

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2025**

**February 1, 2025**

**The Christian Church**

**Printed Text: Mark 4:26-32; Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-18**

**Devotional Reading: Acts 2:42-47**

**Background Reading: Matthew 16:13-20; Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:13-22; 5:22-27**

**Key Text: Ephesians 4:15-16**

**February 8, 2025**

**Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

**Printed Text: Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29**

**Devotional Reading: John 1:29-34**

**Background Reading: Acts 2:38, 41; Romans 6:1-14**

**Key Text: Matthew 28:19-20**

**February 15, 2025**

**The Lord's Day**

**Printed Text: Exodus 20:8-11; Romans 14:4-6; Revelation 1:10**

**Devotional Reading: Psalm 118:19-24**

**Background Reading: Genesis 2:2-3; Matthew 12:1-14; 28:1-10**

**Key Text: Exodus 20:11**

**February 22, 2025**

**Stewardship and Mission**

**Printed Text: Acts 1:6-8; 2 Corinthians 8:3-9**

**Devotional Reading: Zechariah 8:18-23**

**Background: Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Acts 26:12-20; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:1-15**

**Key Text: 2 Corinthians 8:9**

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**Zoom Sunday School Classes – 1 February, 2026, 09:00 AM EST**

**Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612**

**Pass Code: 669872**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTIJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

**The Christian Church**

**Printed Text: Mark 4:26-32; Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-18**

**Devotional Reading: Acts 2:42-47**

**Background Reading: Matthew 16:13-20; Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:13-22; 5:22-27**

## Key Text: Ephesians 4:15-16

### Daily Bible Readings

- Monday: A Community of Testimony and praise- Psalm 22:22-28**
- Tuesday: A Community of Hope-Filled Heirs - Ephesians 1:15-23**
- Wednesday: A Community with Divine Authority- Matthew 16: 13-20**
- Thursday: A Community Made Strong Together- Ecclesiastes 4:7-12**
- Friday: A Community United in Worship - Psalm 150**
- Saturday: A Community Silently Growing - Mark 4:26-32**
- Sunday: A Community United - Ephesians 4:4-16**

### KEEP IN MIND:

"But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:15-16, NRSV).

### LESSON AIM:

**EXPLORE** characteristics of a life worthy of Christ's calling in building up the body of Christ;

**CELEBRATE** our gifts that help build up the body of Christ; and

**UNDERSTAND** the meaning of the statement ". . . one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" as it relates to building up the body of Christ.

### BACKGROUND:

In previous portions of his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul laid the foundation concerning Christ and His church. Now, he switches his focus to a more practical purpose, setting out guidelines for his readers concerning Christian conduct. But first, he decides to give them an overview of the church's place in the world.

Paul called for the Ephesians to be true to who they are called to be in Christ and noted several truths for them to embrace: (1) it's their responsibility to be one in the body; (2) the call for unity does not mean that they should strive for a type of dull sameness; (3) the church is a living organism, made up of living beings who are expected to grow according to their use of the gifts Christ has given them; (4) Christ desires that the church reach maturity and that the people of the church be prepared to exercise their gifts; and (5) as the church grows, its members should take on the nature and character of its head, Christ Jesus.

### LESSON COMMENTARY:

**The Kingdom of God (Mark 4:26-32, NRSV)**

<sup>26</sup>He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,

<sup>27</sup>and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.

<sup>28</sup>The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.

<sup>29</sup>But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

<sup>30</sup>He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?

<sup>31</sup>It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;

<sup>32</sup>yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

These declarations were intended to call the attention of the disciples to the word of Christ. By his instructing them, they were made able to instruct others. This parable of the good seed shows the manner in which the kingdom of God makes progress in the world. Mark encourages believers to let the word of Christ have the place it ought to have in a soul, and it will show itself in a good conversation. It grows gradually: first the blade; then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear. When it is sprung up, it will go forward. The work of grace in the soul is, at first, but the day of small things; yet it has mighty products even now, while it is in its growth; but what will there be when it is perfected in heaven!

The central figure in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is the teacher and account teller in this passage, using parables to convey spiritual truths. A central theme in Jesus' teachings, representing God's sovereign rule and reign, both present and future. The Man in Mark 4 represents those who spread the message of the Kingdom, akin to a sower or farmer in the parable. The Seed symbolizes the Word of God or the message of the Kingdom, which is spread among people. The Ground represents the hearts and minds of people who receive the message of the Kingdom.

The growth of the Kingdom is often unseen and mysterious, much like the growth of a seed. We are called to trust in God's timing and methods. Like the man who scatters seed, we are called to share the message of the Kingdom. Our responsibility is to sow; God is responsible for the growth. Just as a farmer waits patiently for the harvest, we must exercise patience and faith, trusting that God is at work even when we do not see immediate results. The seed represents the Word of God, which has inherent power to transform lives. We should be diligent in spreading this powerful message. The ground symbolizes the condition of human hearts. We should pray for receptive hearts and prepare our own hearts to receive God's Word.

1. How does the imagery of a man scattering seed help us understand our role in sharing the Gospel?
2. How can we ensure that our hearts are like fertile ground, ready to receive and nurture the Word of God?
3. What are some practical ways we can "scatter seed" in our daily lives, and how can we encourage others to do the same?

### **The Church's Calling to Unity (Ephesians 4:4-6, NRSV)**

<sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,

<sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

<sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Paul considered himself a prisoner for the Lord as well as one who belonged to the Lord. Always positioning himself as the example, he issued a plea to the Ephesian Christians to walk worthy of their “vocation,” or to live in a manner that is consistent with their high calling from God. The Christian’s call is the divine summons that was answered at the time of conversion. Our calling is not a hobby or a pastime. It is our life’s achievement, our job.

Paul had previously cautioned against boasting concerning good works. Now, he advises them to live out their calling with humility. He did not want them to become arrogant about their godly living. They were also to exercise patience toward the faults and failings of others and among those with different personality types and temperaments. We are to genuinely have patience for one another with love.

The reason for possessing these qualities; “lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing” is for unity within the body of Christ. When Christ established the church, He abolished the greatest dividing line within humanity, the barrier that separated Jews and Gentiles. Now it was the responsibility of the early church members to try with all earnestness to avoid creating human divisions among God’s people.

Arguments and dissension threaten to destroy the “bond of peace” within the body of Christ. There is only one Spirit in the church; nothing can destroy that unity. However, bickering and quarrels can destroy the peace that binds the members of the body of Christ. A healthy formula for keeping the unity is threefold: unity in those things that are essential to the faith, liberty in those matters that are nonessential or not absolute, and love in all circumstances.

In spite of the vast number of Christian churches worldwide, there is only one body of believers. The same Spirit who dwells in every believer also dwells in the body of Christ. There is but one hope in which every believer has placed his or her trust. Our one Lord is the Savior who shed His blood for our sins. We all share a common faith in that one Lord and Savior. There is one baptism by which we profess our faith in Christ. The one God and Father is supreme above all.

### **The Church's Gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12, NRSV)**

<sup>11</sup>The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

The unity of the church must be balanced by its odd twin, diversity. Unity is often confused with uniformity. The Christian Church is communal; every member makes a contribution. Each member of the body of Christ has been given grace, or a particular

gift or role to fulfill. No two members are alike. No member should try to imitate the other's gifts. In other letters, Paul outlines the necessity for giving equal value to the gifts of every believer.

By His grace, He has given these gifts as He sees fit. The risen Lord bestowed these gifts by first sending His most excellent gift, the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 4:8, Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 as a prophecy that the Messiah would ascend to heaven and conquer His foes and lead them captive. As a reward for His victory, He would receive gifts for humankind.

Paul proceeds to explain the nature of some of these gifts of grace. Apostles were those persons directly commissioned by the Lord to preach the Word and plant churches. They were those who had seen the risen Christ. Prophets were the mouthpieces for God. They received revelations directly from the Lord, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and passed them on to the church.

Evangelists are those who preach the Good News. They have been divinely equipped to go out into the world and lead persons to Christ. Pastors are those who serve as God's under-shepherds, caring for the sheep of His flock. It is their responsibility to guide and feed the flock. The New Testament gives the impression of a number of pastors at a local church instead of one (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

Teachers are persons divinely gifted to teach and explain the Bible and what it means. A Bible teacher endeavors to connect God's Word into everyday life.

The purpose of all these gifts is for leaders to enable "the perfecting (or equipping) of the saints" so that all are prepared "for the work of the ministry" and, ultimately, "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). These gifts should always be used to empower others to do even greater deeds for the sake of the kingdom.

### **The Road to Maturity (Ephesians 4:13-18, NRSV)**

<sup>13</sup>until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

<sup>14</sup>We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.

<sup>15</sup>But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

<sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

<sup>17</sup>Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds.

<sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.

At this point, Paul may have anticipated the question, "How long will this process of growing continue?" In verse 13, Paul explains that this will go on "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God."

Little can prepare the mind for the unity that exists in the afterlife. As long as we live, no matter how hard we try, we will have innumerable differences. This will continue until

we are able to see Him as He truly is and to know as we are known. At that time the "unity of the faith" will occur. Until then, there will be room for growth. When we obtain full knowledge, we enter the state of "perfect man." The word "perfect," used in the King James Version, is translated "complete." Our Christian journey is done when we come to the place of full knowledge of Christ and unity of our faith.

Verses 14-15 describe the growth process in the body of Christ. As we continue toward spiritual maturity, some things will become apparent. We are no longer like "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (v. 14). As we grow to be more like Him, we grow in our knowledge of Him. Our understanding is solid and sure. No one can then persuade us to change our beliefs.

All disciples are called upon to grow. Discipleship is a process. It is not a course of study from which we will earn a diploma and never revisit again. There is always room for growth, for training, for new understanding, and for enlightenment. As we grow in Christ, so do our challenges. The longer we live, if we are achieving spiritual maturity, we learn to lean on Him more, trusting more fully in His promises and His providence.

When we encounter brothers and sisters who have gone astray in their thinking and beliefs, we are commanded to speak "the truth in love," helping each other to grow toward the head, which is Christ Jesus. He is both the goal of our growth and the source of our growth. As the church receives its life from the One who supplies all of our needs, quite naturally, growth comes from Him too. But Paul adds that the church grows "toward" Christ as we as individuals grow "in" Christ.

### **THOUGHTS TO PONDER:**

1. How does understanding the concept of "one body" influence the way you interact with other members of your church community?
2. In what ways can you rely on the Holy Spirit to foster unity within your local church?
3. What practical steps can you take to contribute to the unity and mission of your church?
4. In what ways can recognizing God's sovereignty ("over all") impact your response to life's challenges?
5. How do other scriptures, such as Deuteronomy 6:4 and 1 Corinthians 8:6, deepen your understanding of Ephesians 4:6?
6. How do the roles mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 contribute to the overall mission of the church?
7. In what ways can you identify and develop your own spiritual gifts to serve your local church community?

### **LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY**

Unity in the Body of Christ emphasizes the unity among believers. Despite diverse backgrounds and gifts, Christians are called to function as a single, cohesive unit. "One Spirit" signifies the Holy Spirit's role in unifying believers. The Spirit empowers, guides, and sustains the church, ensuring that all members are working towards the same purpose. "One hope" refers to the shared future and promise of eternal life in Christ. This hope should motivate believers to live in harmony and pursue the mission of the church. Understanding our calling involves recognizing our place within the body of

Christ and actively participating in the life and mission of the church. Believers are encouraged to guard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, actively working to maintain harmony and understanding within the church community.

There is a real danger among Christians to look at ourselves as having “arrived” in regard to our spiritual growth. We can never fully know God in this life; therefore, Christian discipleship is not a course of study to be completed. It is a process that causes us to change and grow continuously if we yield ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We are never too old to learn about matters concerning the kingdom. The oldest, most seasoned Christian can still learn about God’s love from a newborn baby. A true sign of Christian maturity is in knowing there is still more to be known.

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### **Zoom Sunday School Classes – 8 February, 2026, 09:00 AM EST**

**Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612**

**Pass Code: 669872**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTIJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

#### **Baptism and the Lord’s Supper**

**Printed Text: Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29**

**Devotional Reading: John 1:29-34**

**Background Reading: Acts 2:38, 41; Romans 6:1-14**

**Key Text: Matthew 28:19-20**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

**Monday: Saved Through the Sea - Exodus 14:21-31**

**Tuesday: Baptized Into a New Life - Romans 6:1-14**

**Wednesday: God Provides Bread - Exodus 16:13-16, 31**

**Thursday: Jesus Is the Bread of Life - John 6:28-40**

**Friday: A Blessing with Bread And Wine - Genesis 14:14-20**

**Saturday: Beloved Child of God - Matthew 3:13-17**

**Sunday: A Meal of Remembrance - 1 Corinthians 11:23-29**

#### **KEEP IN MIND:**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20, NRSV).

#### **LESSON AIM:**

**REVIEW** the circumstances of Jesus' baptism,  
**ASPIRE** to partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner as covenant partners with God; and  
**EXPLORE** the meaning of the Lord's Supper as a time of covenant remembrance;

**BACKGROUND:**

Jesus' willingness to be baptized by John demonstrates His humility and submission to God's plan. We are called to emulate this humility in our own lives. Jesus' baptism signifies the fulfillment of all righteousness. As believers, we are called to pursue righteousness in our daily walk with God. Jesus identifies with sinners through His baptism, showing His solidarity with us. We should strive to identify with and support others in their spiritual journeys. Jesus' actions reflect His obedience to the Father's will. We are encouraged to seek and obey God's will in our lives, even when it requires humility and sacrifice. Baptism represents purification and a new beginning. As Christians, we are reminded of our own baptism and the call to live a life transformed by Christ.

The Corinthian church had been wrapped up in all kinds of immorality and unethical practices. Although it was a very gifted church in one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the Roman Empire, they were lacking in some basic Christian theology and behavior. In order to help them, Paul wrote the letter that we know as 1 Corinthians, where we see Paul address a list of issues that need to be addressed in the life of the church. This list of issues included celebrity worship of Christian ministers, sexual immorality, eating foods offered to idols, and head coverings for women. Next, he tackles the problem of the Corinthians' lack of love and consideration when taking the Lord's Supper or Communion. Paul has received reports that the Corinthian church has been misrepresenting Christ while taking the Lord's Supper, and he attempts to ring order to what has become a shameful feast.

**Lesson Commentary:**

**John Baptizes Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17, NRSV)**

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.

<sup>14</sup>John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

<sup>15</sup>But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

<sup>16</sup>And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

<sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

John was confused about why Jesus would ask him to baptize Him. Even today, it's hard to understand. John's baptism was to demonstrate repentance for sins, but Jesus never sinned and He had not inherited Adam's sinful nature. John felt that it would be more appropriate for Jesus to baptize him than vice versa. Yet Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires" (v. 15, NLT). There was no Old Testament command to be baptized, so this was not what Jesus meant. Jesus was baptized to show His identification with us sinners needing repentance.

The baptism of Jesus was also significant because it was at this time that the Father (the voice) and the Holy Spirit (the dove) gave witness to the authenticity of His ministry. The word "Trinity" never appears in Scripture (this was later articulated by Tertullian, one of the early church fathers from Africa), but a number of New Testament passages speak of all three members of the Trinity together—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18). This was the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and this verified for John that Jesus was actually the Son of God. And it must also have been encouraging to Jesus as He heard His Father saying that He loved Him and that Jesus brought Him great joy (Matthew 3:17).

In the Gospels of Mark and Luke, the "voice from heaven" or "a voice out of the cloud" speaks to Jesus (Mark 1:11; Luke 9:35). But Matthew states the experience more indirectly. Perhaps, he has in mind the main intended audience of his gospel, which in that day were primarily Jews.

### **Doubt to Disciple Nations (Matthew 28:19-20, NRSV)**

<sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Jesus tells His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations (verse 18). This means when God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at the right hand, He was given power and dominion over all things in Heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:20-23). The disciples were under His authority and called to make more disciples (verse 19). The disciples understood what Jesus meant by "making disciples." He had just done this with them for the past three years and a half years. He was telling them to go and do what He had done with them so that other people could also become disciples of Jesus.

He told them to teach the new disciples everything He had taught them. This is how disciples are made, through teaching them what Jesus says and what it means for our daily lives. And this command to make disciples goes to every follower of Jesus. Disciples have to make other disciples until the nations learn the teachings of Christ and how to live accordingly. We are to go teach any person who will listen, regardless of race or nationality, about Jesus. When they accept Him as Lord and Savior, they are to

be baptized as a sign of their union and commitment to Christ. And we are to teach them to be devoted to the Word of God (verses 19-20).

Jesus ended His great Commission with the promise that He will always be with us (verse 20). The disciples may have been puzzled how Jesus would remain with them. But Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit to be present with them—and us—forever (John 14:16, 26).

1. Why is baptizing and teaching the Word to new believers so important?

### **Remembering the Pattern (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, NRSV)**

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,

<sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

<sup>25</sup>In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

<sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

After letting the Corinthians know that their behavior at the Lord's Supper was unacceptable, Paul proceeds to remind them of the purpose of the meal. He says this tradition was passed on to him, and now he passes this on to the Corinthian church. The meal is not just an arbitrary time for eating and feasting, but a tradition that has been handed down from Jesus to the church.

This tradition was given meaning and significance by Christ Himself on the night that He was betrayed. Jesus took the bread and broke it as a symbol of what His body would go through in agony on the Cross. He would be broken and pierced for the sins of the world. Then He took the cup and passed it around to all the disciples. This cup represented the blood that He shed, which would provide forgiveness and seal the new covenant that God made with His people. This meal was to be taken in remembrance of Christ and not for self-pleasure. It was a means to show the world that Jesus died and that His sacrifice has made God accessible to all.

1. Why do those who choose to indulge in alcohol, drugs, and sexual immorality belittle their lives and society?
2. How does the behavior of the modern-day church compare and contrast to the behavior of the Corinthian church during the Lord's Supper?
3. What should our attitude be when we participate in the Lord's Supper?

### **Pinpointing the Problem (1 Corinthians 11:27-29, NRSV)**

<sup>27</sup>Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.

<sup>28</sup>Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

<sup>29</sup>For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.

Now that Paul has reminded them of the reason and sacredness of the Lord's Supper, he pinpoints the problem of the Corinthian church's practice. The rich are participating in an unworthy manner. It is important to note that it is not that they were personally unworthy. Their actions were dishonorable because they did not wait for their poorer brothers before eating. To take the Lord's Supper in an inappropriate manner is serious. Those who do so are guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord, against Christ Himself.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the taking Lord's Supper is a sacred act, so they should examine themselves before partaking. This time is to acknowledge the sacredness of the meal as they honor Christ. Keeping this in mind will avoid bringing God's judgment on themselves. Paul underscores this by adding that some have already experienced God's judgment in the form of sickness and even death. This is God's discipline of believers in Corinth who have dishonored Christ by taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy way.

#### **THOUGHTS TO PONDER:**

1. When we take the Lord's Supper, we are remembering the covenant that Christ sealed with His death on the Cross. What does it mean to take communion in an unworthy manner?
2. How often do you choose to take the time to examine yourself before partaking of the Lord's Supper?
3. When Jesus was baptized, the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. This must have been a great encouragement to Jesus as He was about to begin His ministry. How do the members of the Trinity encourage you in your daily life?
4. Research the baptism practices in your church and how they reflect the teachings of Scripture. You may invite the pastor to your class if you need further clarification.
5. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance only. His baptism was to prepare people's hearts for the coming of the Messiah. A number of Scripture passages talk about the baptism of John being insufficient after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (for instance, see the story of Apollos in Acts 18:24-26). Read Romans 6:4 and discuss the symbolism of Christian baptism and how it goes beyond simple repentance. Discuss your own understanding of the meaning of baptism when you were baptized. Can you think of ways to make baptism more meaningful at your church?

## LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY

Taking communion in an unworthy manner isn't the only way we can dishonor Christ. Ignoring the plight of the poor, holding a grudge, and neglecting or abusing little ones are other ways that we dishonor Christ. Unbelievers aren't the only ones who commit sinful acts: believers themselves can act in ways unbecoming of Christ. To make a mockery of Christ's death before an unbelieving world is to disregard His sacrifice and the agony that He suffered on the Cross. When we sin in front of the world, we bring reproach on His name. Too many scandals have made the world turn from Jesus and look at the church with contempt. Taking communion is not about looking worthy on Sunday; we need to live our lives in a worthy manner every single day.

Too much is at stake when we fail to honor Christ in our private and public lives. When we choose to blatantly sin, the mothers conclude that Christ has no power and our faith is meaningless. This is why so many in our communities have sought meaning in other things like gangs, drugs, and sex. They conclude that Christianity is just a show. Ultimately, it poorly reflects Christ Jesus.

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### **Zoom Sunday School Classes – 15 February, 2026, 09:00 AM EST**

**Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612**

**Pass Code: 669872**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTIJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

#### **The Lord's Day**

**Printed Text: Exodus 20:8-11; Romans 14:4-6; Revelation 1:10**

**Devotional Reading: Psalm 118:19-24**

**Background Reading: Genesis 2:2-3; Matthew 12:1-14; 28:1-10**

**Key Text: Exodus 20:11**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

**Monday: God Rests on The Seventh Day - Genesis 1:31-2:4a**

**Tuesday: The promise of Entering God's Rest - Hebrews 4:1-11**

**Wednesday: Delight in the Sabbath - Isaiah 58:8-14**

**Thursday: Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath - Matthew 12:1-13**

**Friday: The Day of Resurrection - Matthew 28:1-10**

**Saturday: Keep the Sabbath Day Holy - Exodus 20:1, 8-11**

**Sunday: Living or Dying to the Lord - Romans 14:1-8**

#### **KEEP IN MIND:**

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it." (Exodus 20:11, NRSV).

**LESSON AIM:**

**EXPLORE** the meaning of the Sabbath as expressed in Exodus;  
**RECOGNIZE** and **APPRECIATE** the importance of the Sabbath; and  
**DISCOVER** ways to practice the Sabbath in this day and age.

**BACKGROUND:**

Since the theme of this quarter's lessons is *tradition*, some observations about that concept are in order. Often the word *tradition* carries negative connotations. For example, *traditionalist* may refer to someone who is rigidly tied to certain beliefs or practices and is unwilling to change them.

Traditions, however, can assist nations, cities, churches, and families in remembering their roots and respecting their heritage. Yes, traditions can become stale and routine; but properly handled, traditions can achieve worthwhile purposes. Such was God's intent in instituting Sabbath observances as an ongoing tradition for ancient Israel.

The first part of today's text is taken from the Ten Commandments, which God gave to His people at Mount Sinai after their exodus from Egypt (Exodus 19:1, 2). The second part of our text comes from Exodus 31 at the conclusion of the instructions regarding the construction of the tabernacle (which begin in chapter 25).

**LESSON COMMENTARY:****A Memorial (Exodus 20:8-11, NRSV)**

<sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

<sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.

<sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

When God created humankind, He understood how people would act. Moreover, He understood that humans would be overwhelmed and engrossed in our daily lives and worldly things rather than Him and His precepts. God not only provided the Sabbath but also instructions to remember it. God knew there would be an inclination to forget the purpose and benefit. Sabbath means "rest" in Hebrew

God understood the importance of rest during creation and wants His people to remember not only His commandments but their limitations as creatures and their submission to Him as Creator

God distinguished the Sabbath by blessing it, sanctifying it and making it a holy day. Even in contemporary times, Christians must set apart the Lord's Day and ensure it has distinction from every other day. God sanctified the Sabbath, but unless the day is committed to Him, the blessing has no benefits. God provided a model whereby

everything to do was finished in a six-day period. He exhibited organization skills, the advantages of prioritizing, the obligation of completion, and the necessity of rest

Given this example, all believers are challenged to honor God by observing the Sabbath

1. Since observing special days is a personal matter in the New Testament era (Romans 14:5-8), what benefits and dangers are there for a church to encourage its members to do so? Regarding Christmas; regarding Easter; regarding Good Friday
2. Why would God include the statement “nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates”?
3. How does society (include the church) aid or prevent us in observing the Sabbath?
4. How do you make sure you get adequate rest?

Regarding sleep; regarding time off; “I’d rather burn out than rust out”

### **Believers and Accountability to God (Romans 14:4-6, NRSV)**

<sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup>Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

<sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

Paul gives a stern rebuke when he writes, "Who art thou that judges another man's servant?" We must remember that all believers are servants of the Lord and are accountable to Him. Thus, God is responsible for His servants, and He is able to correct us when appropriate to make us pleasing to Him (v. 4).

The Roman believers are debating over the special feast days that are part of Old Testament ceremonial laws. One group believes the feast days should still be observed, while another believes every day is the same. Paul addresses both groups by affirming that each should be fully persuaded in their own mind about what they feel is important to them. In essence, Paul says, "Listen, it is acceptable unto the Lord if you still want to regard these feast days as an expression of your love and devotion to Him. On the other hand, if you have no desire to observe these days, that's OK too."

In speaking of these special feast days, Paul leaves it up to the believer to decide whether to continue observing them. Paul also affirms that those who feel they can eat anything should do so as unto the Lord with thanksgiving, and the believer who has chosen not to eat certain foods should also do it as unto the Lord with thanksgiving (v. 6).

We no longer belong to ourselves, but to Christ Jesus. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are His. The choice a believer makes in this life should be based on love and devotion to the Lord. Each of us is accountable to God, so let's not waste our time judging one another on trivial matters.

## **The Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10, NRSV)**

<sup>10</sup>I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

On the Lord's Day is traditionally understood to refer to Sunday, the first day of the week, which early Christians observed in commemoration of Jesus Christ's resurrection. The term "Lord's Day" is distinct from the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) and reflects the shift in worship practices among early Christians. This day became significant for gathering, worship, and breaking bread, as seen in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2.

Being "in the Spirit" indicates a state of spiritual ecstasy or prophetic vision, where the Holy Spirit enables a deeper level of revelation. This experience is similar to those of Old Testament prophets, such as Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:2) and Daniel (Daniel 10:7-10), who were also transported into a divine realm to receive God's messages. It suggests a heightened awareness and receptivity to divine communication.

The "loud voice like a trumpet" signifies authority and urgency, often associated with divine revelation. In biblical times, trumpets were used to announce significant events or to gather people (Exodus 19:16, 19; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). This imagery connects to the theophany at Mount Sinai, where God's presence was accompanied by trumpet sounds. The voice's position "behind" John may indicate the unexpected nature of the revelation, drawing his attention to turn and see the source of the message.

The Lord's Day is a time set apart for worship and reflection on Christ's resurrection. Christians are encouraged to honor this day as a time for spiritual renewal and community worship. Believers we are called to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. Being "in the Spirit" involves prayer, meditation on Scripture, and openness to God's leading. Just as John heard a loud voice, Christians should cultivate a sensitivity to God's voice through Scripture, prayer, and the counsel of the Holy Spirit. The trumpet-like voice signifies the authority and clarity of God's message. Believers should approach Scripture with reverence, recognizing its divine authority.

### **THOUGHTS TO PONDER:**

1. What does "the Lord's Day" mean to you personally, and how can you honor it in your weekly routine?
2. How can you cultivate a lifestyle of being "in the Spirit" in your daily walk with God?
3. In what ways can you become more attentive to hearing God's voice in your life?
4. How does understanding the authority of God's revelation impact your approach to reading and applying Scripture?
5. Can you identify a time when you felt God speaking to you clearly? How did you respond, and what was the outcome?

### **LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY**

God revealed the need to observe a regular rhythm and rest for the health and well-being of humans, animals, and plants. Recently this rhythm has been set aside in many places around the globe. Underneath this casting off of the Sabbath is greed.

This desire for more has caused corporations to work non-stop, which in turn creates a vicious cycle as the rest of society is swept up in this desire for more. Now we have stores and other businesses open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This is contrary to the rhythm God established at the beginning of creation.

In our communities, there are so many churches, denominations, and people of various nationalities, cultures, and lifestyles with different personal preferences that unbelievers can become confused when someone mentions the word *church*. We must be careful that we don't allow our differences to cause us to be divided. Some people are uncomfortable when the Gospel is presented using skits, videos, dance, or film. Some churches have communion once a month, while others have it every Sunday. Our inability to accept these differences should never cause us to judge anyone without scriptural evidence. However, we need not worry since one day all will be given an equal opportunity at the judgment seat of Christ to know whether or not our worship, works, expression of love, devotion, and commitment to the Lord was pleasing to Him.

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### **Zoom Sunday School Classes – 22 February, 2026, 09:00 AM EST**

**Meeting ID: 848-9423-0612**

**Pass Code: 669872**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84894230612?pwd=Zk1ESitzbGZwTlJyV21UZXY5aTVPZz09>

#### **Stewardship and Mission**

**Printed Text: Acts 1:6-8; 2 Corinthians 8:3-9**

**Devotional Reading: Zechariah 8:18-23**

**Background: Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Acts 26:12-20; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:1-15**

**Key Text: 2 Corinthians 8:9**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

**Monday: Blessings to Those Who Give - Malachi 3:7-12**

**Tuesday: Giving More Than Enough – Exodus 36:2-7**

**Wednesday: May God's Ways Be Known – Psalm 67**

**Thursday: Ready With a Voluntary Gift - 2 Corinthians 9:1-6**

**Friday: Bountiful Sowing and Reaping - 2 Corinthians 9:6-15**

**Saturday: Go and Make Disciples - Matthew 28:16-20**

**Sunday: Excel in Generous Giving - 2 Corinthians 8:3-9**

#### **KEEP IN MIND:**

"For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9, NRSV).

#### **LESSON AIM:**

**COMMIT** to maintain a lifestyle of giving

**SHARE** with others in need is a part of believer's commitment to Christ and the church, and

**EXPRESS** our gratitude to God for His wonderful gift

**BACKGROUND:**

Paul, who had written this letter from Macedonia, was appealing to the Corinthians to participate in the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. This letter tried to build on the success of his harsh letter (an earlier letter that is now lost). It led to forgiveness and reconciliation among the believers in Corinth. He was building upon the foundation that they had realigned themselves with him and obeyed his commands (2 Corinthians 2:9). Since they had been obedient to his directions before, Paul wanted the Corinthians to continue in their allegiance to him. His goal was their full participation in the collection for the saints in Jerusalem.

**Lesson Commentary:**

**The Disciples' Question and Jesus' Response (Acts 1:6-8, NRSV)**

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

<sup>7</sup>He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The disciples' question reflects a human desire to know God's timeline. We must trust in God's perfect timing and His sovereign plan, even when it is not fully revealed to us. The disciples were thinking of a political restoration, but Jesus' kingdom is spiritual and transcends earthly boundaries. We should focus on the spiritual aspects of God's kingdom in our lives. Jesus' response (in the following verses) shifts the focus from national restoration to the mission of the Church. We are called to be witnesses and spread the gospel to all nations. The question of restoration points to the hope of ultimate fulfillment in God's promises. We can live with hope, knowing that God's promises will be fulfilled in His time.

Jesus' response highlights God's Divine Authority Over Time. God alone has the authority to determine the times and seasons. This should lead us to trust in His perfect timing and plan. Instead of being preoccupied with the timing of future events, believers are called to focus on the mission Jesus has given us: to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Understanding that God has fixed times by His own authority should bring comfort and peace, knowing that He is in control of all things. We are called to be patient and faithful, living in anticipation of God's promises while actively engaging in the work He has set before us.

The Greek word for "power" (dynamis) indicates miraculous strength and ability. Believers today, like the early disciples, are empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's mission. Being a "witness" involves both verbal proclamation and living a life that

reflects Christ. Our daily actions and words should testify to the truth of the Gospel. Just as the disciples began in Jerusalem, believers are called to start their witness in their immediate context—family, friends, and community—before reaching further. The call to reach "the ends of the earth" challenges believers to support and engage in global missions, recognizing the universal need for the Gospel. The disciples were instructed to wait for the Holy Spirit, teaching us the importance of relying on God's timing and power rather than our own strength.

### **Give Like the Macedonians (2 Corinthians 8:3-5 (NRSV))**

<sup>3</sup>For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means,

<sup>4</sup>begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints—

<sup>5</sup>and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us,

Paul wanted to call attention to the grace of God given to the Macedonian churches. He acquainted the Corinthians with the gifts of God given through them. The Macedonians were Christians who gave to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. They were in the midst of affliction and poverty but joyfully responded because of the sense of favor God had bestowed upon them. The Macedonians gave sacrificially on behalf of other saints in need. They wanted to assist other believers and show their commitment as followers of Christ.

When we think about the gift that God gave to the world through Jesus Christ, we should be motivated to respond. We should show our appreciation for the sacrifice He made. The Macedonians not only were appreciative but also proved it by their actions. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Paul was challenging the Corinthians to emulate the Macedonians.

### **Give as You Promised (2 Corinthians 8:6-9, NRSV)**

<sup>6</sup>so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.

<sup>7</sup>Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

<sup>8</sup>I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others.

<sup>9</sup>For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Titus, who was Paul's representative, had previously encouraged the Corinthians to give toward the collection for the poor. But in light of their recent conflict with Paul, they lost their zeal for collections (2 Corinthians 7:2-15). When affliction abounds in our lives, we should still be committed to God and to ministering to others. The

Macedonians were rejoicing in the midst of their troubles; Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to do the same. He told Titus to complete the gathering of collections from the Macedonians. Paul wanted them to prove their allegiance to him and their love for others.

The Corinthian believers excelled in everything. They had strong faith, good preaching, and much knowledge, enthusiasm, and love. Paul appealed to them to have the same passion and commitment for the collections. For him, the offering was a remembering (Galatians 2:10), a collection of money (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), a ministry (Romans 15:25), and a gift (2 Corinthians 8:6).

He was not commanding them to give but urging them to prove that their love was sincere. Love manifests itself in action. “Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:18). Our actions reveal our hearts. Paul wanted the Corinthians to reveal where their devotion and affection were focused.

### **THOUGHTS TO PONDER:**

1. How does the promise of the Holy Spirit's power in Acts 1:8 encourage you in your personal witness for Christ?
2. How can we apply the lesson of trusting in God's timing to our personal lives and current world events?
3. In what ways can you shift your focus from seeking knowledge of future events to fulfilling the mission Jesus has given you?
4. How does the anticipation of the kingdom's restoration influence our role as Christians in the world today?
4. How does the anticipation of the kingdom's restoration influence our role as Christians in the world today?
4. How does the anticipation of the kingdom's restoration influence our role as Christians in the world today?
5. The Macedonian church was said to be genuine in their giving. How might we be genuine when we give our offering?
5. We live in a nation of abundance. How might the church in this nation be able to bless others out of our abundance?

### **LESSON IN OUR SOCIETY**

The United States is one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Our understanding of rich and poor is quite different from other nations in the world where people live on much less. We know abundance, yet our economy still suffers. The unemployment rate is high. Many churchgoers are unemployed, yet we are still challenged to give generously. Paul exhorted the Corinthian church to do just that. How might those who have the means reach out to those in your congregation who have needs?

### **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON: 1 March 2026**

**Loving God, Loving Others**

**Printed Text: Mrk 12:28-34; James 2:14-17**

**Devotional Reading: Proverbs 28:18-22**

**Background Scripture: Romans 15:1-7; Philippians 2:1-8;**

**Colossians 3:12; 4:1**

**Key Text: Mark 12:33**

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