

2ND QUARTER 2026

*"I Am the
Living One"*



The Church of God
WEEKLY BIBLE LESSONS

**THE CHURCH OF GOD AT JERUSALEM ACRES
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Introduction to the Sabbath School Quarterly: *“I Am the Living One”*

This Sabbath School Quarterly invites us to encounter Jesus as *“the Living One”* at the heart of God’s story. As we journey through Scripture, we discover how Old Testament shadows find their fulfillment in Christ—the Risen Savior who conquered death and offers us new life. We’ll see how Jesus, the Living One, models true service and love, and how His victory empowers believers to engage in spiritual warfare. Over thirteen lessons, we move from Passover to Pentecost, learning to know Christ as the ever-present, victorious Lord who calls us to respond with faith and live by the power of His Spirit.

- **Lesson 1: Shadows of Christ in the Passover: The Lamb and the Blood** – Discover how Passover foreshadows Christ’s sacrifice, the necessity of a sinless substitute, and the reality that salvation is received by faith. We’ll see Jesus as the true Passover Lamb whose blood covers us.
- **Lesson 2: Shadows of Christ in the Passover: Unleavened Bread, Remembrance, and New Life** – Explore the meaning of unleavened bread, the call to cleansing, and how Passover shapes our identity and journey. Learn how Christ forms a holy people who remember and reflect His character.
- **Lesson 3: If You Want to Be Happy, Wash Some Dirty Feet** – Examine Jesus’ act of foot washing as a model for humility and servant leadership. This lesson encourages us to seek joy in selfless service and to follow Jesus’ example of loving others.
- **Lesson 4: CHOOSE LOVE** – Study the challenge and power of choosing love as a daily act of obedience. Reflect on God’s unconditional love for us and how it empowers us to love others, forgive quickly, and live with grace.
- **Lesson 5: LOYAL HEART AND WILLING MIND** – See how God calls imperfect people to serve Him wholeheartedly. Learn what it means to pursue God with sincerity, courage, and a willing mind, building His spiritual house today.
- **Lesson 6: WHY AM I SO ANGRY?** – Understand the roots of anger and how God’s grace breaks destructive cycles. Discover how confession, forgiveness, and choosing love bring healing in relationships and restore emotional health.
- **Lesson 7: THE HIDDEN FOUNDATION OF SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY** – Uncover the importance of the hidden life in Christ—prayer, surrender, and communion—as the foundation for spiritual authority, stability, and authentic ministry.
- **Lesson 8: NOT BY MIGHT: LIVING AND MINISTERING FROM THE SPIRIT’S POWER** – Learn to rely on the Spirit, not human strength, for ministry and daily life. See how Spirit-led living produces lasting fruit and supernatural effectiveness.
- **Lesson 9: Not Many Days Hence: Waiting for the Promise** – Study the significance of waiting for God’s promises, the role of unity, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for mission and witness.
- **Lesson 10: Not Many Days Hence: Pentecost Proves Jesus Is Alive** – Examine Pentecost as evidence of Christ’s resurrection and reign, and how the Spirit’s presence empowers every generation for repentance, faith, and daily Christlike living.
- **Lesson 11: Spiritual Warfare and the Kingdom of God: Know the Real Battlefield** – Recognize the true nature of spiritual conflict, the importance of discernment, and how to stand firm with God’s armor in everyday life.
- **Lesson 12: Spiritual Warfare and the Kingdom of God: Pulling Down Strongholds** – Delve into what strongholds are, how they form, and how believers can demolish barriers to God’s truth through spiritual weapons and persistent prayer.
- **Lesson 13: Spiritual Warfare and the Kingdom of God: Standing Firm and Moving Forward** – Conclude with the call to persevere, advance the Kingdom, and support one another in community. Learn to resist the devil by submitting to God and moving forward in mission.

Shadows of Christ in the Passover: The Lamb and the Blood

Lesson 1 For week ending April 4, 2026

The Passover was more than Israel's rescue from Egypt; it was a God-given pattern that pointed forward to a greater deliverance. In Exodus, the Lord provided a lamb, commanded its blood to be applied, and promised judgment would "pass over" those who trusted His Word. In the New Testament, the apostles declare that Jesus fulfills what Passover anticipated—He is the Lamb, and His blood is our covering. As we consider the shadows and their fulfillment, we are invited not only to admire God's design, but to respond with faith, gratitude, and holy living.

Key Text : *"Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7–8 NIV).*

1. God teaches that deliverance from judgment requires an acceptable substitute.

In Egypt, the sentence of death fell on the firstborn, and no household could avoid that night by effort, heritage, or good intentions (Exodus 12:12). The Lord provided a way of escape through the death of a lamb "without defect" (Exodus 12:5), teaching that life is preserved when a God-appointed substitute dies in the sinner's place. This prepares us to understand why the gospel centers on the cross: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). How does the idea of substitution shape the way you view sin and grace? Where are you tempted to trust personal goodness instead of God's provision?

2. God requires that the lamb be inspected and without defect, foreshadowing the sinlessness of Christ.

Israel selected the lamb on the tenth day and kept it until the fourteenth (Exodus 12:3, 6), allowing time for inspection—an intentional pause that underscored purity and suitability. In the same way, Jesus was publicly examined in the final week of His ministry, questioned by religious leaders and Roman authority, yet found without legitimate charge (Luke 23:4). Scripture declares that He "committed no sin" (1 Peter 2:22) and is therefore the only sufficient offering. What "defects" do people commonly project onto Jesus to make Him seem less authoritative? How does His sinlessness give you confidence to bring your failures honestly to Him?

3. God's salvation is personally received when the blood is applied by faith.

The lamb's blood had to be placed on the doorframes, and God's promise was specific: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13). Notice that the Israelites were not told to understand every detail of judgment—only to obey and trust the word of the Lord. Likewise, the New Testament does not present Christ's blood as a mere symbol, but as the ground of real forgiveness: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). Where might you be treating faith as agreement in your mind rather than obedience in your life? What does it look like, practically, to "apply the blood" through repentance and public allegiance to Christ?

4. God intends the Passover meal to form a covenant people who remember redemption and live ready to depart.

Israel ate in haste—belt fastened, sandals on, staff in hand (Exodus 12:11)—because redemption was not an abstract idea; it launched a new way of life. Passover was also to be remembered from generation to generation (Exodus 12:14), shaping identity through worship and testimony. Jesus gathered His disciples at Passover and re-centered the meal on Himself, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). How should remembrance reshape the way we take the Lord's Supper—personally and as a church? What "Egypt" is God calling you to leave behind right now, and what readiness step will you take this week?

Shadows of Christ in the Passover: Unleavened Bread, Remembrance, and New Life

Lesson 2 For week ending April 11, 2026

Passover did not end with the lamb's death; God also commanded a meal, a week without leaven, and a lifelong practice of remembrance. These details may seem small, yet Scripture treats them as theology in action—teaching God's people how to live once they have been redeemed. In Christ, the shadows deepen: salvation not only rescues us from judgment but also begins a cleansing, a new identity, and a new walk. This lesson follows the Passover pattern from the table to the journey, tracing how Jesus forms a holy people who remember His sacrifice and reflect His character.

Key Text: *“Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve”* (Luke 22:1–3 NIV).

1. God pairs redemption with a call to cleansing, pictured in the removal of leaven.

In the ancient world, leaven (yeast) was commonly kept from a previous batch and spread through new dough, making it a natural picture of influence that works quietly but thoroughly. During Passover week, Israel removed leaven from their houses (Exodus 12:15), dramatizing a decisive break with Egypt's old life. Paul uses the same picture for the church: “Get rid of the old yeast” (1 Corinthians 5:7), calling believers to confront tolerated sin because Christ has already been sacrificed. What “small” compromises might be spreading through your habits, home, or leadership? What step of honest confession and practical change would match the cleansing God is calling for?

2. God intends Passover remembrance to be taught, repeated, and centered on His saving act.

Passover was designed as a memorial with a story attached: parents were to explain God's deliverance to their children (Exodus 12:26–27). The form of worship guarded the content of faith. Jesus honored that pattern but transformed its focus when He instituted the Lord's Supper in the Passover setting, saying, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Christian remembrance is not nostalgia; it is proclamation and re-centering—“you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). How well is the story of redemption being told in your household and congregation? Consider ways we can enhance the Lord's Table so that it becomes a richer experience of teaching, unity, and worship, moving beyond mere routine.

3. God shows that spiritual conflict surrounds redemption, but His purpose stands firm in Christ.

Luke's account places Passover alongside rising opposition and betrayal: “Then Satan entered Judas” (Luke 22:3). Scripture is plain that the cross was not merely a human misunderstanding; it was contested ground. Yet Jesus went forward knowingly, declaring that His blood was “poured out for you” (Luke 22:20), fulfilling what God had planned and foretold (Acts 2:23). When believers face temptation, discouragement, or division—especially around worship and holiness—we should remember that resistance often intensifies where redemption is being applied. Where do you sense spiritual pressure in your walk with Christ right now? How can prayer, accountability, and a renewed focus on Scripture strengthen you to stand firm?

4. God's Passover directs redeemed people from bondage to obedient living as pilgrims.

Israel's deliverance was immediately followed by departure: God led them out, not back into comfort, but forward into dependence and guidance (Exodus 13:17–18). Salvation created a new direction. The New Testament describes the same movement in Christ: “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Passover therefore confronts every attempt to be “saved” while still clinging to Egypt—old identities, old loyalties, old sins. What would leaving Egypt look like in your relationships, entertainment, finances, or leadership priorities? What one act of obedience this week would demonstrate that you belong to the Redeemer and not to the former master?

If You Want to Be Happy, Wash Some Dirty Feet

Lesson 3 For Week ending April 18, 2026

The act of washing feet, as exemplified by Jesus in the Gospel of John, stands as a profound illustration of servant leadership and selfless love. In a world that often equates happiness with status, power, or possessions, Jesus teaches that true joy arises from humility and service to others. This transformative act demonstrates that happiness is not found in self-serving pursuits, but in giving ourselves away in love and service. This lesson will explore the significance of humility in the Christian life, the example set by Jesus, the blessings of serving others, and the deeper joy that comes from selfless acts of love.

Key Text: *“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet”* (John 13:14 NIV).

1. The Call to Humility.

Humility is the foundation of Christian character, as demonstrated by Jesus washing His disciples’ feet, an act that defied the cultural norms of authority and status (Philippians 2:5–7; 1 Peter 5:5–6). By taking the role of a servant, Jesus showed that true greatness is rooted in serving others rather than being served. This radical shift in perspective challenges us to evaluate our own attitudes towards pride and entitlement, urging us to adopt a mindset that prioritizes the needs of others over our desires for recognition or advancement (Proverbs 16:18–19). How can embracing humility transform your interactions with others, and what practical steps can you take to foster a humble spirit in your daily life?

2. Jesus as the Ultimate Example of Service.

In washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus models the essence of servant leadership, illustrating that service is integral to our faith and calling as Christians (Mark 10:45; John 13:12–15). This act was not merely symbolic but a tangible demonstration of His love and care for each individual, even those who would soon abandon and betray Him (Romans 5:8). By following His example, we are called to serve those around us, reflecting the unconditional love of Christ in our communities. In what ways can you follow Jesus’ example of service in your daily interactions, and how might this change your perspective on the people you encounter?

3. The Blessings of Serving Others.

Serving others not only fulfills Christ’s command but also leads to personal fulfillment and joy, inviting us to experience happiness that is rooted in love rather than self-interest (Acts 20:35; Proverbs 11:25). When we focus on the needs of others, we develop deeper relationships and cultivate a sense of belonging and purpose within the Body of Christ (Hebrews 10:24–25). Practical acts of service can include volunteering, offering support in times of need, or simply being present for others, all of which enrich our lives and foster community. How have you experienced the joy of serving others, and what opportunities can you identify in your life to engage in acts of service that can bless both you and those you serve?

4. The Deeper Joy Found in Selfless Acts of Love.

Engaging in acts of service can lead to profound joy that surpasses temporary happiness, as our hearts align with God’s purpose for our lives (Galatians 5:13–14; Philippians 2:3–4). This selfless love reflects the nature of Christ, who calls us to love one another as He has loved us, enabling us to find true fulfillment in giving ourselves for the sake of others (1 John 3:16–18). When we prioritize loving actions over personal gain, we begin to experience the transformative power of joy that comes from reflecting God’s love in tangible ways. How can you cultivate a heart of service that prioritizes the welfare of others, and what new practices can you implement to live out this selflessness in your community?

CHOOSE LOVE

Lesson 4 For week ending April 25, 2026

Love is one of the most familiar words in Scripture, yet one of the most challenging to practice in daily life. We often wait for others to change before we offer kindness, forgiveness, or patience. But Jesus teaches that love is not merely an emotion—it is a deliberate choice rooted in God’s own character. When we understand that God loves us unconditionally, even with full knowledge of our flaws, we are freed and empowered to extend that same love to others. This lesson invites us to examine our hearts, embrace God’s transforming grace, and choose love as a daily act of obedience. **-Bishop David Kramer**

Key Text: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37–39, NIV).*

1. Love is a deliberate choice rooted in God’s own decision to love us first.

Scripture consistently shows that God’s love is not based on our performance but on His character. He knows every hidden part of us, yet He chooses to love us without condition (Romans 5:8). This divine initiative becomes the foundation for our own ability to love others. Because God loved us first, we are empowered to love even when it is difficult or undeserved (1 John 4:19). Jesus demonstrated this on the cross when He forgave those who crucified Him, revealing that love is ultimately a decision of the will. What makes unconditional love difficult? How does knowing God loves you unconditionally change the way you love others?

2. Love requires self-examination and personal responsibility for our attitudes and responses.

We are responsible for ourselves—our words, reactions, and attitudes. Scripture encourages believers to examine their own hearts (2 Corinthians 13:5) and to put away the old nature that once dictated our behavior (Ephesians 4:22–24). Although we cannot control the actions of others, we can choose how we respond. The fruit of the Spirit includes self-control (Galatians 5:22–23), reminding us that love is demonstrated through disciplined decisions rather than impulsive reactions. In what situations do you find it hardest to control your responses? How can self-examination help you grow in love?

3. Love reflects the new life we have received in Christ and the power to overcome the flesh.

Romans 6:1-4 teaches that believers are no longer slaves to sin but have been raised to walk in newness of life. Though the flesh still resists, we now possess the Spirit’s power to overcome sinful impulses and choose righteousness (Romans 6:11–14). Paul testifies that he must “crucify the flesh” daily (Galatians 5:24), showing that love is not automatic but cultivated through continual surrender. When we choose love, we are living out the resurrection life Christ has given us. How does understanding your new identity in Christ help you choose love in difficult moments? What habits strengthen your ability to “walk in newness of life”?

4. Love is expressed through forgiveness, generosity, and a posture of grace toward others.

Jesus teaches that loving our neighbor includes forgiving quickly and refusing to let bitterness take root (Matthew 6:14–15). Love looks for the good in others, just as God does with us. It is patient, kind, and not easily angered (1 Corinthians 13:4–5). Choosing love means choosing to be the kind of person who brings peace, encouragement, and grace into every environment. It is not pretending; it is allowing the heart to be shaped by Christ so that our actions reflect His nature. What does it look like to “forgive fast”? How can you cultivate a lifestyle of grace in your home, church, and community?

LOYAL HEART AND WILLING MIND

Lesson 5 for week ending May 2, 2026

Many believers wrestle with the question, “*What does God really want from me?*” We often assume He is waiting for us to reach perfection before He can use us. Yet Scripture reveals a God who knows us completely—our past, our weaknesses, our motives—and still calls us, loves us, and invites us into His purpose. Rather than demanding flawlessness, God seeks a heart that is loyal and a mind that is willing. Today we will explore what it means to serve God with sincerity, courage, and intentional devotion, following the example of Solomon’s divine mandate. **- Bishop David Kramer**

Key Text: “*Serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought.*” (1 Chronicles 28:9, NIV)

1. God has always used imperfect people who chose to obey Him.

Scripture is filled with men and women whose lives were marked by failure, weakness, and sin, yet God used them powerfully when they turned their hearts toward Him. The list includes Abraham, who feared and faltered; Moses, who struck the rock in anger; David, who committed grievous sins; Rahab, a prostitute who became part of Messiah’s lineage; and Paul, once a persecutor of the church. Their stories remind us that God does not wait for perfection—He looks for repentance, humility, and willingness. Satan tells us our past disqualifies us, but God calls us forward into His purpose (Romans 8:1; 1 Timothy 1:15–16). What past failures still make you feel unworthy? How does Scripture challenge that belief?

2. God calls each believer to make a deliberate choice to serve Him.

Just as Joshua declared, “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15), every believer must decide whether to follow God wholeheartedly. God has a plan for our lives, but Satan also has a plan—and we must choose which voice to follow. God does not force obedience; He invites cooperation. Even King David, a man after God’s own heart, faced consequences for past actions and was not permitted to build the Temple (1 Chronicles 22:7–8). Yet God still used him mightily. What daily choices help you stay aligned with God’s purpose? Where do you feel the pull of competing voices?

3. God requires His people to know Him, serve Him, and govern their own hearts.

David charged Solomon to “know the God of your father” and to serve Him with a blameless heart and willing mind (1 Chronicles 28:9). This mandate reflects God’s desire for relationship, not ritual. Knowing God requires intentional pursuit—reading His Word, praying, and listening to the Spirit. Serving Him with a blameless heart means governing the flesh, refusing to let sin reign (Romans 6:12–14). Believers are not helpless victims of their nature; through the Spirit, we can choose righteousness and walk in obedience. What practices help you “know God” more deeply? How do you respond when the flesh resists obedience?

4. A loyal heart and willing mind position us to build God’s spiritual house today.

Solomon was given detailed instructions for building the physical Temple, but the New Testament reveals that God is now building a spiritual house made of “living stones” (1 Peter 2:4–5). Solomon’s mandate serves as a reminder of the Church’s calling today: to restore God’s spiritual house through His doctrine, His government, and His ways. This mission demands courage, strength, and a willing heart—believers who embody joy, faith, and hope, leaving “trails of love and harmony” instead of bitterness or pessimism. God examines the heart and empowers those who earnestly seek Him. What does it mean for you personally to help build God’s spiritual house? What attitudes or habits strengthen a willing mind?

WHY AM I SO ANGRY?

Lesson 6 for week ending May 9, 2026

Anger is one of the most common human emotions, yet one of the least understood. It rises quickly, often surprising us with its intensity, and can leave behind damage we never intended. Scripture teaches that anger rarely appears out of nowhere; it is connected to deeper roots within the heart. When left unexamined, these roots create cycles of conflict that grow stronger over time. This lesson invites us to look beneath the surface, understand the spiritual laws at work, and discover how God's grace breaks the destructive patterns that anger creates.

-Bishop David Kramer

Key Text: *"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires"* (James 1:19–20, NIV).

1. Anger often begins with a stimulus that triggers an unresolved response.

Human relationships are full of moments that provoke reaction. A word, a tone, a memory, or a perceived slight can stir something deep within us. Scripture teaches that conflicts arise from desires at war within our hearts (James 4:1–2). When a stimulus touches an old wound, the response is often stronger than the moment itself. This cycle—stimulus, response, stimulus—can escalate from arguments to division, and even to violence on a larger scale. Understanding the trigger is the first step toward healing. What kinds of situations tend to trigger strong reactions in you? How can awareness help break the cycle?

2. Unresolved bitterness creates a "bitter root" that fuels anger and demands expression.

Hebrews warns believers to guard against a "bitter root" that grows into defilement (Hebrews 12:15). A bitter root forms when we make internal judgments about others or about ourselves, allowing resentment to settle in the heart. According to the law of sowing and reaping, bitterness produces more bitterness (Galatians 6:7). Even when we try to suppress our reactions, the root remains alive beneath the surface. Without repentance and healing, the heart becomes primed to respond with anger whenever similar situations arise. Have you noticed patterns in your anger that point to deeper roots? What steps help you confront bitterness honestly?

3. Only the cross of Christ can break the destructive cycle of anger, hatred, and reaping.

Scripture teaches that hatred is a form of murder in the heart (1 John 3:15). Left unchecked, anger grows into resentment, resentment into hatred, and hatred into destruction. Every hatred "requires blood," pointing to the biblical truth that forgiveness is only possible through the shed blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:22). The cross interrupts the cycle of sowing and reaping by offering cleansing, mercy, and the power to die to self. Without Christ's continual intercession, human relationships would collapse under the weight of accumulated offenses. How does remembering Christ's sacrifice reshape your response to anger? What does it mean to "die to self" in moments of conflict?

4. Healing comes through confession, forgiveness, and choosing love in daily relationships.

Many sins are cleansed by God's mercy without our awareness, yet Scripture calls us to intentional remembrance and repentance (Luke 22:19). When we confess our sins, God is faithful to cleanse us (1 John 1:9). Choosing love—through prayer, worship, and intentional forgiveness—breaks the power of bitterness and restores relationships. Even when hurt is buried or forgotten, God knows how to bring healing. The call is to walk in love, pray for one another, and allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify our whole being (1 Thessalonians 5:23). What practices help you choose love when anger rises? How can prayer and worship reshape your emotional responses?

THE HIDDEN FOUNDATION OF SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY

Lesson 7 for week ending May 16, 2026

Every believer desires a life that reflects Christ's power, wisdom, and compassion. Yet Scripture teaches that true spiritual authority does not begin in public ministry but in the unseen places of prayer, surrender, and communion with God. Like an iceberg, the visible part of our lives is supported by a much larger hidden foundation. When the hidden life is neglected, the visible life becomes unstable and vulnerable to pressures, temptations, and the approval of others. Jesus demonstrated that the strength and effectiveness of His ministry came from His consistent time alone with the Father—seeking direction, expressing dependence, and receiving renewal. This lesson explores how Jesus modeled a life where the secret place shaped everything, He did, and how believers today can cultivate the same depth, leading to greater stability, fruitfulness, and authenticity in their walk with God.

Key Text: *“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:6, NIV)

1. The visible “tip” of our lives is sustained by the unseen depths of our walk with God.

More than 90% of an iceberg lies beneath the surface, unseen yet essential for stability. In the same way, the majority of a believer's spiritual life—prayer, worship, repentance, humility—is hidden from public view. God looks at the heart, not the outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7), and He forms us in private before He entrusts us with influence in public (Matthew 6:1–6). When the hidden life is shallow, the visible life becomes fragile—easily shaken by pressure, tempted by pride, or driven by the need for approval. What parts of your spiritual life are “above the surface,” and what lies beneath?

2. Jesus' public ministry was rooted in His private communion with the Father.

Jesus frequently withdrew to solitary places to pray (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). Before choosing the Twelve, He prayed all night (Luke 6:12), showing that spiritual decisions were made in communion, not in hurry. Before raising Lazarus, He prayed, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me” (John 11:41–42), modeling dependence even when He carried great authority. His authority flowed from abiding, not effort, and He taught His disciples to “remain in me” as the source of lasting fruit (John 15:4–5). How does Jesus' rhythm of prayer challenge your own habits?

3. The secret place forms the character needed to carry spiritual authority.

Psalms 139:23–24 invites God to search the hidden places of the heart. Without this inner work, outward ministry becomes hollow—gifted on the outside but unhealed on the inside. In the secret place, the Spirit cultivates humility, purity, and discernment so that our visible life reflects Christ, not just our personality (Galatians 5:22–23). Paul told Timothy to watch his life and doctrine closely (1 Timothy 4:16), reminding us that character must support calling. What areas of your heart need God's searching light?

4. A strong hidden life produces stability, fruitfulness, and resilience.

Storms reveal the strength of what lies beneath. Believers who cultivate deep roots in God's presence stand firm when pressures rise (Psalm 1:2–3), because stability comes from being anchored to God's Word and God's love. Like a tree whose roots reach deep into life-giving soil, the follower of Christ draws nourishment and resilience from private devotion and ongoing communion with the Lord. Jesus taught that the wise build on the rock by hearing His words and putting them into practice (Matthew 7:24–25), and that foundation keeps us steady when ministry becomes demanding or life's challenges threaten to overwhelm us. The hidden life anchors us, enabling us to minister with grace and spiritual authority, not from our own strength but from the overflow of God's presence within. In difficult seasons, it is often the unseen habits of prayer, worship, and surrender that carry us through, providing peace, clarity, and courage when outward circumstances are uncertain. How has your hidden life sustained you during difficult seasons?

NOT BY MIGHT: LIVING AND MINISTERING FROM THE SPIRIT'S POWER

Lesson 8 For week ending May 23, 2026

The Christian life is filled with moments when human strength is not enough. Scripture teaches that the work of God is never accomplished by talent, willpower, or personality alone—and what we cannot produce, the Spirit can. Jesus demonstrated supernatural authority through simple, Spirit-empowered words—“Peace, be still,” “Be clean,” “Get up.” These few-word miracles reveal a profound truth: power flows from abiding, not striving. When we rely on self-effort, we may stay busy but lose clarity and peace; when we rely on the Spirit, we find both strength and direction. Let’s discover together how we as believers can move from self-effort to Spirit-empowered living, allowing God to accomplish what we cannot.

Key Text: “So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6, NIV).

1. Human strength cannot accomplish God’s purposes.

Zerubbabel faced an impossible task—rebuilding the Temple amid opposition, limited resources, and discouragement. God reminded him that the work would not be completed through human effort, influence, or intensity, but through the Spirit’s power (Zechariah 4:6–7). In the same way, spiritual growth and fruitful ministry cannot be sustained by willpower alone; what begins in the Spirit must not be carried forward by the flesh (Galatians 3:3). God often allows us to reach the end of ourselves so we learn to depend on Him, not on our gifting, personality, or experience (2 Corinthians 12:9–10). Where do you feel the limits of your own strength?

2. Jesus’ few-word miracles reveal authority rooted in abiding.

Jesus calmed the storm with three words (Mark 4:39), healed the leper with a touch and a sentence (Matthew 8:3), and raised Jairus’s daughter with a simple command (Mark 5:41). These moments show that His authority was not performance or volume—it was alignment. Jesus lived from intimate fellowship with the Father, speaking only what the Father was doing and saying (John 5:19; John 12:49). Spirit-empowered words carry weight because they are rooted in truth, compassion, and obedience—not anxiety or the need to prove ourselves. Have we, at times, been guilty of relying on many words and our own effort instead of embracing the Spirit-empowered simplicity that Jesus demonstrated?

3. Abiding in Christ produces clarity, discernment, and Spirit-led speech.

Jesus taught that apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). Abiding is not passive; it is an ongoing, relational dependence where we stay connected through prayer, obedience, and attention to His voice. When believers remain connected to Christ, the Spirit produces discernment and gives words “in season” that strengthen, heal, and build up (Isaiah 50:4; Ephesians 4:29). This is why Scripture calls us to be “filled with the Spirit” continually, not occasionally (Ephesians 5:18). When have you sensed the Holy Spirit guiding your words?

4. A Spirit-led life produces lasting fruit and supernatural effectiveness.

When believers walk by the Spirit, they bear fruit that remains—character that looks like Jesus and endurance that lasts through pressure (Galatians 5:22–25). The Spirit also empowers witness and ministry beyond natural ability, giving courage, wisdom, and power to serve others with love (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4–5). A Spirit-led life produces stability on the inside and effectiveness on the outside, because God supplies what He commands. As we yield daily, the Lord shapes our desires and directs our steps so our lives point to Christ, not ourselves (Romans 8:14). What fruit do you desire to see grow as you walk by the Spirit?

Not Many Days Hence: Waiting for the Promise

Lesson 9 For week ending May 30, 2026

Jesus' words, "not many days hence," were not meant to tease the disciples with uncertainty—they were meant to anchor them in hope. Between the Ascension and Pentecost, the church lived in the tension of promise and waiting, unsure exactly when the fulfillment would come, yet trusting in Jesus' assurance. This period was more than idle anticipation; it was a season where God often shapes His people in the waiting room, nurturing obedience, unity, and expectation through shared prayer and steadfast faith. Patient, prayerful waiting cultivates believers for Spirit-empowered witness, refining character and deepening reliance on God's timing and provision.

Key Text: *"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit'"* (Acts 1:4-5 NIV).

1. Jesus commands believers to wait, because God's promises are received in God's way.

The disciples were not told to innovate a new plan; they were told to obey a clear command: stay in Jerusalem and wait (Acts 1:4). Their waiting was active—gathered prayer, shared hope, and steadfast unity (Acts 1:14). Pentecost would not be the result of human enthusiasm, but of divine initiative. Even the timing matters: Pentecost (Shavuot) was already a feast of firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-17), and God used that appointed season to reveal the firstfruits of the Spirit-filled church. Where do you tend to "run ahead" of God? What practices (prayer, Scripture, unity) help you wait without losing faith?

2. The Holy Spirit is God's promised gift, not an optional accessory for advanced Christians.

Jesus calls the coming Spirit "the gift my Father promised" (Acts 1:4). This language reaches back into the prophets who envisioned a day when God would pour out His Spirit on His people (Joel 2:28-29) and give them new hearts (Ezekiel 36:26-27). The Spirit is not merely for emotional experience; He is God's own presence to cleanse, comfort, teach, and empower (John 14:16-17). When the church treats the Spirit as optional, it quietly shifts confidence from God to human ability. In your ministry, home, or leadership responsibilities, where do you most need the Spirit's help? How does Scripture correct misunderstandings about the Spirit's role?

3. God often prepares power through unity, because division makes witness unstable.

Before the church preached publicly, the believers were "together" and "constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). Unity did not mean sameness; it meant shared surrender to Christ's Word. In a city crowded with pilgrims and competing religious voices, God first formed a praying community whose love and agreement would strengthen its testimony (John 17:20-23). Waiting seasons can expose unresolved conflicts and hidden pride—but they can also become God's workshop for reconciliation. What threatens unity in your congregation or family? What steps can you take this week to pursue peace so your witness is strengthened?

4. The purpose of Spirit-baptism is courageous witness to Jesus Christ.

Jesus connects the promise to mission: "you will receive power... and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit's arrival wasn't just for inner assurance, but to empower disciples to proclaim Christ boldly. The Spirit always magnifies Jesus and gives believers courage to share the gospel, even amid uncertainty (John 15:26-27). Pentecost power is for bold witness, not merely personal comfort. True courage is a gift from God's presence (2 Timothy 1:7). Every believer is called to witness wherever they are, trusting the Spirit to enable them to speak, love, and live for Jesus. Where is God asking you to be a clearer witness in daily life? What fear can you surrender to the Spirit's leading?

Not Many Days Hence: Pentecost Proves Jesus Is Alive

Lesson 10 For week ending June 6, 2026

Pentecost was not simply an emotional outbreak in Jerusalem—it was heaven’s public testimony that Jesus Christ reigns. When the Spirit came, Peter did not point the crowd to the disciples’ experience as the main issue; he pointed them to the exalted Christ who sent the Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s presence is the church’s ongoing evidence that the crucified Jesus is risen, enthroned, and still saving. This study explores how Pentecost demonstrates Jesus’s lordship, extends God’s promise across generations, and invites us to experience the active presence of Christ within our lives.

Key Text: “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” (Acts 2:32-33 NIV).

1. The outpouring of the Spirit is evidence that Jesus has been raised and exalted.

Peter interprets Pentecost by connecting three realities: resurrection (“God has raised this Jesus to life”), exaltation (“to the right hand of God”), and outpouring (“has poured out what you now see and hear”) (Acts 2:32-33). In biblical thought, the “right hand” represents authority and kingship (Psalm 110:1). The Spirit’s coming is not random—it is the reign of Christ made visible in the life of His people. When the church depends on the Spirit, it confesses that Jesus is alive and ruling now, not merely honored in memory. Where do you need to renew your confidence that Jesus is presently reigning? What changes when you see the Spirit’s work as Christ’s active ministry?

2. The gospel response to Pentecost is repentance and faith, not curiosity and critique.

The crowd’s question—“Brothers, what shall we do?”—shows that true preaching presses for decision (Acts 2:37). Peter’s answer is direct: “Repent and be baptized... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). In Jerusalem, many listeners knew the story of the crucifixion; now they faced its meaning. The Spirit’s work does not entertain; He convicts and calls people to Christ (John 16:8-9). Healthy Spirit-filled worship still produces humble repentance and clearer allegiance to Jesus. What does repentance look like in your daily life beyond a single moment? How can your church keep Christ—not spectacle—at the center of Spirit-empowered ministry?

3. The promise of the Holy Spirit belongs to every generation God calls to Himself.

Peter refuses to limit the Spirit to one moment in history: “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). “Far off” includes distance in geography and distance in time. The book of Acts confirms this widening circle as the Spirit is given to Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48), and later disciples (Acts 19:1-6). The church does not move forward by nostalgia for Pentecost, but by participation in the same promise through the same Christ. How does Acts correct the idea that the Spirit’s work ended with the apostles? What would it mean for your family to live as people to whom the promise still applies?

4. Life in the Spirit means living daily from the reality that Christ lives in us.

Pentecost is not only power for proclamation; it is the presence of Christ within the believer. Paul describes the Christian life as a union with Jesus so deep that we can say, “Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). This indwelling reshapes character (Galatians 5:22-23) and strengthens obedience when faith is costly. The same Spirit who emboldened Peter also forms Christlike humility, patience, and love in ordinary days. Churches need both: public witness and private holiness. Where have you separated “power” from “character” in your thinking? What daily habits help you yield to the Spirit so that Christ’s life is seen in your words, choices, and relationships?

Spiritual Warfare and the Kingdom of God: Know the Real Battlefield

Lesson 11 For week ending June 13, 2026

Picture this: Jesus arrives, making it clear that God's kingdom is here and the battle lines are drawn. Whenever you try to follow Him or share your faith, it can feel like you're up against invisible resistance. The truth is, many of us waste our energy fighting the wrong battles, thinking people or circumstances are the enemy, when the real fight is on a spiritual level. The Bible lifts the veil so we can see what's really going on: God's kingdom is making moves in a world at war, but the good news is, Jesus has already won the ultimate victory. This lesson uncovers where the true battle happens—and shows why facing spiritual opposition isn't just normal, it's what happens when you're living out God's kingdom for real.

Key Text: *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (Ephesians 6:10-12 NIV).

1. Spiritual warfare begins when we recognize that our primary conflict is spiritual, not personal.

Paul makes the conflict plain: believers do not wrestle “against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12). That does not deny real human wrongdoing, but it keeps us from treating people as the ultimate enemy. Jesus confronted sin and oppression without surrendering to hatred (Luke 4:18–19). When we mislabel our opponent, we drift into bitterness, gossip, and power struggles that weaken our witness. Ask: Where have I been treating a person as the enemy instead of responding with spiritual discernment and prayer? What practical step will help me “stand” in Christ rather than react in the flesh?

2. The kingdom of God advances when Christ’s authority is trusted and exercised in the power of the Spirit.

Jesus taught that deliverance and liberation are signs that “the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). Kingdom work is not self-powered; it rests on the reign of the risen Christ and the present activity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Jesus displayed authority through truth, holiness, compassion, and obedience to the Father—not force. When the church leans on charisma or strategy alone, it produces noise without breakthrough. Ask: Where do I need to rely more intentionally on the Spirit's power? Where do I need to submit to Christ's authority before confronting spiritual opposition?

3. Satan’s schemes often focus on blinding minds to the gospel and dividing believers from one another.

Scripture describes the devil's strategy as deception and disruption. Paul says “the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and Jesus warned that a divided kingdom cannot stand (Matthew 12:25–26). Spiritual opposition often shows up through false teaching, discouragement, accusation, and relational fracture (Revelation 12:10). The church advances by guarding truth, practicing repentance, and pursuing unity in the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3). Ask: What lies or distortions have been competing with God's truth in my thinking? Where might division, offense, or suspicion be doing more damage than I realize?

4. We stand firm by putting on God’s armor daily, using spiritual practices that protect our mind, heart, and mission.

Ephesians 6:13–18 calls believers to “put on the full armor of God”: truth, righteousness, gospel peace, faith, salvation, the Word, and prayer. Paul's image is simple—believers must be prepared, not merely informed. The armor is not ritual; it is a life anchored in Christ's finished work and practiced through obedience and prayerful dependence. This is how we resist temptation, withstand accusation, and remain faithful in mission. Ask: Which piece of the armor do I neglect most—truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Word, or prayer? What daily habit will help me “put on” what God has already provided?

Spiritual Warfare and the Kingdom of God: Pulling Down Strongholds

Lesson 12 For week ending June 20, 2026

Spiritual warfare is far more than just battling temptation—it is an adventurous call to action, a battle to tear down the barriers that hide Christ from the hearts and minds of people. Scripture describes these barriers as “strongholds”—stubborn patterns of thinking, misplaced loyalties, and persuasive arguments that actively resist the knowledge and reign of God. These strongholds can trap individuals in lies that feel true, distort their identity, and keep them from experiencing freedom in Christ. This lesson dives deep into what strongholds really are, how they take root in our lives and communities, and how believers can join with God in a daring mission to pull them down. Through the mighty weapons of truth, persistent prayer, and humble obedience, we’re invited to wage war that demolishes every obstacle—so that lives can be transformed and Christ’s kingdom can advance with power and victory!

Key Text: *“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV).*

1. Strongholds are sustained by lies that feel true, not by truth that sets people free.

Paul describes strongholds as “arguments” and “pretensions” raised against knowing God (2 Corinthians 10:5). Strongholds are often lies that feel true—about God’s character, our identity, or what will satisfy us—and they shape reactions, choices, and relationships. Jesus said, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Ask: What recurring lie most often governs my reactions? What specific truth from Scripture must replace it?

2. God’s weapons work by spiritual power, so we must refuse worldly methods that contradict the gospel.

“We do not wage war as the world does” (2 Corinthians 10:3). The kingdom does not advance through manipulation, intimidation, slander, or coercion—even if those tactics seem effective. Examples of worldly methods include using guilt or fear to motivate others, twisting facts to win arguments, leveraging social status to pressure people, or trying to control outcomes through deception or flattery. Jesus rejected shortcut power and chose obedience to the Father (Matthew 4:8–10), showing that our methods must match our message. Instead, Christlike alternatives are honesty, humility, patient persuasion, servant leadership, and trusting God to change hearts. Ask: Where am I tempted to use pressure, control, or image-management to get a “good” result? What Christlike alternative would better reflect the gospel?

3. Prayer and perseverance matter because spiritual resistance can delay breakthroughs without defeating God’s purposes.

Daniel’s prayer was heard “from the first day,” yet the answer was resisted until help arrived (Daniel 10:12–13). This does not invite fear; it teaches perseverance. Jesus told His disciples to pray and not give up (Luke 18:1), and Paul urges believers to pray “on all occasions” (Ephesians 6:18). Ask: What situation have I stopped praying about too soon? What simple, steady prayer habit can I rebuild this week?

4. Capturing thoughts for Christ is a daily discipline that protects our minds and strengthens our witness.

Paul moves from demolishing strongholds to taking thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5), reminding us that the mind is a major front in spiritual conflict. Scripture calls us to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2) and to replace anxiety with prayer (Philippians 4:6–7). Ask: What thought pattern most often steals my peace or weakens my courage? What one verse will I memorize and pray this week as an act of warfare?

Spiritual Warfare and the Kingdom of God: Standing Firm and Moving Forward

Lesson 13 For week ending June 27, 2026

The goal of spiritual warfare is not simply to survive attacks, but to pursue faithful obedience to Jesus as His kingdom advances. Scripture holds two commands together: submit to God and resist the devil, reminding us that surrender and resistance are inseparable in the life of a believer. Mission will always invite opposition, whether through temptation, accusation, or discouragement, yet God promises to empower His people as they move forward through prayer, unity, and bold witness. The Lord calls us to stand firm in faith, recognize and respond to common attacks, and press onward with gospel courage that refuses to shrink back. By embracing perseverance, practicing spiritual alertness, and supporting one another, we fulfill our purpose—not just by enduring, but by actively advancing the kingdom of God in every area of life.

Key Text: *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.”* (James 4:7-8a NIV).

1. We resist the devil most effectively when we first submit every area of life to God.

James puts submission before resistance (James 4:7), teaching that spiritual authority flows from surrendered allegiance. Submission is yielding our choices, reactions, and priorities to God’s rule, especially in the areas we tend to protect or justify. Confession and repentance close doors to temptation and accusation (1 John 1:9), restoring spiritual clarity to recognize the enemy’s schemes without shame or denial. Ask: What area—speech, habits, relationships, money, or ministry—needs fresh submission to Jesus? What simple act of obedience today would strengthen my resistance tomorrow?

2. Standing firm requires alertness because the enemy attacks through temptation, accusation, and discouragement.

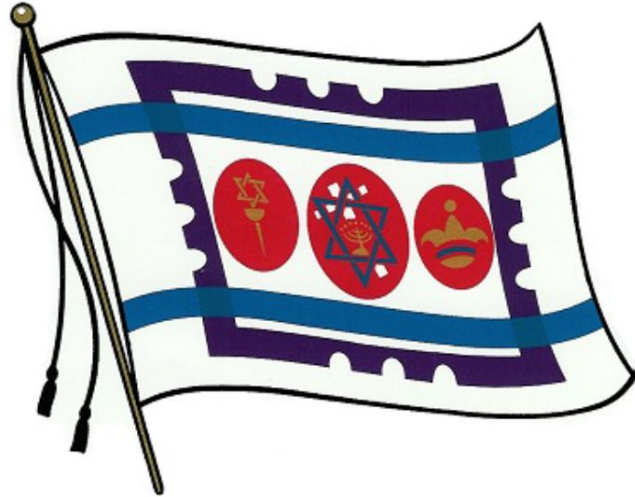
The devil is described as a “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8), and he often attacks through temptation, accusation, and discouragement—especially when we are tired, isolated, or offended. Scripture answers each: God provides a way out of temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13), Christ advocates for us when we fail (1 John 2:1), and endurance grows as we fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1–3). Standing firm is often less about one dramatic victory and more about steady choices to believe truth and reject condemnation. Ask: Which attack is most common for me right now? Who can I ask to pray with me and help me stay alert?

3. The kingdom advances through gospel proclamation and discipleship, not merely through defense against evil.

Jesus connects authority with mission: “All authority... has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:18–19). Spiritual warfare becomes distorted when it is only defensive; the Spirit empowers witness (Acts 1:8), and believers overcome “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11). Moving forward often means obeying clearly—speaking the gospel with love, reconciling relationships, and training others to follow Jesus. Ask: Where is God calling me to take a step forward in witness rather than only “hold on”? Who is one person I can intentionally encourage, disciple, or invite toward Christ this week?

4. Victory is sustained in community as believers pray, practice unity, and support one another.

Paul calls believers to pray “on all occasions” and persevere “for all the Lord’s people” (Ephesians 6:18), showing that warfare is communal. Isolation makes believers more vulnerable, but community strengthens faith through encouragement and accountability (Hebrews 10:24–25), and our love becomes a witness to the world (John 13:35). Ask: What would it look like for my class or church to become more prayerful and united in mission? Who might be struggling silently that I can support through encouragement or intercession?



A quarterly publication of

THE CHURCH OF GOD

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