

## Adult Sunday School Class

**Objective:** Increase understanding of the process of being perfected in the faith.

**Opening Prayer:** I thank you that you hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

**Read:** Hebrews 2

Q – How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? - Rhetorical.

- We must pay the most careful attention, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.
- We must pay more careful attention to the word of God that has been sown into our hearts.
- We must not allow the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things to choke the word and cause it to be unfruitful in our lives.

Q – In the parable of the sower, why did trouble or persecution arise? - Because of the word.

Q – What is the context of that answer? - Let's re-read. Mark 4:13) Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14) The farmer sows the word. 15) Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16) Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17) But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18) Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19) but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20) Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Q – Why is it that trouble and persecution arise because of the word?

- Because the enemy of our souls does not want the word to produce fruit in our lives.
- Said another way, he does not want us to mature spiritually.
- He wants to keep our faith weak and ineffective.
- He wants to divert our attention from the things of God to other things.

Q – Help me understand the problem with “other” things in the context of this parable. Didn't Jesus deal with other things as He walked the face of this earth?

- He did but not at the expense of the things of God.
- This parable in essence is saying don't allow other things to become a diversion from the things of God or the most important priorities of your life.
- Someone has said, “be careful to keep the number one thing number one.”
- Jesus said “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? (Mark 8:36,37)
- He says a person's life does not consist in the abundance of their possessions. (Luke 12:15)

Q – Another question from a previous session was does the concept of drifting away apply to both those who will spend eternity with God and those who won't?

- The answer is yes.
- It applies to both Christians and non-Christians.

Q – How is drifting away defined?

- Allow distance to come between you and the word of God. Or

- Distance between you and the tenants of your faith.

Q – How does distance between believers and the elements of our faith occur? - When we're distracted from the things of God, the word, prayer, worship and the assembling of ourselves together as admonished by scripture.

Q – Do the descriptions in the parable of the sower like shallow soil, rocky places and among thorns apply to both Christians and non-Christians?

- They do!
- This great salvation that we're talking about is built around accepting Christ as your personal savior.
- And in Paul's words, making him the **Lord of your life**.

Q – What have we learned about making Jesus the Lord of your life?

- It's a journey that begins with the event of accepting Christ as your personal savior.
- However the resulting growth and maturing process lasts a life time.

Review – Allow me to review some of the key principals of our faith that we recently discussed .

- We are saved by God's grace, through faith, it has nothing to do with who we are or our good behaviors.
- We are His children and the sheep of His pasture.
- We can do nothing to make God love us any more or for that matter, any less.
- He cares for you!
- He loves us and is always acting in our best interests.
- He never leaves us or forsakes us and is an ever present help in time of trouble, even when we can't seem to sense His presence or understand the reasons for our circumstances.
- He knows right where “we live”, He knows the thoughts and intent of our hearts.
- God is fair and just, in the most absolute form of these two concepts.
- Who among us can say, God didn't treat us right or handle our situation correctly or that He could have done a better job?
- Who can say God owes me or is indebted to me?
- God honors our faith. The scripture says for without faith it's impossible to please God.

Q – When trouble and persecution arises as a result of the word or we might say as a result of the principals of our faith, how are we to react?

- James says don't resent the trails and testing or our faith as intruders but welcome them as friends?
  - James 1:2-8) J B Phillips translation. When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence. And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God—who gives generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty—and he may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given him.
  - The NIV says it this way. - 2) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3) because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4) Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Q – How many of you participated in sports programs of any kind? - Many will have done so.

Q – Did anyone have a coach who seemed to delight in making practice session difficult?

- Again, many will be able to affirm this experience.
- Our football coach loved this drill. We would all line up on the goal line facing the opposite end of the field. When he blew the whistle we were supposed to run forward as fast as we could. When he blew the whistle again we were to dive onto the ground head first onto our stomachs. He would then

blew the whistle again and we were to get up as quickly as possible and run at full speed until he blew the whistle to signal it was time to dive onto the ground again. It was not uncommon for us to run this drill for the entire length of the field. He would continue to blow the whistle until we were all exhausted and could barely respond to his commands. And in addition, while we were doing this “training” exercise he would publicly chide anyone he viewed as not doing their very best. He would then allow us to get a drink, rest for a few minutes and then we'd do it all over again.

Q – Why would a football coach delight in an exercise like this one?

- Because it was designed to get us in shape &
- Prepared us for the real world of game situations.

Q – How would you describe an exercise like this? - Would you consider it fun and enjoyable or might you describe it as difficult, punishing, painful or suffering?

Q – What is an essential part of any Olympic athlete's routine? - A rigorous training program with characteristics like the one I just described.

Q – How is the perfecting of Jesus described in this chapter?

- Verse 10) In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.
- 18) Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Q – How did the writer of Hebrews describe the temptation of Jesus?

- As suffering.
- It's described as a trying and difficult period.

Q – How does the scripture describe the introduction of the temptation of Jesus? - Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (Matt 4:1)

Q – Who led him into the place of temptation? - The Spirit of God.....The Holy Spirit of God,....His coach!

Q – How is this thought described in Hebrews 2? - 11) Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Q – Are the phrases “made holy” and “make perfect” interchangeable and consistent with the text? - They are.

Q – Who did the tempting or arranged the conditions of this period of testing? - The devil.

Q – What kind of event immediately preceded this period of testing?

- A significant spiritual breakthrough.
- In the case of Jesus, it was his baptism in water &
- Having the Holy Spirit descend upon him in the form of a dove.

Q – When are we most exposed to a period of severe testing or trials? - Following a significant spiritual breakthrough or a new plateau of faith.

Q – What do we mean when we use the phrase “suffer for our faith”?

- Suffer for the things we believe.
- That could be suffer the persecution of men who consider us to be either fools or infidels.
- It can also mean the enemy of our souls is attempting to destroy our faith or
- Causing trouble and persecution to arise because of the things we believe or the word that has been planted in our hearts.

Q – What is your aspiration regarding faith? Are you striving for strong faith or are you OK with a lesser amount of faith? Does strong faith imply more maturity, testing, development and conditioning? - Rhetorical.

Q – Is the concept of degrees of even faith accurate?

- It is.
- Jesus describes degrees of faith in many places in scripture.
  - Recall in one place He said “oh yea of little faith, why did you doubt”
  - Of the centurion, “When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.
  - Let's read the account of the centurion's faith. Matt 8:5) When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6) “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.” 7) Jesus said to him, “Shall I come and heal him?” 8) The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9) For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10) When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11) I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12) But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13) Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that moment.

Q – What did the centurion say was the only ingredient necessary for his servant to be healed? - The words of Jesus, or the words of a member of the God head.

Q – What are the tenants of our faith built on? - The word(s) of God.

Q – What's the difference between strong and weak faith?

- One gets results the other does not.
- One endures the trial and comes out stronger.
- The other is further weakened and gives up in defeat.

Q – How is strong faith developed? - By perseverance when being tried and tested for the things we believe.

Q – Who is the source of our faith? - Hebrews 12:2 & Romans 10:17

- Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God. (Sower sows the word!)

Q – What's different about the trying and testing of our faith and the process our earthy coaches put us through?

- Spiritual trials can be much more intense &
- Have greater or eternal consequences.

Q – What is the role of the Holy Spirit when we're being tried and tested?

- To lead, guide, counsel and direct us.
- He'll provide support if we will hear that still small voice and follow His leading.
- His objective is to control the exposure to minimize negative consequences.

Q – Who is our intercessor? - Jesus Christ the righteous one.

Q – What is His role during the periods of our testing and trials? - He prays for us so that our faith will not fail.