do for others demonstrates what we really think about Jesus’ words to us; do we really feed the hungry, give the homeless a place to stay, and look after the sick just as He had commanded us to do?

This parable describes acts of mercy that we can all do every day as a manifestation of our faith in God. These acts do not depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence; these are simple acts freely given and freely received. We have no excuse to neglect those who have deep needs, and we cannot hand over this responsibility to the church or government. Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for others’ needs, whoever they are. The point of this parable is not the *who*, but the *what* – the importance of serving where service is needed. The focus of this parable is that we should love every person and serve any one we can. Such love for others glorifies God as we reflect our love for Him unto our fellow men. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 1707*). What we have done as a result of our faith brings us closer to be reunited with Christ when he returns to gather all the faithful.

Revelation 22:12-17

In his return, Jesus will gather all the faithful; those who seek to purify themselves from a sinful way of life and whose sins are forgiven. There will be no more evil and no more sinners in God’s presence to corrupt or harm any of the faithful. Jesus will come with his reward which is to give to everyone their due according to what one has done in their lives. (*Zondervan, Life Application Study Bible, p. 2334*).

Both the Holy Spirit and the bride (the church) extends the invitation to come to Jesus to the entire world. They ask us to be a part of the assembly that will experience the joys of salvation given to us by Christ, where no one shall feel thirsty or hungry anymore, and no one to experience fear and pain – but only Jesus’ peace, love, and justice.

Suggested Lesson Outline

Expressing Praise and Thanks to God

Greetings and Announcements

Opening Hymn “Jesus Shall Reign” Hymnal of Faith Journey, 173



Opening Prayer

Learning Time

Discovering the Biblical Truth

- Assign two readers to read the two biblical references. Read the texts responsively.
- The teacher/facilitator explains the biblical background of the text.
- Guide questions for discussion:
 - What kind of people shall be gathered in God's Kingdom?
 - What kind of life shall the faithful experience in God's Kingdom?
 - What does "to believe" mean?

Lessons Learned

- How can we be sure that we will be part of the redeemed that will be gathered when Jesus returns?

Applying the Lessons Learned

- As an individual believer and as a church, have we sent an "invitation" to other people asking them to become a part of the assembly of the redeemed? What are our ways of inviting them? Do we get a response from those we have invited? If we have received no response yet, is there anything else that we can do for them to respond positively?

Closing Worship

Offering

Closing Hymn "God Always Leads Me" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 176

"Why We Are UCCP" Hymnal of Faith Journey, 243

We believe in one God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of everyone's life
In Jesus Christ, God became human and rules as Lord of lords.
In Spirit, God guides us all along.

Refrain:

That's why we are UCCP, for we are taught what the Lord has said
To live a life in community with God and all
Assured of life even after death, no more sorrow and no more defeat
There's only love, justice and peace, all creation new.

As persons, we are created reflecting God's image
The Lord made us stewards of the world.
The Church is the Body of Christ, redeemed and reconciled,
Entrusted with God's own ministry.

[Refrain]

The Bible is God's revelation in hist'ry and in Christ
A faithful witness to God's work.
To guide and illumine believers and build them up in faith,
Equip them to witness to the world.

[Refrain]



The kingdom of God is present where faith in Christ is shared
Where healing is given to the sick;
Where food is bestowed to the hungry and light to the blind
And freedom for captives and oppressed.

Refrain 2:

That's why we are UCCP, for we are taught what the Lord has said
To live a life in community with God and all
Assured of life even after death, no more sorrow and no more defeat
There's only love, justice and peace... UCCP!

Closing Prayer

